

HARRY WALTER TYLER—IN MEMORIAM

With the sudden death of Harry Walter Tyler on February 3, 1938, this country lost an able administrator and a remarkable man. As a student he showed unusual mathematical power. After graduation, however, he chose to follow the path of "maximum usefulness rather than least resistance." As a consequence most of his life was devoted to administrative work, often but little related to Mathematics.

A native of Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he was born in 1863, he entered Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the age of seventeen as a freshman in the chemistry course. During his undergraduate years he led in student activities. For the love of it he took all the mathematics courses then offered, and after graduating in chemistry accepted an instructorship in mathematics. A few years later, accompanied by his wife, who as Alice Brown was a classmate in chemistry, he studied further abroad. One year was spent at Göttingen, a second at Erlangen, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1889.

Years of strenuous work followed, during which he not only was promoted to a full professorship at the age of thirty, but actively participated in the administration of the Institute. As Secretary of the Institute (a position which at that time included the duties of Registrar, Director of Admissions, Secretary of the Faculty, Dean, and sometimes even Medical Director), as chairman of many important committees, particularly those on Admission and Courses of Instruction, as Adviser to the President, he was a guiding power during the early days when the very existence of the school was imperiled. With vision and sound judgment he worked untiringly to give the students the best instruction and broadest development possible.

At the same time he was anxious to build up his own department, of which he was elected head in 1901. For nearly forty years he was responsible for every appointment made. That the department grew from one of hardly more than freshman standard to a position of world importance during that period testifies to his success.

His active interests also extended to faculty and alumni relations. For some time he was Secretary of the M. I. T. Alumni Association and for several years he was President of the Faculty Club. As Chairman of the Walker Memorial Committee he guided the campaign which brought into existence the splendid student center, almost as much a memorial of Tyler himself as of the former president after whom it is named.

In the early days of the American Mathematical Society he was a member of the Council and of the Committee on Policy of the Transactions, and he was also Chairman of the Committee on College Entrance Requirements which reported in 1903. In 1904 he reported on the International Congress of Mathematicians for the Bulletin, and in 1925 he was Vice President of the Society.

He took a very active interest in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, serving as Librarian, 1912–1914, and Corresponding Secretary, 1914–1924. For many years he was prominent in the American Association of University Professors, having been a charter member and having served as General Secretary from 1916 to 1934. At one time he also served as the Association's Vice President and worked on its Committee on Academic Freedom. He was a member of the College Entrance Examination Board, the Cosmos Club, the English Speaking Union, the History of Science Society, and the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, serving as chairman of its Committee on Entrance Requirements. He assisted in establishing

the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New England and spent years carrying on work in its behalf.

Many happy summers were spent with his wife and four daughters on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. His love of the out-of-doors and mountaineering was expressed in his enthusiastic membership in the Appalachian Mountain Club, of which he was at one time president.

He submitted his resignation at the Institute of Technology in 1930 in order to continue his activities with the American Association of University Professors, whose central offices he moved to Washington. There he also held the position of Consultant in Science at the Library of Congress, energetically pursuing this work until the day of his death.

While his department is a living memorial, his activities outside his department have been his chief contribution to the Institute and to American education.

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