

April 7th was 44° Far., wind S.W.-N.W., heavy rain in afternoon
coming with strong
westerly wind.

“ 8th “ 24° “ “ N.W., snow flurries.

OBITUARY.

REV. GEORGE W. TAYLOR, F.R.S.C., NANAIMO, B.C.

In the death of the Rev. George W. Taylor, on August 22nd, Canadian zoology loses one of its most distinguished workers. To a great many of his friends in eastern Canada, especially in Ottawa, the announcement must have come with a shock of surprise, for when last in the Capital, five years ago, attending the Royal Society meetings, as a Fellow, he was full of vigour and activity. He received something like an ovation from his brother scientists here, as his visits, owing to his residence on the Pacific coast, were of rare occurrence. With his great friend, the late Dr. James Fletcher, he spent much time on his last visit, but he had hosts of other friends who were delighted to see him once more in Ottawa. Born in Derby, England, in 1854, he became connected with the excellent Natural History Museum in that busy railway centre, and acquired a reputation as an original observer, but on coming to Canada in 1882 he applied himself, with such vigour and success, to work in conchology and entomology that he soon took a first place as an authority; his collections of land and freshwater shells, and of marine mollusca, and his collection of N. A. Geometridae are amongst the finest in existence.

As a clergyman of the Church of England much of his time was taken up with parish work in Ottawa, Ont., and in Victoria, Nanaimo, and Wellington, B.C., but he never abated in his devotion to scientific studies. For some years he gave up clerical work, and resided in a lovely but lonely spot at the north end of Gabriola Island, in the Straits of Georgia, in order to investigate the marine zoology of the nearby marvellously rich waters, and in the hope that a biological station would be founded there by the Dominion Government. This long cherished ambition was at last gratified when, in 1909, laboratory buildings were erected at Departure Bay, and the Board of Management, composed of professors in the chief universities of the Dominion chose him as the first curator, a position he held until his death. He threw himself with all his energy into his new duties, and by constant dredging expeditions and shore collecting accumulated a vast collection of marine fishes and invertebrates,

which excited the wonder of a party of British and foreign scientists, who paid a visit to this British Columbia Station in September, 1909, at the close of the meeting of the British Association in Winnipeg. The party included famous men from the British Museum, from Cambridge University, Copenhagen, Sheffield, Leeds, London and other universities, and like President Starr Jordan, Professor C. H. Gilbert, and Dr. Barton Evermann, who made short visits to the station, they declared it to be one of the best marine laboratories on the continent. The location is very beautiful, but the rich marine life in the waters of Departure Bay, and above all, the enthusiasm and profound knowledge of the curator himself, delighted all scientific visitors.

Those privileged to go with him on dredging trips will not soon forget his scientific devotion. The writer sailed with him, in 1906, on the Dominion cruiser "Kestrel," along the British Columbia coast from Vancouver to Alaska, including Queen Charlotte Islands and Quatsino Sound in the cruise, and at every point where hauls of the dredge were made myriads of strange creatures were brought up from the depths below. From morning to night Mr. Taylor sorted out and named the specimens, usually working on deck till long after dark, aided by the light of a ship's lantern. He had such an unusual knowledge of marine zoology that he could name without difficulty a vast proportion of the hosts of molluscs, echinoderms, zoophytes, etc., and very fine collections resulted. He was for some time at work on a list of small shore fishes, so abundant in British Columbia, but the list was never completed. It included many new forms. One named *Asemichthys taylori* has been described in a paper, now being printed by the King's Printer, Ottawa, the author being the eminent United States ichthyologist, Professor C. H. Gilbert, Stanford University, who says, "I take pleasure in naming this interesting species for its discoverer, Rev. G. W. Taylor, Nanaimo, B.C." A list of British Columbia Copepod Parasites is also now in course of publication by the Biological Board, the result of Mr. Taylor's assiduous collecting, and the author, Professor C. B. Wilson, the well-known specialist, says that eight out of fourteen species are wholly new to science. Mr. Taylor made a study of Pacific Crustacea, and completed a report, to be issued shortly, by the Biological Board, with the title "Preliminary List of One Hundred and Twenty-nine Species of British Columbia Decapod Crustaceans." In the report of the British Columbia Fisheries Commission, of which Mr. Taylor was appointed a member by the Dominion Government, he gave a list of no less than thirty species of edible molluscs occurring on the British Columbia coast, of which three only,

the oyster, the clam, and the abalone or *Haliotis*, are at present used for food.

It would take many pages to tell of his numerous papers contributed to scientific journals, from the time of his early papers in the *Nautilus*, and later in the *Canadian Entomologist*, and especially in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST, which for nearly twenty years he has enriched with able notes and papers. One of general interest is a sketch of Canadian Conchology (March, 1895), an admirable summary with a valuable bibliography of the principal papers on the subject. He made many additions to our molluscan fauna, such as the two land shells, *Punctum clappii* and *P. taylori*, the latter being new to science, and named by Dr. Pils-bery after him.

His splendid entomological labours which brought him into contact with leading authorities in France, Germany and Britain, as well as in this continent, will be adequately treated elsewhere, but reference may be made to such papers as "Notes for April in Vancouver Island," published in these pages in 1898, in which he told of forty species of Coleoptera secured in an afternoon walk, besides Cicadas, and specimens of Lepidoptera, Hymenoptera and Orthoptera, some of them rare. A valuable list of Pacific Marine Mollusca, covering over eighty pages of the Royal Society's Transactions, 1895, must not be omitted; but it is not possible to name, even by title, the many scientific contributions bearing this indefatigable worker's name.

He was chosen a member of the Biological Board of Canada, and was a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London, and of the Entomological Society of London, while for a time he was an associate editor (in zoology) of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST. He himself especially valued the mark of appreciation on the part of his brother naturalists in Ottawa, when he was chosen as a Corresponding Member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.

High as was his rank amongst entomologists, he held a hardly less eminent position amongst marine biologists and conchologists, but he was also well versed in botany and geology, and his mathematical abilities were such that had he gone to Cambridge University, as in early life was intended, he would have, without doubt, gained high academic distinction in the mathematical tripos. His genial personal qualities and his self-denying devotion to science, especially work in the field and at sea, attracted all who were privileged to know him. Numerous as are his scientific papers, his labours and influence cannot be adequately measured by them.

E. E. PRINCE.



Prince, Edward Ernest. 1912. "Rev. George W. Taylor [Obituary]." *The Ottawa naturalist* 26(5-6), 74–76.

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