

# The Canadian Entomologist.

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## DR. WILLIAM SAUNDERS, C. M. G.

On Sunday afternoon, September 13th, after an illness which had continued for nearly two years, and which for a twelve-month had rendered him mentally incapable, Dr. William Saunders passed to his rest at his home in London, Ontario, in the 79th year of his age. He was born in Devonshire, England, and came to Canada with his parents when a boy of twelve. His educational advantages were meagre, but he succeeded in obtaining a technical training in Chemistry and set up in business as a retail druggist in London. His agreeable manners, thorough honesty and untiring industry brought him a fair measure of success. His love of nature led him to the collection of wild plants and insects which could be found in abundance in the neighbourhood, and he became an ardent student of Botany and Entomology. Finding many medicinal plants readily obtainable, he began the preparation of fluid extracts, which were so pure and reliable that they soon became widely and favourably known among the medical profession, and led by degrees to the establishment of an extensive and lucrative business both wholesale and retail. Years later, when he became Director of the Experimental Farms of the Dominion, the wholesale business was transferred to his eldest son, Mr. W. E. Saunders, by whom it is still successfully maintained, and the retail department to two of his younger sons, who, however, afterwards relinquished it for other pursuits.

During the five-and-twenty years of his business life, Mr. Saunders found time for taking an active part in many other things. Besides his scientific work in Entomology and Botany, he took great interest in fruit-growing, establishing a farm of his own near the city, and becoming a zealous member of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association, of which he was a director for many years and President from 1882 to 1885. In connection with his professional work he was appointed Professor of Materia Medica in the Western University, Public Analyst for Western Ontario, and

President for two years of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, of which he was one of the founders. He was an active member of the American Pharmaceutical Society, and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. His attendance at the meetings of these Societies held from year to year in various cities of North America caused him to have a widely extended friendship with notable men of all kinds, by whom he was highly esteemed and respected.

The writer's acquaintance with Dr. Saunders began more than fifty years ago, when we were both young men, and soon ripened into a warm friendship, which has continued unbroken until now during all these years. In those early days, when the study of Entomology was so difficult owing to the scarcity of books on the subject, we were in constant correspondence, helping each other in every way we could, and spending each summer some days together, comparing notes, studying specimens and making collecting expeditions. Many happy hours we spent together in early morning tramps to the ponds and woods about London, and in the evening, when his day's business was over, in examining the captures we had made. At that time there were few in Canada who took the least interest in the objects which to us afforded the keenest pleasure, but as time went on we found here and there a congenial spirit, and were led on in 1862 to attempt the organization of an Entomological Society. This was successfully accomplished during the following spring, and last year the completion of half a century's work and progress was celebrated by the Jubilee meeting at Guelph. An account of the proceedings on that occasion and the history of the formation and growth of the Society have been given in the November (1913) number of the "Canadian Entomologist" and the 44th Annual Report of the Society. In 1868 Mr. Saunders and the writer decided upon making another venture and began the publication of the "Canadian Entomologist," to the first two numbers of which we were the sole contributors. For five years the latter was the Editor, and was then succeeded by Mr. Saunders, who continued the management of the magazine until his removal to Ottawa in 1886. Three years previously there was published in Philadelphia his notable book, "Insects Injurious to Fruits," which is justly regarded as a classic by economic entomologists.

A second edition was issued in 1892, and the author had begun the preparation of a third, when his prolonged illness rendered him incapable of accomplishing any literary work. A list of his published articles, bulletins, reports, etc., fills six columns of the Bibliography in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1894, and a large number have been added since. In 1881 he had been appointed by the Governor-General of Canada, the Marquis of Lorne, one of the original Fellows of the Royal Society, and in 1906 he was elected President, having thus risen to the highest position of honour for scientific work that can be attained in this Dominion. Twenty years ago it was said of him by an American writer that "by painstaking study and observation he has risen to the topmost pinnacle of fame as an entomologist, horticulturist and experimental agriculturist."

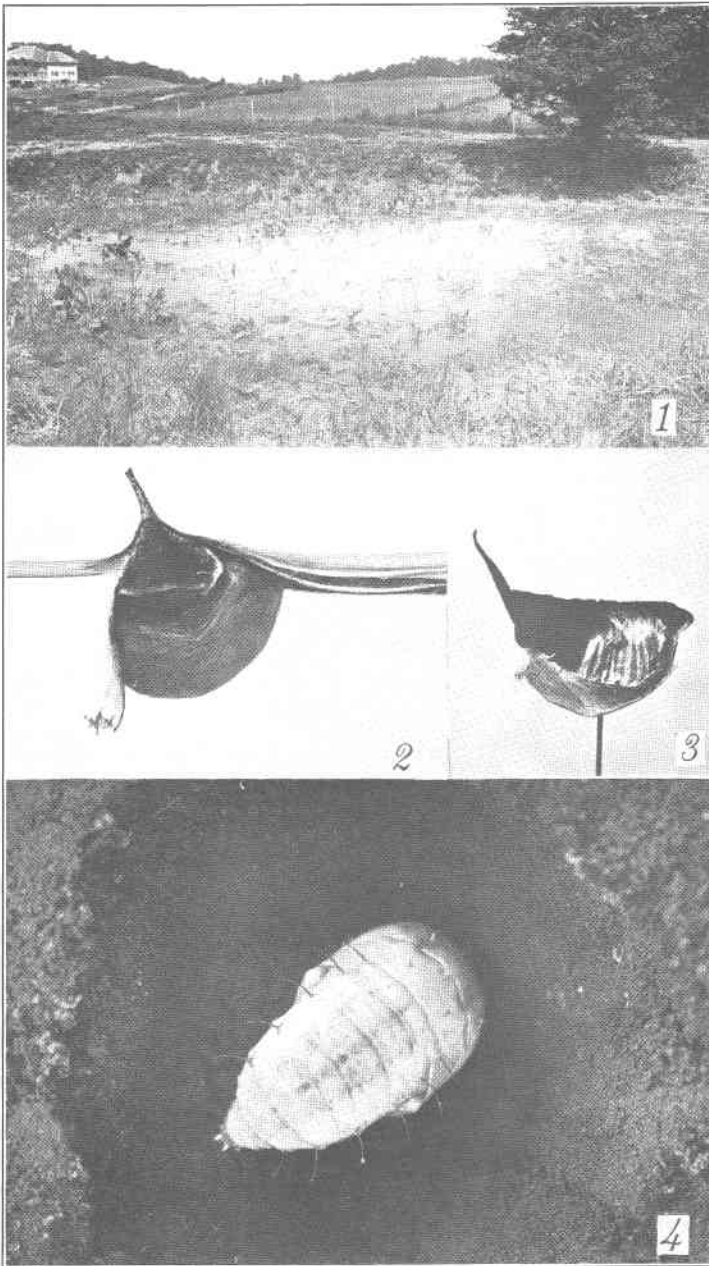
A very important change took place in the life and work of Dr. Saunders in 1886, when he was appointed Director of the Experimental Farms of the Dominion, and left his home and business in London to reside in Ottawa. During the previous year, he was commissioned by the government to visit various Experiment Stations in the United States and to report upon agricultural and experimental work in Europe and America. In this new sphere of labour he applied himself with his wonted vigour, and in the course of a few years was mainly instrumental in bringing these establishments into thorough working order and into a high standard of excellence. Anyone who saw the Ottawa Farm in the autumn of 1886—a large tract of bare land, with workmen busily employed in levelling and removing stumps and boulders with dynamite—and then visited it ten or fifteen years later (as did the writer), could not fail to be impressed with the wonderful work accomplished by the genius of Dr. Saunders in turning a waste into a scene of beauty and a hive of industry. Here have been carried on under his direction a great variety of experiments in breeding and feeding live stock, testing soils and water, growing fruit and ornamental trees of all kinds, selecting hardy varieties, improving the size and quality of any fruits suited to the climate of the Western Provinces, beekeeping, experiments and observations in economic entomology, plant pathology, and various other matters pertaining to the welfare and benefit of the farming community. Especially

noteworthy was his work in crossing varieties of grain and producing new and improved kinds. One alone of these, the Marquis Wheat, is believed to have added millions of dollars to the value of the wheat products of the prairie country. All information thus acquired has been freely afforded to the farmers by distributions of seed, and bulletins and reports on all manner of subjects.

The ever-growing work and its extension in every Province of the Dominion began at length to tell upon the physical strength of the man who was the mainspring of it all. His vitality, owing to advancing years and the inroads of an insidious disease, began to fail, and he felt the time had come for his retirement. Accordingly he resigned about three years ago and went with his wife and daughter for a pleasure trip to Europe—his first real holiday since he went to Ottawa. His friends expected him to return with much improved health, but it was ordered otherwise; he became very ill in England and never entirely recovered. He had completed his life work, his duty was well done, and he has left the record of great deeds accomplished and of vast and widespread benefits conferred upon the people of the land. This account of a remarkable man would be incomplete without a reference to his beloved wife, who was a true helpmeet both in small things and in great, ever cheerful and encouraging, full of kindness and hospitality, perfectly unassuming and free from all affectation, she is loved and esteemed by all who know her, and her children and friends rise up and call her blessed. To her in her desolation and to her family in their sense of loss our sympathies go out in the fullest measure.

The ability and work of Dr. Saunders have been recognized in many gratifying ways. In 1905 he received the distinction of Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, conferred by his Majesty King Edward; honorary LL.D. from Queen's University in 1896 and from the University of Toronto in 1904; the Mantua gold medal for distinction in scientific knowledge. He was a Fellow of the Entomological Society of London and the Royal Microscopical Society; an honorary member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and of the Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland; and an ordinary member of a large number of Scientific Societies in the United States and Canada.

C. J. S. BETHUNE.



HYDROPHILUS TRIANGULARIS SAY.