OBITUARY

Dr. Henry Skinner

Dr. Henry Skinner was born in Philadelphia on March 27, 1861. He died on May 29, 1926, in the Polyclinic Hospital, Philadelphia, after a brief illness.

Dr. Skinner graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in the year 1881 with the degree of B. S.; and again in 1884 with the degree of M.D. In 1911 he received the honorary degree of Sc.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in recognition of his learning and achievements as an entomologist.

After graduating in medicine he practiced his profession with success for a number of years. Gradually he withdrew from practice, and began to devote himself more and more to his favorite scientific studies. He specialized in the Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths). Beginning in 1884 he held various entomological curatorships and custodianships in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, these activities only terminating with his death. He was one of the founders and the Editor of The Entomological News from 1890 to 1910, when against the protest of his associates he resigned, but continued to the end to serve in an advisory and emeritus capacity. To him more than to any other is due the establishment of this valuable and indispensable entomological journal. As one of the members of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia he served on various standing committees, as a member of the Council, and as Vice-President from the year 1918 onward. He ran the whole gamut of official positions in the American Entomological Society. He was one of the founders of the Entomological Society of America, being chosen Vice-President at the initial meeting in New York, 1906; presiding at the meeting at Boston in the following year; being elected President at the meeting in Baltimore in 1908, and presiding again at the meeting in Boston in 1909. He attended the First Entomological Congress held in Brussels in 1910, where he was chosen President of the Section on Nomenclature. With his family he attended the Second International Entomological Congress at Oxford in 1912, where he was President of the Section on Evolution, Bionomics, &c. From March, 1913 to the end of his days he was a Member of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, called into
being and perpetuated by successive International Zoological Congresses. He was a member of many learned societies in America and foreign lands.

The writings of Dr. Skinner, as editor and as author of papers relating to entomology compose a formidable array. He published continuously from 1882 until the time of his death. Thirteen pages of the October number of The Entomological News are devoted to setting forth in the most compact form the titles, the dates, and the places of the appearance of his papers. He was the author of but one generic name; he originated one hundred and sixteen specific or subspecific names, all applied to forms found in the Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Skinner collected widely and his trips covered the continent of North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from Alberta to Texas and Florida. He also visited the Antilles.

Dr. Skinner in 1886 married Miss Celia Angela Beck of Philadelphia. The young couple made their home with his parents at 716 North 20th Street, Philadelphia, until his father and mother died. It was here shortly after his marriage that I first formed his acquaintance, and a friendship was begun which lasted until death severed it for a while. We often met; he was my guest in Pittsburgh, and I his guest at his beautiful home at Narberth, or when I dropped into the Academy of Natural Sciences, where I sometimes go to consult the Library. We foregathered at Brussels at the First International Entomological Congress, where we resided at the same hotel, and both presided at meetings. My correspondence with him covers a period of forty years. The last letter I received from him was written on April 19th. Toward the close of the letter he says “I notice that you say that ‘you are too much occupied with other and more important things to devote much time to the lepidoptera.’ I might say that there are no more important things; but of course I might be mistaken. Perhaps keeping busy keeps you well and happy, and I hope such is the case. Just at present I am interested in the coming spring flowers and will be extremely glad when the roses bloom. The magnolias are about to burst into blossom. With warm regards, I am cordially, Yours,”

And when the roses bloomed he passed onward to

‘the land of pure delight
Where everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers!’

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