

FRANCIS MARION WEBSTER.

JAMES TROOP.

It is always a pleasure to add one's testimony to what naturally comes spontaneously, as it were, from his many friends, when a good man is called upon to lay down his implements, and leave his active life here, and pass over to the great beyond. And so, as one who has been more or less intimately acquainted with Professor Webster for the past third of a century; in fact, during the larger portion of his active, public life, I wish to add a word of appreciation to, as well as to reiterate what has already been said by others.

The following facts have been furnished me by Mrs. Webster, his widow, from an article written by Dr. L. O. Howard and printed in the Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington. In that we learn that Professor Webster was born at Lebanon, New Hampshire, August 2, 1849. He was the son of J. S. and Betty A. (Riddle) Webster. He married Maria A. Potter of Sanwich, Illinois, August 21, 1870. He was Assistant State Entomologist of Illinois from 1882 to 1884; Special Agent of the U. S. Department of Agriculture from 1884 to 1891; Entomologist of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station from 1891 to 1902; an assistant on the Biological Survey of Illinois during 1903 and 1904; after which he was appointed to a position in the Bureau of Entomology, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in charge of Cereal and Forage Crop Insect Investigations. While located at Lafayette, Indiana, 1884-1891, he was Consulting Entomologist of the Indiana Experiment Station during the last three years. He was sent on a mission to the Melbourne, Australia, International Exposition by the U. S. Departments of State and Agriculture in 1888, visiting other portions of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, returning in 1889. He was engaged during part of the years 1886-1890 in the solution of the problem of the suppression of the buffalo gnat in the valley of the lower Mississippi River. He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Indiana Academy of Science, the American Association of Economic Entomologists, the Entomological Society of America, and the Entomological Society of Washington. He was a member of the Biological Society of Washington, the National Geographic Society, the American Society of Naturalists, and the Geological Society of Iowa. He was an honorary member of the Entomological Society of Ontario and a corresponding member of the Cambridge Entomological Club and the New York Entomological Society.

It will be seen at once that in order to keep up a membership in good standing and to maintain an active part in the studies and investigations of all of

these various organizations, it required a very active and busy brain, and this is just what Webster possessed to an eminent degree.

The writer had just come to Purdue University in the fall of 1884, only a few weeks before Webster appeared on the scene, and both being interested in practically the same kind of work, a very close friendship sprang up between them, which continued until his death from pneumonia at Columbus, Ohio, in January, 1916, while attended a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It has been said that he was Professor of Economic Entomology in Purdue University from 1885-1888. This is a mistake. Professor Webster never did any teaching while located at Purdue University; in fact, he often remarked to the writer that no amount of money could induce him to take charge of classes in the class-room. This was not his forte. It is somewhat rare at the present time to find a great investigator and a great teacher in the same person. The investigator must find out the facts, often by long and patient "watchful waiting," before the teacher can impart them to the younger generation in such a way as to make them helpful to the world. Webster was an investigator, a close observer and thinker along the lines of natural history, but he did not wish to be confined to the walls of a class-room. His activities could only be limited by the broad fields of Nature. And it is well that it was so. Forty years ago, when Webster first came on the scene, there was great need of careful investigators. The science of Entomology was comparatively new (it is not old yet), and but very little real practical scientific information had been published. Teachers were groping in the dark for facts which they did not possess, and many of the so-called facts of those days have since had to be revised, and in this work Webster had an active part. His first published articles began to appear about 1874, and, although not a college graduate, many of his papers since that time would do credit to the best trained minds of his day. He was strong on using the daily and weekly newspapers for his publications, because (1) so much of the so-called information given out by these periodicals was so unreliable and unsatisfactory that he wished to correct that evil as much as possible; and (2) he saw in them a quick and cheap method of getting this information out to the people. But he came to be an authority among the scientific men of this and other countries. Many of his articles have been published in the best scientific journals of the world. His address as President of the Association of Economic Entomologists, in 1897, entitled "The Present and Future of Applied Entomology in America," is spoken of by Dr. L. O. Howard, as one of the best things he ever wrote. While his work was not confined to any one class of insects, his best and perhaps most useful work has been along the lines of Cereal and Forage Crop Insect investigations. The farming interests of the United States owe much to the life work of F. M. Webster. "He died at the end of a long and useful career, actively in the harness, but with a most useful life work accomplished, with his children grown up and practically established in life, and after all it was a good way to die."