

## OBITUARY

## EZRA T. CRESSON

Ezra Townsend Cresson was born on June 18, 1838, at Byberry, Bucks County, Pa., and died on April 19, 1926, in his eighty-eighth year at the residence of his son, E. T. Cresson, Jr., Swarthmore, Pa. He was for many years the Secretary of the Franklin Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia, and was well known as a successful and most upright man of affairs. It is, however, upon his work as an entomologist that his name will be handed down to future generations. He was one of the founders of The Entomological Society of Philadelphia in the year 1859. The name of the Society was subsequently in 1867 changed to The American Entomological Society. In this body he served as Recording Secretary in 1859, as Corresponding Secretary from 1859 to 1874; as Curator from 1866 to 1874, as Editor of the *Transactions* for forty-two years from 1871 to 1912, and as Treasurer for fifty years from 1874 to 1924. From August, 1865, to October 1866 he edited *The Practical Entomologist*, which was gratuitously distributed among farmers and agriculturists, being the first journal devoted to economic entomology published in the United States. He was one of the founders of *The Entomological News*, and for thirty-seven years took an active part in the management of that journal.

Mr. Cresson was a hymenopterist and confined himself almost exclusively to the study of that order. The papers which he published appeared mainly in the *Proceedings* of the Entomological Society of Philadelphia, the *Transactions* of the American Entomological Society, and in *The Entomological News*. During his long and active life he published many articles, which are of prime importance to students of the *Hymenoptera*. In these papers he named and described not far from three thousand species as new to science.

In the *Transactions of the American Entomological Society*, Vol. XXVIII, 1902, pp. 1-91, he published a paper upon the *Mutillidæ* of Brazil, in which he described ninety-five species, and in addition listed fifty-one other species belonging to the family, which had been named by earlier authors, all being contained in the collection, which the writer of these lines had secured for the Carnegie Museum from



the late H. H. Smith. On page 14 of the article referred to Cresson says: "The types of all the new species described in this paper are in the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa." Within a few hours before sitting down to pen these lines I took time to consult our collections, and am glad to know that the specimens are in perfect condition, and in as fine state as they were, when returned to us by Cresson twenty-five years ago. It is a pleasure to have in safe keeping at least some of the fruits of the labor of this famous student.

The writer recalls with pleasure his occasional meetings with Mr. Cresson and has in his possession a few letters received from him in the course of the years during which our acquaintance subsisted. He was a truly learned man, but exceedingly modest and somewhat reticent. As a writer upon the *Hymenoptera* (Ants, bees, wasps, &c.) he held the same rank as was held by his cotemporaries and fellow-workers, Dr. LeConte and Dr. Horn, who wrote upon the *Coleoptera* (Beetles). These three men, all active at the same time, were members of the American Entomological Society, and shed lustre upon that association, which they helped to form, widened human knowledge, and laid firm foundations for those who have come after them. Cresson was the last of this great triumvirate to "fall on sleep."



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