

GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD

GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD, for forty years professor of moral philosophy and metaphysics at Yale University, died on August 8, at the age of eighty-one years.

In the eighties and nineties, Ladd was a towering figure, through his academic leadership, in the introduction of the new psychology. This was the period in which physiological, experimental, genetic and abnormal psychology gained recognition in the college curriculum of this country, and Ladd did much to bring this recognition. Yet, he was not primarily a psychologist and did no experimental work in any of the fields which he so ably introduced. He came into psychology through philosophy, and had come into philosophy through theology. History will probably recognize him as an organizer rather than an inspirer, or an original contributor in specific problems.

While always regarded as more or less dry, his books and lectures were characterized by remarkable clearness, accuracy, thoroughness, broadmindedness and chasteness of style and a pleasing absence of the irrelevant. His definitions were those of a logician; his scientific perspective was that of a philosopher; his power of appeal was that of the forceful teacher. The fidelity and constructive analysis with which he interpreted the findings of research men in physiology, physics, medicine and genetics gave dignity and permanence to his work. The encyclopedic character of his work shows him at his best in his power to organize for himself and put in teachable form these new and diverse approaches to the study of the human mind. His "Elements of Physiological Psychology" and "Psychology Descriptive and Explanatory" will live as classics from that period.

His conservatism was another feature which gave his work in that period prestige and success. Wundt, Ribot, Galton, James, Hall, Cattell, Baldwin, Scripture, and others, each came out with a different brand of psychology which was bound to draw out some temporary antagonism; but Ladd welcomed all these and quieted the turbulent waters by certifying and formulating as a philosopher, as a

preacher and as a teacher what was "wholesome" and giving it a setting in academic psychology. As an original thinker, Ladd's power lay not in the scientist's observation and discovery within a narrow field, but rather in the power of a great thinker to interpret and organize new and relevant facts.

His utterances on mental evolution, on mental measurement, on disorders of personality, on "psychology without a soul," make most interesting reading from the present point of view. The new points of view are all in his work, but their presentation is so sagaciously qualified as to make the present reader question whether he had actually recognized the real significance of these new concepts in psychology. Yet, it was this mode of conservative thought and guarded statement that gave stability to his teaching and made it for many years the orthodox point of view in the new psychology. He made the transition not only from philosophy to psychology but also from theology to psychology and from common sense view of daily life to scientific psychology without any break or antagonism.

Ladd's influence in psychology was cut short by an unfortunate breaking up of the department in the late nineties, which led to his premature retirement and deprived him of the contact with the younger working constituency and the opportunity of projecting himself through such a constituency. His interest then turned to interpretative psychology through his various books on psychology as applied to philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, social life, and religion. His appeal was here to the general reader, and in this field his utterances are characterized by the same traits that we found in the earlier academic period.

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE BRITISH IMPERIAL BUREAU OF MYCOLOGY

In 1918 the British Imperial War Conference had brought to its notice the loss to