

## CENTENARIES

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### Baldwin, Loammi (1780-1838)

LOAMMI BALDWIN, an American engineer, was born at North Woburn, Massachusetts, May 16, 1780. He had his education in Westford Academy and Harvard College and graduated in 1800. As he showed early predilections for engineering, an attempt was made to apprentice him to Count Rumford. The idea was however given up, on account of the prohibitive cost and time stipulated. Hence, he took to law. Even then, his engineering propensities did not leave him. In 1802 he designed and built his town's fire-engine, with capacity to throw water to a height of seventy-five feet. This was in use for over eighty years.

#### CHANGES TO ENGINEERING

In 1807 he abandoned law for civil engineering, touring through Europe to learn the profession. Having done some casual pieces of work in Boston and Virginia, he became the Engineer of the Union Canal in 1821. This canal, from Reading to Middletown, was seventy-nine miles long and included a tunnel of 739 feet, three large dams and an artificial lake. The President of the Company took objection to the width of the canal proposed by Baldwin and so the latter had to resign. After completion of the work, however, Baldwin's original figures were found to be correct and alterations were effected at immense cost.

#### OTHER WORKS

The following are some of the other major works designed by Baldwin:—(1) Canal from Boston Harbour to the Hudson River (1825); (2) Railroad over the same line (1827); (3) Masonry dry docks at Charlestown and Norfolk (1833); (4) Boston Water Works (1834); (5) Brunswick Canal and Railroad (1836). Some of these were works of magnitude in his days, as there was no power-driven machinery. These achievements earned the following encomium for Baldwin: "No man so well deserves the name of Father of Civil Engineering in America".

He died June 30, 1838.

### Cresson, Ezra Townsend (1838-1926)

EZRA TOWNSEND CRESSON, an American entomologist, was born at Byberry June 18, 1838. He entered the service of the Franklin Fire Insurance Company in 1869, became its Secretary in 1878 and continued in that position till his retirement in 1910. But his life interest was in entomology.

#### FOUNDS A SOCIETY

In February 1859, when not yet twenty-one, he founded the first entomological society of America, along with his two friends, James Ridings and George Newmann. It was first known as the Entomological Society of Philadelphia. In 1867, its name was changed to American Entomological Society. In the earlier years, when the Society was very poor, it was the enthusiasm and industry of Cresson that pulled it through. On September 4, 1861, Cresson wrote to Baron Osten Sacken, Entomologist and Secretary of the Russian Legation at Washington, "We do our own printing, as you already know; I am the compositor and also assist in the press work, and although I have had little or no experience in setting type (I have set the type for *all* the pages of the *Proceedings* thus far), yet be assured that I will do my best to have your paper got up in as neat and scientific a style as possible".

Cresson's connection with the Society, which began in such an intimate form, was maintained throughout his life. He was editor of its *Transactions* from 1871 to 1912 and its treasurer from 1874 to 1924.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

Cresson's special field of work was in the order Hymenoptera. Between 1861 and 1882 he published sixty-six papers. The first paper which appeared in 1861 in Vol. I of the *Proceedings* of the Philadelphia Entomological Society was entitled *Catalogue of the cicindelidae of North America*. His entomological research culminated in his *Synopsis of the families and genera of the hymenoptera of America, North of Mexico, together with a catalogue of the described species and bibliography*, which appeared

in 1887 as a supplement to the *Transactions* of the American Entomological Society. His work was summarised by himself in the *Cresson types of hymenoptera* published in 1916 as No. 1 of the *Memoirs* of the American Entomological Society.

In 1865 and 1866 Cresson was also editor of the *Practical entomologist*, the first American periodical devoted to economic entomology.

Cresson is estimated as "a man of greatest diffidence, devoid of all self-display, shrinking from notoriety of all kinds . . . the personification of unselfishness and of devotion to the advancement of sciences" and ever ready to help and encourage young workers.

Cresson died at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, April 19, 1926.

#### Smyly, Philip Crampton (1838-1904)

**PHILIP CRAMPTON SMYLY**, an Irish Surgeon and Laryngologist, was born in Dublin, June 17, 1838. He belonged to a family of medical men. His father was a surgeon of good position. His grand-uncle Sir Philip Crampton was thrice President of Dublin College of Surgeons. His younger brother Sir William Josiah Smyly was an obstetrician and gynæcologist of distinction in Dublin. Philip Crampton Smyly entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1854 and became M.B. in 1860. After study in

Berlin, he became M.D. and Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland in 1863.

#### HIS CAREER

In 1861, he was appointed surgeon to the Meath Hospital, his father being one of his colleagues and his grand-uncle, a distinguished predecessor. He kept this post till his death. He was a member of the viceregal staff (1869-92); President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (1878-79); Representative of the College on the General Medical Council (1898-1900); Surgeon-in-ordinary in Ireland to Queen Victoria (1895-1901); and Honorary Surgeon to King Edward VII. He was also President of the Laryngological Association of Great Britain (1889) and of the Irish Medical Schools' and Graduates' Associations (1902). He was consulting surgeon to the Hospital for Diseases of Throat and Ear, the Children's Hospital and the Rotunda Hospital of Dublin. He was knighted in 1892.

#### HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Smyly specialised in laryngology, a field almost untouched in his earlier days. He introduced the laryngoscope into Ireland in 1860. His observations on the use of tobacco juice as an antidote in strychnin poisoning received some notice.

Smyly died suddenly from cerebral hæmorrhage in Dublin April 8, 1904.

## ASTRONOMICAL NOTES

**Planets during July 1938.**—Both the planets Venus and Mercury will be visible as evening stars during the month. The latter will reach greatest eastern elongation ( $27^{\circ} 15'$ ) on July 31. It will closely approach the first magnitude star Regulus ( $\alpha$  Leonis) on July 26, the angular distance at the time between planet and star being less than a degree. Mars attains conjunction with the Sun on July 24 and will be invisible. Jupiter, rising about 9 p.m., is favourably situated for observation and will be a conspicuous object in the latter part of the night. So also will be Saturn which will be rising about midnight. The planet is slowly moving eastward in the constellation Piscium and on July 10 will be in quadrature with the Sun. The width of the rings is gradually increasing. Uranus is in the constellation Aries and will be visible as a morning star; on July 22 the planet will be in conjunction with the Moon. A lunar occultation of some interest that can be observed in India is that of  $\omega$  Scorpii (magnitude 4.1) which

will take place at about 9 p.m. on the night of July 8.

**Gale's Comet.**—This periodic comet was detected on May 1 by Cunningham at Harvard. At the time of discovery, the comet was in the constellation Ophiuchus and is reported to have been a diffuse object of the tenth magnitude without central condensation or nucleus. The probable time of perihelion passage seems to be June 17 and according to the Ephemeris computed, the comet is moving southeastwards in the constellation Sagittarius and getting brighter. The last apparition of the comet was in 1927.

**A Faint Star of Large Proper Motion.**—A faint star (of magnitude 11.8) has been found at the Nizamiah Observatory, to have a proper motion of nearly a second and a quarter per year. It is situated in Cetus and the position for 1900 is given by R. A.  $2^{\text{h}} 0^{\text{m}} 10^{\text{s}}$  Declination  $18^{\circ} 5'.4$  South. The star is probably a dwarf and one of the nearest neighbours of the Sun.

T. P. B.