
FLORIAN CAJORI

February 28, 1859-August 14, 1930

IN the death of Professor Florian Cajori the world has lost one of the best-known of its recent historians of science, not merely in the domain of mathematics but in the contiguous domains of physics, geodesy, and to a certain extent astronomy.

Not only was he a writer of books, but he was an indefatigable contributor to scientific journals in this country and abroad. The number of these journals and of his monographs is impressive and his numerous articles will long be looked upon as material from which historians will draw.

Born in Switzerland, coming to this country at the age of sixteen, educated at the University of Wisconsin (B. S., 1883) and Johns Hopkins (1884-1885), he began his teaching as assistant professor of mathematics at Tulane University in 1885, continuing at Colorado College (1889-1918). In 1918 he was called to the University of California as professor of the history of mathematics, doubtless the first man in the world to hold this title and be given the privilege of devoting all of his time to the subject. It was a great opportunity and the appointment was fully justified in the twelve active years that remained.

As to his work in these institutions, as to the academic honors bestowed upon him (Ph. D., Tulane, 1894; LL. D., University of Colorado, 1912, and Colorado College, 1913; Sc. D., Wisconsin, 1913), and as to his membership and official positions in various learned societies it is not possible, in the space here allowed, to speak in detail. Suffice it to say that his work was faithfully performed and the honors were worthily bestowed. Standing as the leading historian of mathematics in this country, his loss will be deeply felt by all who knew him, whether personally or through his contributions to the subjects of his major interest.

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