

OBITUARY

THOMAS H. GRONWALL

THROUGH the death, on May 9, of Dr. Thomas H. Gronwall, of Columbia University, America has lost one of its outstanding mathematicians.

Dr. Gronwall was born at Axberg, Sweden, on January 16, 1877. He received his Ph.D. from Upsala in 1898. He then went to Berlin, where, until 1902, he studied engineering. Soon after taking his engineering degree, he came to this country. Here he held various technical positions and also filled academic posts at Princeton and at Columbia.

Gronwall's work covered a wide variety of subjects. He wrote on analytic functions, infinite series, nomography, the analytic theory of numbers, differential geometry, integral equations, ballistics, elasticity, electrical theory and relativity. Some years ago he was associated with Professor V. K. La Mer in a revision of the Debye-Hueckel theory.

In pure mathematics, Gronwall's best known papers are probably those on analytic functions of several variables and on the summability of Laplace series. In his dissertation, he extended the Weierstrass factorization theorem to functions of several variables. In later work, he did much to clear up the problem of the representation of a meromorphic function of several variables as a quotient of two analytic functions. He developed for Laplace series a summability theory analogous to that of Fejer for Fourier series.

Gronwall's knowledge was encyclopedic. He was a prodigious reader, quick in assimilating ideas and retentive in memory. He possessed analytic skill of a high order and great elegance of style.

While Gronwall was of a reserved nature, those who knew him intimately appreciated the depth of his culture and his wealth of intellectual interests. In his premature death, we have lost a great savant and a brilliant personality.

J. F. RITT

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ELLEN CHURCHILL SEMPLE—1863-1932

DEAN of American geographers, noted author, and one of the world's foremost educators, Miss Semple achieved a life marked by untiring devotion to duty. Louisville, Kentucky, was her birthplace in 1863, her parents being from two of the old families of the Blue Grass. In 1882, at nineteen, she became a bachelor of arts from Vassar College. Graduate work in history combined with extensive travels in Europe prepared her to take a master of arts degree at Vassar in 1891. Once more in Europe, she gave herself to work in anthropogeography under Ratzel, whose influence changed her interest from history to geog-

raphy. "American History and Its Geographic Conditions," published in 1913, was forerunner to a number of scholarly treatises including "Influences of Geographic Environment" and "The Geography of the Mediterranean Region."

Miss Semple was a truly great teacher. She set high standards, not only for us, but also for her successors. Although she was never trained specifically for the teaching profession, so outstanding were her accomplishments in the field of anthropogeography that she was called in succession to several European and American universities to lecture on geography.

Catholicity of interest and ability to select and apply facts and principles from an inexhaustible fund of knowledge lifted her lectures above the plane of ordinary instruction. She demonstrated to a marked degree how "nature and books belong to the eyes that see them." Her capacity for observation was enormous. Since her keen curiosity ever prompted her to seek and inquire, she derived the maximum benefit from her studies in the field. She knew "how wide was the far horizon of geography." Because of these qualities she vitalized her teaching by personal observations and incidents selected from her rich and varied experience. She told stories with true dramatic effect and with flashes of wit that enlivened her discussion and made it a real and dynamic exposition.

In 1914 she was awarded the gold medal of the American Geographic Society and in 1932 the gold medal of the Chicago Geographical Society. Upon establishing the Clark School of Geography, I called Miss Semple to be the first geographer of the new staff. Although she ceased university teaching two years ago, she continued on the faculty roll. As lecturer, writer and guide to students, Miss Semple had few her equal. She was a woman of exquisite personal charm and thorough scientific integrity. She exerted a compelling influence over all her friends and associates.

WALLACE W. ATWOOD

MEMORIAL TO DR. JOHN BRIQUET

DR. JOHN BRIQUET, late director of the Botanical Garden, Geneva, Switzerland, died on October 26, 1931, at the age of sixty-one years, after a brief illness. Those botanists who attended the International Botanical Congresses in 1900, 1905, 1910, 1926 and 1930 will realize the great loss botany has suffered by his death. As stated in a recent appeal issued by a committee of distinguished Swiss botanists, Dr. Briquet was an outstanding figure in all discussions on nomenclature, and the rôle he played as recorder, by his tactful, sagacious and conciliatory nature, together