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ENTOMOLOGICAL NEWS.

PHILADLPHIA, PA., NOVEMBER, 1915.

Jean Henri Fabre.

A telegram from Orange, France, dated October 11, 1915, published in the daily press, reads, "Henri Fabre, the entomologist, is dead."

What a life was his since first he saw the light at Saint-Léons, canton of Vezins, in the Haut Rouergue, on December 22, 1823! He himself wrote of it—

a life...not exempt from many cares, yet not very fruitful in incidents or great vicissitudes, since it has been passed very largely, in especial during the last thirty years, in the most absolute retirement and the completest silence.

Most absolute retirement and completest silence account for much of his career. His positive dislike of most human society and intercourse, his infrequent letters even to his well-loved brother, his refusal to observe many of the ordinary conventionalities had much to do with the obscurity in which most of his life was spent. They explain why he remained for nearly twenty years (1853-1871) assistant professor of physics at the Lycée of Avignon without change in rank, title, or salary, the last amounting to £64 per annum. Fortunately, other sources of income became available, such as that derived from the conservatorship of the Requien Museum.

It was during the Avignon period that his entomological researches began with the *Étude sur l'instinct et les metamorphoses des Sphégiens* (1856), but the first series of the *Souvenirs Entomologiques* did not appear until 1879. Nine others followed, the tenth in 1908. An English translation of the first series, entitled *Insect Life Souvenirs of a Naturalist*, was published in 1901 and selections from the others have been included in *The Life of the Spider*, *Social Life in the Insect World*, *The Mason Bees*, etc. Nothing more fascinating in all entomological literature, and at the same time free from all technicality, can be found than Fabre, even though he has been

accused of "making deductions too rapidly from his observations and taking a philosophical position from which he refuses to budge." His biographer insinuates that he was as disregarding of much of the work of others in his chosen field as he was of humans in general.

When at last his genius was generally recognized at home as well as abroad, a jubilee held in his honor at Serignan, in April, 1910, and leaders in literature and science acclaimed his greatness, he was well over eighty. Yet in spite of the neglect, the poverty, the sorrows of a long life, Fabre could write from his Serignan hermitage, as he approached his eighty-eighth birthday—

on reading now the old letters which he [my devoted disciple] has exhumed from a mass of old yellow papers.....it seems to me that in the depths of my being I can still feel rising in me all the fever of my early years, all the enthusiasm of long ago, and that I should still be no less ardent a worker were not the weakness of my eyes and the failure of my strength an insurmountable obstacle.

These words form part of the preface which he contributed to that appreciative volume *Fabre, Poet of Science*, by Dr. C. V. Legros, published in English dress in 1913.