GILBERT AMES BLISS
1876–1951

The contributions made by Gilbert Ames Bliss to mathematics and to educational and scientific activities in the United States were many and varied. The following is a quite inadequate summary of his life and work, with special reference to his mathematical activities.

Gilbert Bliss was born in Chicago on May 9, 1876, and died in Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey, Illinois, on May 8, 1951. In 1893, one year after the University of Chicago first opened its doors to students, he enrolled there as a student, and was awarded the degrees of B.S. in 1897, M.S. in 1898, and Ph.D. in 1900. He studied at the University of Göttingen during the year 1902–1903. His first teaching was done as a substitute for a member of the staff of Kalamazoo College for several weeks during the year 1898–1899. He was an instructor in mathematics at the University of Minnesota 1900–1902, an associate at Chicago 1903–1904, assistant professor at the University of Missouri 1904–1905, preceptor (=assistant professor) at Princeton 1905–1908, and at Chicago was associate professor 1908–1913, professor 1913–1933, Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor 1933–1941, and chairman of the department 1927–1941. He retired from active service in 1941. In various summer or autumn terms from 1906 to 1911 he gave courses at Wisconsin, Chicago, Princeton, and Harvard.

During his student days Bliss first fell under the influence of F. R. Moulton, then a young assistant who was teaching at Chicago, and his first published paper was entitled *The motion of a heavenly body in a resisting medium.* The fellowship in astronomy for which he applied was not granted, and he eventually decided to devote himself to pure mathematics. His thesis for the M.S. was entitled *The geodesic lines on the anchor ring*, and his thesis for the Ph.D. bore the same title. The first developed explicit formulas for the geodesics in terms of elliptic integrals and discussed some of their properties. In the Ph.D. dissertation (**D3**)[1] it was shown that the points on the inner equator of the anchor ring are of the first kind (in the classification due to Mangoldt), i.e., each geodesic passing through such a point contains no conjugate point, while all other points on the anchor ring are of the second kind, i.e., not of the first kind. Previous investigations by Jacobi and by Mangoldt had shown that on a surface

[1] The letters in bold face refer to the sections of the bibliography at the end of this article, and the numbers refer to the individual items.