

JOHN WALLACE BAIRD

JOHN WALLACE BAIRD, professor of experimental psychology in Clark University, died at Baltimore on February 2, 1919.

Baird was born on May 21, 1869, at Motherwell, western Ontario. From the local school he passed to the high school at St. Marys, and thence to the University of Toronto. His undergraduate course was prolonged, partly by disability due to eye-strain and partly by ventures in teaching; he took his B.A. in 1897.

In his senior year at Toronto Baird came under the influence of Professor A. Kirschmann, who aroused in him the psychological interest that was to dominate the rest of his life. After graduation he spent a further year with Kirschmann, and then—working his passage on a cattle-boat—made his way to Wundt at Leipsic. On his return, he was appointed fellow in psychology at the University of Wisconsin. This appointment was renewed for the following year; but a position fell vacant at Cornell, and Professor Jastrow generously consented to release Baird from his obligations in order that he might accept it. He accordingly came to me as personal assistant in March, 1901, and was made fellow for 1901-02. In 1902 he took his Ph.D. degree. He remained two more years at Cornell, first as assistant in the department of psychology, and then as research assistant on the Carnegie Foundation. From 1904 to 1906 he was instructor in psychology at the Johns Hopkins University, and from 1906 to 1910 assistant professor in the University of Illinois. In 1910 he was called as assistant professor to Clark University, and in 1913 was advanced to the rank of professor.

Baird's productive work is shown by his own writings and by the publications of the students he inspired to have covered a wide range. He spoke with especial authority on the phenomena of visual sensation and perception and on the processes of memory and learning. His interest in vision dates from his Toronto time; a study of abnormal color-sense, published in collaboration with R. J. Richardson in 1898, is, I believe, his first essay in psychological research. He took as the sub-

ject of his doctorate thesis the influence of accommodation and convergence on the perception of depth, and his Carnegie Foundation memoir—an admirable bit of work—is an experimental study of the color-sensitivity of the peripheral retina. On the side of memory and learning we have his translation of Meumann's "Psychology of Learning" (1913), and the yearly summaries of experimental papers which he furnished to the *Psychological Bulletin* from 1911 to 1917. Baird's advanced lectures on memory and learning and on the higher intellectual processes would have ripened into books, and indeed would be well worth publishing in the form in which they were last delivered. Unfortunately, he appears never to have written them out in full. He was a born debater, and was openly proud of his ability to speak logically and fluently, on a complex topic, from the scantiest and raggedest of notes. The pride, in a man of extreme modesty, was delightful, and the lectures were always as clear and interesting as he could have wished; but it is doubtful whether enough of their substance can now be recovered to warrant publication. His two latest articles bear witness both to the range of his interest and to the generosity which was an abiding trait of his character. They are entitled "Memory for Absolute Pitch" and "The Rôle of Intent in Mental Functioning," and appear in volumes of essays dedicated to former teachers.

Baird's scientific output, considerable as it was, fails—even if we add his students' work to his own—adequately to reflect his ability and industry. He suffered for many years, and he suffered more than any of us knew, from the malady that was to prove fatal. He seemed able, however, to meet the attacks as they came, and at the time of his marriage in 1914 his friends had reason to hope that his recovery was complete. He threw himself, with zest and humor, into the task of building a house—a house whose hospitality was to rival those other Worcester houses that many psychologists have come to look upon almost as second homes. The house was built, but, alas! was hardly occupied before it was

abandoned. In April, 1918, Baird received an imperative call to Washington, to serve on the committee concerned with plans for the re-education and reestablishment of disabled soldiers. He devoted himself strenuously to this new work, the burden of which undoubtedly hastened his end. He broke down in November, and did not again leave the hospital.

The loss of a man of Baird's caliber would be a heavy blow to any science at any juncture: it is an especially heavy blow to psychology, whose academic representation is meager and which has recently suffered other and serious losses. His untimely death leaves a gap in our professional ranks, of which we shall become more and more sensible as the years go on. But what is now uppermost in our minds is the feeling of personal bereavement. Baird had, in very exceptional degree, the gift of loyal friendship. He made friends everywhere, with all sorts and conditions of men, and the friendships held; his open and cordial nature, his sturdy optimism, and his frank address, were irresistible. Those who were privileged to be his intimates will miss him sorely. It is a satisfaction to remember that during the last year of his life he received the highest honor his colleagues could bestow, the presidency of the American Psychological Association.

E. B. TITCHENER

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

REWARDS FOR BRITISH WAR INVENTIONS

THE appointment of a royal commission to determine what awards and royalties shall be paid to inventors in respect of the use of their inventions by government departments during the war is announced in *The London Times*. Mr. Justice Sargant is the chairman of the commission, and its other members are: Professor the Hon. R. J. Strutt, F.R.S., Sir James Johnston Dobbie, D.Sc., LL.D., Mr. G. L. Barstow, C.B., Mr. W. Temple Franks, C.B., Mr. A. Clayton Cole, Mr. H. J. Mackinder, M.P., and Mr. Robert Young, M.P. The commission has now issued, and is published in the *London Gazette*.

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1. In any case of user or alleged user of any patented invention for the services of the Crown by any government department and of default of agreement as to the terms of user, the commissioners, upon the application of the patentee and agreement to accept their determination, may proceed to settle, and may settle the terms of user in lieu and place of the treasury: Provided that the commissioners shall not actually award to the patentee any sum or sums of money whether by way of a gross sum or by way of royalty or otherwise which shall together exceed an aggregate sum of £50,000 beyond and in addition to any allowance the commissioners may think fit to make for outlay and expenses in connection with the invention; but the commissioners, if of opinion that the patentee is fairly entitled to a remuneration exceeding the said aggregate sum of £50,000, may make a recommendation to the treasury as to any such excess, with a statement of their reasons for such recommendation.

2. In any case where terms of user of any patented invention (including any terms as to selling for use, licensing, or otherwise dealing with any article made in accordance therewith, or any terms as to assignment of an invention under section 30 of the Patents and Designs Act, 1907), have been agreed, or are in course of agreement, between the patentee and any government department, the commissioners may on the application of the treasury make any recommendation as to the giving or withholding by the treasury of approval of such agreement or proposed agreement, and may assist in adjusting or determining any term or terms of any proposed agreement as to which the parties may not be fully agreed.

3. In any case of user or alleged user for the services of the Crown by any government department of any inventions, designs, drawings or processes which, though not conferring any monopoly against the Crown or any statutory right to payment or compensation, may nevertheless appear from their exceptional utility or otherwise to entitle the inventor, author or owner thereof to some remuneration for such user (including user or by way of selling for