

## OBITUARY

### WILSON ALWYN BENTLEY

WILSON ALWYN BENTLEY, member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and fellow of the American Meteorological Society, was born at Jericho, Vermont, on February 9, 1865. Here he lived the whole of his quiet life, and here died on December 23, 1931. One of his great-grandfathers, Roger Stevens, on his father's side, was a soldier through the Revolutionary War. A great-aunt, Anna Bentley, married Martin Chittenden, twice governor of Vermont. His father, Thomas Edwin Bentley, was an up-to-date farmer for his time and place. His mother, Fannie Eliza Bentley, was a daughter of Moses Coletton, a lumber dealer of Bolton, Vermont. He is survived by a brother, C. F. Bentley, of Andover, Vermont, and certain nephews and nieces. He was of the third generation of Bentleys to live at, or near, Jericho, his grandfather being one of the first settlers of that place.

His boyhood was like that of most New England lads on a small farm, uneventful but wholesome. He attended the local public schools, but acquired no further formal education. Thus far nothing whatever in his life had singled him apart for special mention. Then came, by way of his mother, as so many good things do come, the vision that to the end of his days more and more absorbed his attention, and increasingly made the world his debtor. This was when she showed him the beauty of the snow crystal as seen through a small microscope. He was fascinated and began at once to search every snow that came for the more perfect of its fleeting gems. At first he copied what he saw as best he could with pen or pencil, but this was unsatisfactory. The minute details were difficult to represent, and often melted away before he had had time properly to study and copy them. He therefore soon fixed up a photomicrographic camera which afforded accurate and quicker results. He developed his own technique and acquired a remarkable skill, necessary, of course, in dealing with so delicate and so transient a thing as the tiny snow crystal. He taught music one year, 1885-86, but with that exception his young manhood was spent mainly in labor on the farm. During the last 20 years of his life, however, he lived practically alone (he never married) and gave all his time and attention to his pictures, of which he had several thousand, and to which he added many more every winter.

His first article appeared in 1898. After this he contributed a number of papers on frost and the snow crystal to various publications, and furnished many pictures to authors for use in books and maga-

zines. He also gave an occasional lecture on his hobby, and furnished slides for others to use.

Naturally he dreamed of a great book that should contain many hundreds of his pictures of snow and frost. Artists and others also hoped that some suitable publication might be made of this remarkable collection of pictures which it had taken a devoted lifetime to obtain. The realization of his dream was difficult to effect, but at last it was accomplished. Then, after about three weeks of real happiness, he was joined by the "old man's friend," pneumonia.

Thus the drama ends of the kindly "Snowflake Man" of Jericho, whose thousands of pictures long had been classic, and to whose honored doorstep, however secluded and humble, all the world had worn a path in recognition of true worth.

W. J. HUMPHREYS

### MEMORIALS

DR. DENMAN W. ROSS has presented to Harvard University a portrait of the late Theodore W. Richards by Kanji Nakamura, to be placed in the Chemical Laboratory.

THE President's Medal of the National Academy of Design was awarded posthumously to Samuel F. B. Morse, artist and inventor of the telegraph. It was presented on March 28 to his son, William Goodrich Morse, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where a special loan exhibition of Morse's paintings was held. The President's Medal has been awarded only once before, Mr. Elihu Root being the recipient.

IN connection with the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Goethe, *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, Berlin, has published a special number reviewing Goethe's contributions to science, including mathematics, vision, optics, chemistry, geology, meteorology, botany, zoology and anatomy.

A DARWIN exhibition is to be opened at the Communist Academy in Leningrad on April 19, on the fiftieth anniversary of Darwin's death, and a joint meeting of the Communist Academy and the Academy of Sciences is to be held in his honor.

DR. G. CLARIDGE DRUCE, pharmacist and curator of the Fielding Herbarium, Oxford, whose death was reported in SCIENCE last week, has bequeathed his herbarium and library with his house and an endowment for a Botanical Institute at Oxford.

SIR RICHARD WILLIAMS has been appointed president and Professor Gibson treasurer of a fund to purchase for a museum the cottage at Llangerniew, Den-