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William A. Rogers

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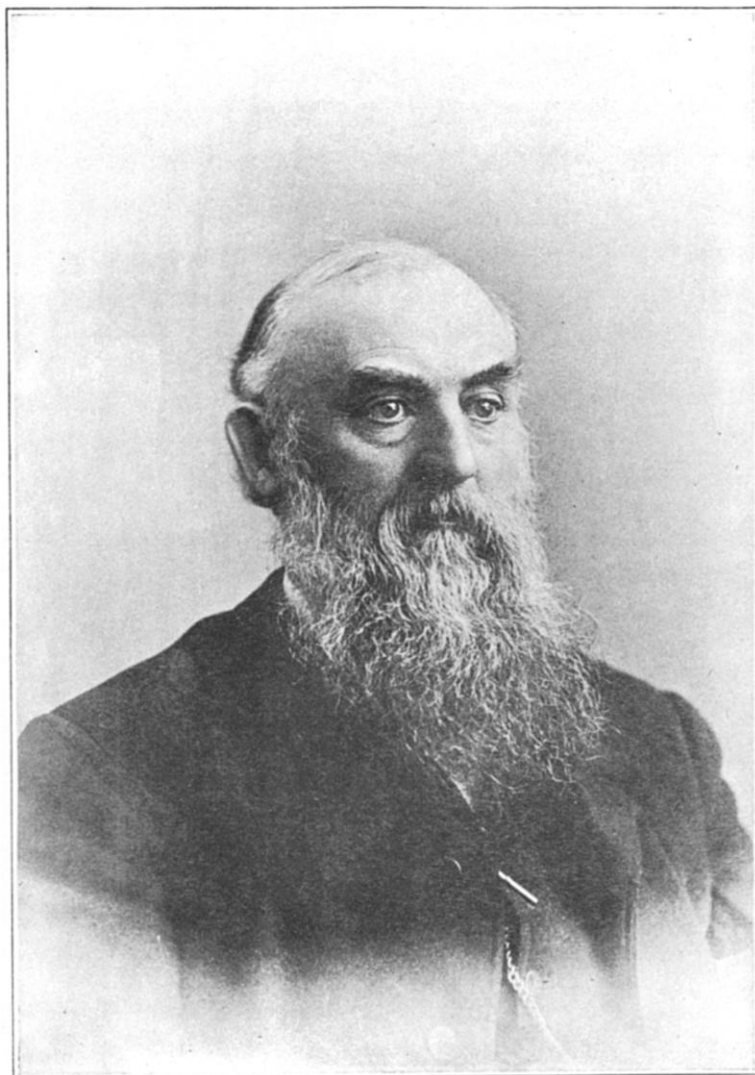
WILLIAM A. ROGERS.

Professor William A. Rogers, A. M., Ph. D., LL. D., was a man of such strong character and able mind that he naturally became a member of all the great societies which came within the limits of his activity. His main work was in Astronomy and Physics, fields in which accurate measurement is as important as in Microscopy.

To insure accurate measurement he investigated the various standard measures of length available and came to appreciate the high value of the microscope in this investigation. Therefore while he was an Astronomer and Physicist and used the microscope only as an instrument of precision, his sympathies turned to the group of men then known as the American Society of Microscopists, noting that among their efforts, the realization of accurate micrometers was earnestly sought.

In 1882 he joined this Society and at nearly every meeting since that time he presented one or more papers bearing upon micrometers or micrometry and upon expansion and contraction which so vitally concern this accuracy.

While his interest in accurate measurement might have been the primary reason for joining the Society, his broad and generous mind entered into sympathy with the Society's work as a whole. At the time of joining in 1882 he was fifty years old and had a national if not an international reputation, hence he was in a position to render great assistance in the general management of the Society. His general good sense acted as a break on some of the radical members; but as I look back over his career among us, what appeals to me most strongly was his interest in the younger members. His words of encouragement and praise for any creditable work were so genuine that one could not help feeling that one would do his best to make the next work more worthy of the generous recognition.



WILLIAM A. ROGERS

Professor Rogers, in spite of his other duties and engagements, never hesitated to bear more than his share of the burden of the Society. In turn the Society gave to him all the honors it had to offer; and although it had not the reputation of many of the societies of which he was a member, yet in the performance of his duties toward this Society no one could have been more conscientious and painstaking. I presume the preparation of no address by a President of the Microscopical Society ever cost more labor and solicitude than the one given by him at the tenth annual meeting in Pittsburg, in 1887.

It has just been said that Professor Rogers came in to be one of us, to give his unstinted labor and impart some of his wholesome enthusiasm and faith in the value of our work. He did all this and more. In times of depression, he gave not only general encouragement but showed in detail how to advance the interests and increase the success of the Society.

That the honor was to us rather than to him, is shown from the fact that the year before joining the American Society, he had been made an honorary fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society of London.

He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and was three times honored by a chairmanship of its sections. In 1873 he was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Yale College conferred upon him the honorary degree of A. M. in 1890 in recognition of his work in Astronomy. In 1886 Alfred University, at its semi-centennial, gave him a Ph. D.; and finally in 1892, 35 years after graduation, his *alma mater*, Brown University, conferred upon him the degree of LL. D.

Professor Rogers was a teacher and an investigator. His warm heart and noble enthusiasm made it easy for pupils to follow him. His investigations were guided by so clear a mind and prosecuted with such tireless industry that success rarely failed to crown his efforts.

In 1857 he became an instructor in Alfred Academy, and in 1859, Professor in Alfred University. From 1870 to 1886 he was connected with Harvard University, most of the time as

Assistant Professor of Astronomy in the Observatory. In 1886 he became Professor of Physics and Astronomy in Colby University; and at this time when the nation is so proud of its navy, it should not be forgotten that he served in it from 1864 to the close of the war.

In 1897 Professor Rogers resigned his chair at Colby and was made the head of the Babcock School of Physics which had just been established in Alfred University; and its plans laid with all the wisdom and experience which his long and fruitful life had given him. His ripest experience was thus to work in the same field that had felt the uplift of his youthful enthusiasm nearly forty years before. But like many another circle of human hope and aspiration, this was not to be completed. On March 1, 1898, death came. SIMON H. GAGE.

NOTE—For other details concerning the life and work of Professor Rogers the reader is referred to the Quarterly Bulletin of Alfred University, July, 1897, and to the Physical Review, Vol. VI, pp. 315-319. Both contain a portrait and a list of his scientific papers.

For the portrait printed herewith the Society is indebted to the courtesy of Alfred University.