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### Thomas Lincoln Casey.

Thomas Lincoln Casey, for many years an earnest student of American Coleoptera, died on February 3, 1925, in his 68th year. He was born February 19, 1857, at West Point, New York, the son of Gen. Thomas Lincoln Casey and Emma Weir, and grandson of Major Gen. Silas Casey. He was educated at private schools in Washington; Sheffield Scientific School, Yale, class of 1877; and finally graduated with high honors at the United States Military Academy in 1879. His career in the army included appointment as second lieutenant, corps of engineers, June 13, 1879; first lieutenant, June 17, 1881; captain, July 23, 1888; major, July 5, 1898; lieutenant colonel, September 26, 1906; colonel, September 21, 1909. He was in charge of defense of Hampton Roads, Virginia, during the Spanish-American War, and at many stations in charge of works of river and harbor improvement; assistant astronomer under Prof. Newcomb, Transit of Venus expedition, Cape of Good Hope, 1882; Greer County Commission, Texas, 1886; Mississippi River Commission, 1902-6. He was in charge of U. S. Engineers' exhibit, St. Louis Exposition, 1904; member and engineering secretary, Light House Board, 1906-10; retired from active service March 1, 1912. He married June 1, 1898, Laura Welsh, of Philadelphia, who survives him.

Physically, he was tall, well built, though somewhat overweight in his later years. His home was in Stoneleigh Court, Washington, D. C., after his retirement from the army, where he was always glad to receive entomological visitors, who found him a gracious host. His occupations, apart from entomology, included billiards at the Cosmos Club, and music at his home, in which he and Mrs. Casey found pleasure. Many daylight hours were devoted to his beetles, studied with the help of many pipes of tobacco.

Possessed of inherited intelligence of high order, provided with the best education schools could supply, fortunately independent of financial worries or overly onerous daily duties, happily married, Casey came into the study of the Coleoptera with an equipment which has seldom been equalled. His field experiences, in consequence of the various stations involved in his army life, included Long Island, Virginia, Mississippi, Texas, California and South Africa. His generous purchases aided in building up one of the most remarkable of private collections, so extensive indeed that he was obliged to rent two apartments in Stoneleigh Court, one for his collection and books, the other for his abode. His library was so large that he had everything, practically, in his home that the literature contained.

The final resting place of both collection and library will be in the United States National Museum, as we are informed by Mr. John D. Sherman, Jr. A conference of specialists to make plans for the reception of the collection has been called for March 3.

With the advantages thus recapitulated he approached the taxonomy of the Coleoptera as logically as he did the engineering problems for which he had been trained. The microscope stood always ready on his working table; under its magnification the smallest beetle was subjected to minute scrutiny and had to agree in every detail with its published description before its identity could be satisfactorily established. If such scrutiny failed to bring it within the characters of some described species, it was set aside for description later as a new species, usually in conjunction with a review of the group to

which it belonged, at least as far as the group was represented in his collection. Beginning with such a review of Cucujidae in 1884, Casey continued this laborious work for forty years. In that period he published 8621 pages (the greater part at his own expense) and described a large number of species or forms. The descriptions often cover half a page of fine print and for completeness of detail leave nothing to be desired. The synopses that precede the descriptions display in the highest degree his remarkable power of analysis. His work was unaided and always original without compilation from other authors, and he never altered his style of composition, seldom changed his views or retracted his statements. The same attitude of describing what he sometimes called "taxonomic units" as he found them in his collection, leaving the biologist to determine their relation to one another or to previously described species, persisted in spite of all criticism.

Of criticism there was plenty. His efforts were at first encouraged by Dr. George H. Horn, who, following the death of Dr. Leconte, had become by 1884 the principal authority on American Coleoptera. Casey's insistence upon describing as new species individuals which differed in some slight respect, contrary to Horn's opinion that they did not represent "species," alienated the support of the older man. Horn's attitude towards Casey's description was shown by Synonymical Notes in which his specific names were briefly and at times perhaps wrongfully relegated to synonymy. The industry of the younger writer and his capacity for dealing with the more minute and neglected species quickly made it impossible for Horn to cope with the situation.

Following Dr. Horn's lead it became the fashion among coleopterists to deride Casey's work. There was once an entomological gathering at which the percentage of valid species among those he had described was variously estimated by those present, 70% being the highest estimate. Casey seldom troubled himself to refute criticisms and the synonymy alleged by his critics therefore stands in the catalogues, although in candid reply to criticism, he was vigorous in attack, a fighter who neither gave nor asked quarter. He once said that he enjoyed "polite polemics."

Many years must pass before an accurate estimate of the value of his work can be formed. To many coleopterists it must seem incredible that after the exhaustive work of Leconte, Horn, Crotch and others almost half our species waited for Casey's discovery and description. And if their studies cover *Prionus*, *Buprestis*, or other genera in which his method of describing unique specimens led to bad results, they may feel justified in regarding his "taxonomic units" as probably synonyms in most cases. But when comparison is made with recent studies in *Serica*, where dissection of genitalia has resulted in doubling the number of species, or in *Donacia*, where five years of masterly study of abundant material has produced a similar result, soon to be published, it will be seen that finer discrimination must always result in a great increase in names. When, moreover, it is remembered that a great part of Casey's work was with the Pselaphidae, Scydmaenidae, Staphylinidae and other obscure families which had been greatly neglected up to his time, it is not so surprising that, in the immense product of his long continued industry, he found it necessary to describe thousands of species. A revision of his descriptions with a view to eliminating the names that are unnecessary can be adequately made only by students as well prepared for their work as he was for his and equally willing to devote themselves to a laborious task. And after making all corrections there may still remain as Casey's life work, the greatest contribution to the taxonomy of the Coleoptera that has ever been made by one man.

A list of Col. Casey's writings to 1918 appeared in the last Catalogue of the Coleoptera. His subsequent publications include:

A revisional study of the American Platyninae,  
Random Studies among the American Caraboidea,  
Some desc. Studies among the American Barinae, Mem.  
Coleop. IX, 1-529, Apl. 8, 1920.

Studies in the Rhynchophorous subfamily Barinae of the  
Brazilian Fauna, Mem. Coleop. X, 1-520, Nov. 25, 1922.

Additions to the known Coleoptera of North America,  
Mem. Coleop. XI, 1-347, May 20, 1924.

CHAS. W. LENG.