

Unclassified

International Association of Academies. Third meeting: Vienna, 1907; fourth meeting: Rome, 1910.

L'Académie Internationale des Sciences, des Arts et Manufactures. Paris, 1860.

International Patent Congress. Vienna, 1873; Paris, 1878.

International American Scientific Congress. Buenos Ayres, 1910.

International Conference on Scientific Literature. Third meeting: London, 1900.

International Association of Leather-Trades Chemists. London, 1897.

Women's International Congress. London, 1899.

International Groups of Esperanto. Brussels, 1910.

International Prison Congress. Eighth congress: Washington, 1910.

CHARLES BASKERVILLE

COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

WILLIAM JAMES

THE following minute on the life and services of Professor William James was placed upon the records of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, of Harvard University, at the meeting of October 18, 1910.

By the death of William James this university loses one who brought it high honor in many lands. As a man of science he left his mark on several departments of knowledge, while as a literary man he charmed all who read his lucid and picturesque pages. In him science and humanism were singularly combined. Learned as he was, he had none of the pedantry of the scholar. His books, besides illuminating their subjects, were creative of character, and through them he became one of the chief spiritual forces of our time.

He was born in New York, on January 11, 1842, of devout and independent parentage. Throughout life his studies were much disturbed by ill health, to which his dauntless spirit refused to bow. But a somewhat irregular education suited well a nature which was always fretted by routine and profited by whatever was unusual, diverse and expressive of individual character. In his youth he attended a Lycée in France and afterwards the

University of Geneva, there gaining an unusual command of French. His German he acquired a few years later at the University of Berlin. In 1862-64 he was in the Lawrence Scientific School; then for four years in the Harvard Medical School, from which, two years later, he received the degree of M.D. He studied with Agassiz in the Cambridge Museum, and accompanied a scientific expedition to Brazil. He worked at painting under William Hunt, with John La Farge as a fellow pupil. His home training gave him power of expression, for in that home brilliant conversation and literary skill were traditional; while philosophy was at the same time set before him, on the one hand by his theological father, and on the other, by his rationalistic friend, Chauncey Wright. He early showed a strong distaste for such idealistic modes of thought as he believed obscured the concrete realities of experience.

The progress of his mind can be traced in the successive topics of his teaching. In 1873 he became an instructor in anatomy at Harvard; but soon, finding greater interest in physiology, he accepted an assistant professorship in that subject, in 1876. For the next three years, in addition to teaching physiology, he offered a course on the theory of evolution in the department of philosophy. In 1880 he abandoned physiology altogether, becoming in that year assistant professor, and in 1885 professor, of philosophy. He now gave himself enthusiastically to psychology, and under his energetic guidance a psychological laboratory was established here. But after the publication of his treatise on psychology, in 1890, his interest in it declined, and he turned more toward the history of philosophy and the theory of knowledge. In 1892 he resigned the directorship of the laboratory, and after 1897 was never willing to offer a psychologic course. Religion and metaphysics claimed him, and his last years were devoted to the elaboration of a comprehensive philosophy in which the portion known as pragmatism has occasioned wide discussion.

While unusually successful as a teacher,

Professor James's greatest enjoyment and influence came from his writings. For ten years before his death he taught either not at all or but a single course, and in 1907 he resigned his professorship in order to devote to writing whatever strength his ever weakening heart allowed. Throughout his academic career, with characteristic courage, he put out a series of papers filled with large learning, aggressive originality, popular sympathy and delightful language. Through continual practise he had made himself the master of a style which so fascinated the reader by its clearness and pungency that he was able by its aid to break down the distinction between technical and popular appeal, and render abstract subjects intelligible to the common man. Whatever he wrote, said, or did, was instinct with abounding life. Whether readers agreed with his books or dissented, all perceived that they vitalized their subjects. Several obliged a kind of new departure of human thought in their respective fields, the most notable being "The Principles of Psychology," 1890; "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," 1899; "The Varieties of Religious Experience," 1902, and "Pragmatism," 1907. Perhaps four short papers should also be mentioned: "The Feeling of Effort," 1880; "The Dilemma of Determinism," 1884; "Is Life Worth Living?" 1895; "The Will to Believe," 1896.

The honors received by Professor James were many and great. He was a member of national academies in America, France, Italy, Prussia and Denmark; was a doctor of letters at Padua and Durham, of laws at Harvard, Princeton and Edinburgh, of science at Geneva and Oxford. He delivered a course of Lowell Lectures in Boston, of Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, of Hilbert Lectures in Oxford. He was one of the founders, and always a chief supporter, of the Society for Physical Research, a subject which profoundly interested him. More than once he was president of the American Psychological Association and of the Boston Natural History Society.

Yet all who knew William James thought less of his learning and renown than of his massive and inspiring personality. The uni-

versal admiration given him was ever mixed with love. From him men drew their ideals of human character and were grateful to him for being what he was. They found him the best of comrades—simple, engaging, generous in his estimates of others, tender as a woman, fair-minded, playful, reverent and unconventional, with a natural elevation of thought and manner which made all excellence easy in his presence. As we now recall that erect form, alert bearing, kind eye and masterful voice, we perceive how, in spite of his aversion to anything like intentional consistency, "his words and works and fashion too" were "all of a piece, and all were clear and straight."

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

THE nineteenth annual meeting of the American Psychological Association will be held in Minneapolis during convocation week in conjunction with the Western Philosophical Association, the North Central Association of Teachers of Psychology, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, December 28, 29 and 30.

THE tenth annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association will be held at Princeton, from December 27 to 29.

THE American Physiological Society will hold its twenty-third annual meeting in New Haven, Conn., December 27-29. The place of meeting will be the Sheffield Scientific School, Yale University. The society will hold joint sessions with the American Society of Biological Chemists and the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics. Professor W. H. Howell, of Baltimore, is the president and Professor A. J. Carlson, of Chicago, is the secretary of the society.

THE Society of American Bacteriologists will meet in Ithaca, N. Y., December 28, 29, 30, 1910.

WE learn from *Nature* that the Hungarian Academy of Science has this year awarded the Bolyai prize, of the value of 10,000 crowns, to