

FRANK NELSON COLE

BY T. S. FISKE

Frank Nelson Cole, son of Otis Cole and Frances Maria Pond Cole, was born at Ashland, Massachusetts, September 20, 1861. Prepared for college at the Marlborough (Massachusetts) High School, he was admitted to Harvard in September 1878 and at graduation in 1882 stood second in his class. After studying mathematics for a year in the Graduate School of Harvard University, he was appointed to a traveling fellowship and spent the following two years (1883–1885) at the University of Leipsic, where he was a member of the mathematical seminar of Professor Felix Klein.

Returning to Harvard in 1885, he was for two years lecturer in the Graduate School. In 1886 he received from Harvard the degrees of A.M. and Ph.D. In the summer of 1888 he revisited Germany and married Miss Martha Marie Streiff of Hamburg.

In the autumn of 1888 he became instructor in mathematics at the University of Michigan, and a year later was promoted to an assistant professorship. In 1895 he was called to Columbia University as professor of mathematics with assignments to the University Faculty of Pure Science and to the Faculty of Barnard College. For fourteen years (1901–1914) he served on the Committee on Admissions of Barnard College. During three years (1904–1906) he was an examiner in mathematics for the College Entrance Examination Board.

He was elected Secretary of the American Mathematical Society in 1895, became a member of the editorial staff of the *Bulletin* in 1898, and succeeded the author of this sketch as editor-in-chief of the *Bulletin* in 1899. In 1920 he relinquished his administrative and editorial labors for the American Mathematical Society. However, he continued his work in the Columbia University Faculty of Pure Science and at Barnard College.

In the spring of 1926 he applied to Columbia University to be released from active service on September 20, 1926, the sixty-fifth anniversary of his birth. Suddenly taken seriously ill he died of heart failure May 26, 1926. He was survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

A picture of Frank Nelson Cole in 1885 after his return from Leipsic is sketched in the following excerpt from an address "Professor Bôcher's Scientific Start in Life" delivered by Professor William Fogg Osgood at a meeting of the Harvard Mathematical Club held February 12, 1925:

"The other course, Mathematics 13, was given by Mr. (at that time not yet Dr.) Frank Nelson Cole, who had just returned from Germany and was aglow with the enthusiasm which Felix Klein inspired in his students. Cole was not the first to give a formal course of lectures at Harvard on the theory of functions of a complex variable, Professor James Mills Peirce having lectured on this subject in the seventies. That presentation was, however, solely from the Cauchy