

OBITUARY

EDMUND SMITH CONKLIN
1884-1942¹

ALL of us who were intimately associated with Dr. Edmund S. Conklin in his last years of life were deeply impressed with the calm manner in which he carried on while facing the constant threat of impending death. To the admonitions of doctors and colleagues that he give up all work and rest, he answered that when the fatal stroke came he wanted to be at his usual occupation. And so it was, that, although in his last months he was not able to do much, the end came the morning after he had spoken to a religious gathering on some psychological aspects of religion. Up to the last he was hoping to be present at the New York meeting of the Psychological Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. To him it seemed an opportunity lost when he could not be present to meet and chat with his many professional and personal friends.

It was characteristic of Dr. Conklin eagerly to seek and cultivate social relations. He was never as happy as when he could converse intimately with his friends concerning human problems. Indeed, it was probably this trait that directed him into psychology. Quite clear he made it to his friends that psychology was to him primarily a concern with persons and everyday activities of people. This is further manifest in his lectures and writings. In recent years he deplored certain psychological trends toward abstractness and severe formulation. He contrasted this tendency with the situation in which he grew up at Clark University when G. Stanley Hall was the dominant figure there.

A graduate of Springfield College and Clark University, he helped to give Oregon a reputation for being in some ways more like New England than New England itself. His lively interest in students is shown by his request that the student members of his fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta, call him "Ned," and the fact that his lectures in general psychology were considered outstanding by students. At the same time that he attracted such informal interest of undergraduates he always remained Dr. Conklin to his colleagues and graduate students, not through any lack of friendliness, but simply as a mark of professional respect to a scholarly gentleman.

Having gathered together a staff with whom he built

¹ This memorial statement was prepared by three of Dr. Conklin's former colleagues at the request of the executive committee of the Section of Psychology of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Conklin was the retiring vice-president of the association and chairman of the Section of Psychology, and it was planned to read the memorial statement in place of his vice-presidential address at a joint session of the Sections of Psychology and Education at the New York meeting. Owing to war conditions, this meeting was not held.

the splendid Oregon psychological laboratory, together they attracted a small and highly selected group of major students whose subsequent professional development was always a matter of great pleasure of the Oregon group, particularly in their gatherings at annual meetings.

His viewpoint on the administrative functions of a department chairman may be illustrated by an early incident. When one of the writers came to Oregon from an N. R. C. post-doctorate fellowship, he called him into his office, told him what regular funds were available for his work, mentioned that he had also built up a special fund to enable the new laboratory man to provide equipment in line with his special interests, and then after showing him around the fine new laboratory gave him his only "sailing orders" in six years, by telling him to develop the laboratory courses as he saw fit, and to come to him if he could be of assistance. For him, administration was a matter of selecting personnel, and then giving them full opportunity to develop their plans, and unusually liberal and successful policy.

In 1934, when he was in middle life, Dr. Conklin was called to assume the chairmanship of the department of psychology in Indiana University. His eight years of service there were years of tranquility and orderly development for the department. His ideal was to provide the greatest possible academic liberty and freedom from annoyance for his colleagues and to encourage them in scientific productivity. As an administrator, Dr. Conklin was especially earnest in conceiving himself as "chairman" rather than "head" of a department. Matters of policy were placed before a staff conference; the decision was theirs, and a favorite project would be abandoned rather than pursued against the wishes of others. It was through their own merit that his careful plans were adopted and guided the department. The impress of his work at Indiana will be felt and remembered for years to come.

To the general public Dr. Conklin will probably be best known for his books in the fields of abnormal, genetic and religious psychology, all based on very extensive library research. Doubtless, he, himself, would have considered his greatest accomplishment to be whatever professional and personal assistance and direction he was able to give his colleagues and students in their careers as psychologists. To his earlier associates and students, now scattered among many of the larger departments of the country, psychology as Dr. Conklin conceived it to be remains a high standard by which to measure one's own professional development.

In addition to his teaching and administrative duties, Dr. Conklin generously devoted considerable time to public lecturing. He was especially fond of presenting to psychological audiences the life and manners of his teacher Hall. In other than psychological groups he probably was most devoted to the discussion of religious topics, especially the comparison of the various forms of worship.

The essentially human interests of Dr. Conklin were revealed in his general literary reading. Samuel Johnson, the man, appealed to him inordinately. Upon occasion Dr. Conklin could spend an entire evening recounting various interesting items concerning Johnson, and evaluating the literature centering around this interesting figure. In him he found a subject which afforded scope for the expression of his own great fund of humor.

ROBERT H. SEASHORE
R. C. DAVIS
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RECENT DEATHS

DR. WILLIAM HENRY METZLER, formerly professor of mathematics and dean of the Graduate School of Syracuse University, later dean of the State Teachers College at Albany, N. Y., died on April 19. He was seventy-nine years old.

DR. RICHARD A. VON MUTTKOWSKI, since 1925 head of the department of biology of the University of Detroit, died on April 15 at the age of fifty-six years.

THE death at the age of sixty-seven years is announced of Dr. Frederick Barry, professor of the history of science at Columbia University.

CHARLES C. WILLOUGHBY, since 1928 director-emeritus of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, died on April 21 at the age of eighty-five years.

DR. JOHN EDWARD WILLIAMS, professor of mathematics and dean of the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, died on April 19. He was seventy-five years old.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL WALTER W. PLECHNER, assistant director of research of the Titanium Division of the National Lead Co., was killed in action in North Africa on March 4.

WILLIAM R. WEBB, assistant deputy chairman and director of Eastman Kodak, Ltd., England, died on April 16. He was fifty-four years old.

DEAN WILLIAM H. G. LOGAN, of the Dental School of Loyola University (Chicago College of Dental Surgery) since 1920, died of a heart attack on April 6 at the age of seventy years. Dr. Paul C. Kitchin, secretary of the dental subsection of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, writes: "Dr. Logan was an oral surgeon and educator of international reputation and the holder of honorary degrees from the University of Michigan, Loyola University and the National University of Ireland. During World War I Dr. Logan played a prominent part in the establishment of the Army Dental Corps. From 1917 to 1919 he was chief of the Dental Division of the Surgeon General's Office and held the rank of colonel. He was a past president of the American Dental Association (1917-1918) and of the American Association of Dental Schools (1928) and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons."

Nature reports the death of Sir Sidney Burrard, Bart., F.R.S., formerly Surveyor-General of India and superintendent of the Trigonometrical Survey of India, on March 16, aged eighty-two years; of H. G. Denham, dean and professor of chemistry, Canterbury University College, Christchurch, New Zealand, and chairman of the New Zealand Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, aged sixty-two years; of J. Eustice, emeritus professor of engineering at University College, Southampton, on February 24, aged seventy-eight years, and of Dr. F. G. Parsons, research fellow in anthropology at St. Thomas's Hospital, formerly professor of anatomy, University of London, on March 11.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

SWEDISH FOREST PRODUCTS

ACCORDING to the Swedish International Press Bureau, as reported in *Nature*, a survey of Sweden's production of forest products of a chemical nature was recently made by Otto Cyren, director of the Swedish Chemical Office. Speaking of chemical pulp, one of Sweden's most outstanding export products in normal times, he said that Sweden is in a very good position in respect of quality, as the slowly growing timber in northerly regions gives very long fibers, and consequently the strongest pulp and paper are ob-

tained from it. The most important by-product of the sulphite pulp production is sulphite spirit, which up to most recent years was the only product recovered. Mixed with petrol, it was of importance as a motor fuel. The purity of the rectified spirit now surpasses that obtained from grain and potatoes, and it is therefore used also for human consumption. Researches on the possibility of using sulphite spirit as the basis of more highly developed products were not initiated until the present crisis made the matter urgent. As an instance he described the work carried on by the