

HENRY BURCHARD FINE—IN MEMORIAM

Dean Fine was one of the group of men who carried American mathematics forward from a state of approximate nullity to one verging on parity with the European nations. It already requires an effort of the imagination to realize the difficulties with which the men of his generation had to contend, the lack of encouragement, the lack of guidance, the lack of knowledge both of the problems and of the contemporary state of science, the overwhelming urge of environment in all other directions than the scientific one. But by comparing the present average state of affairs in this country with what can be seen in the most advanced parts of the world, and extrapolating backwards, we may reconstruct a picture which will help us to appreciate their qualities and achievements.

Henry Burchard Fine was born in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, September 14th, 1858, the son of Lambert Suydam Fine and Mary Ely Burchard Fine. His father, a Presbyterian minister, died in 1869 leaving his widow with two sons and two daughters. Mrs. Fine lived with her children for a while at Ogdensburg, New York, and afterward at Winona, Minnesota, and in 1875 brought them to Princeton to complete their education. She was, by all accounts, a woman of great ability and force of character and launched all her children on honorable careers.

Thus Fine's early years were those of a country boy under pioneer conditions. He was always enthusiastic about the two great rivers, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, beside which he lived in those years and on which he learned to row. Rowing, by the way, was the only college sport in which he took an active part, though he was always keen on athletics and gave much time and energy to the direction of them up to the end of his life. During the years when I knew him he got much of his exercise on his bicycle, which he used both in going to and from his classes and for long rides in the country.

He finished his preparation for college during his first year in Princeton and entered the College of New Jersey, as it was then called, in 1876. Throughout his college course he was ranked at the head of his class and he graduated with first honors in 1880. As an undergraduate he specialized in the Classics, which he expected to teach later on, and he also began the study of Sanskrit. Besides this he found time for a normal undergraduate's interest in athletics, and played the flute in the college orchestra. He served for three years on the board of the college paper, the *Princetonian*, of which he was managing editor in his senior year. It was in this connection that he formed a life-long friendship with Woodrow Wilson.

The picture which one gets of his undergraduate years fits in completely with the impression which those of us got who knew him only in the last three decades of his life. We saw that he was widely read in literature and history, that he was fond of good music and active in bringing good concerts to Princeton, and that he took a keen interest in the games and the daily life of the undergraduates.