

MARGARET FLOY WASHBURN

1871 - 1939

Tribute of a Colleague

That Miss Washburn's fellow scientists considered her an outstanding scholar and leader in research is evident from the fact that she was a past president of the American Psychological Association, and a member of the Society of Experimental Psychologists and of the National Academy of Science. One of her most deep-seated principles was that a woman in science should be judged entirely on the basis of her work, and that no leniency or consideration should be shown her on account of her sex. I remember that she opposed honoring a certain woman because a member of the committee remarked that he thought we should have a woman in the selected group under discussion. I am sure that I am reflecting the opinion of all those who are acquainted with Miss Washburn's work that she richly deserved the honors and recognition she received.

It would be impossible to describe in this place with any degree of completeness the vast number of publications that came from Miss Washburn's pen. The list of her publications in the Psychological Register, which starts with her first paper in 1894, covers almost six columns of fine print.

Miss Washburn was an ideal experimenter. She had a lively curiosity, a profound respect for facts, imagination, and an integrity which inspired trust in her results. She could be abrupt with an opponent whose ability she distrusted, but she was patient and generous with those whom she respected because they were motivated solely by the desire to arrive at the truth. Her research was well-planned and carefully executed. She was meticulous as to details but direct in her attack and she never acknowledged defeat.

Miss Washburn's outstanding contributions were to animal psychology and to the speculations on the motor theory of consciousness. Through them she has earned an honored place in the history of psychology. Her book, *The Animal Mind*, is a classic in the former field and Effe was a pioneer among the modern motor theorists.

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Tribute of a Colleague(Continued)

I have met a number of students who have taken courses under Miss Washburn. Almost all of them have spoken of their respect for her scholarship and her ability as a teacher, but they have added that they were somewhat afraid of her and had difficulty in knowing her. From personal experience

I learned that her rather reserved and austere manner was due principally to shyness and to extreme earnestness in what she might at the moment be interested. I soon discovered that she was generous and warm-hearted, and a loyal friend and colleague. Above all, she had the modesty of a sincere and forthright personality.

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Herbert S. Langfeld, Chairman

Department of Psychology

Princeton University