

THE
OPEN
COURT

NOVEMBER

1932

Vol. 46

Number 918

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THE OPEN COURT

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science,
and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

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Published monthly by

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY
337 EAST CHICAGO AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year, 35c a copy. Remittances may be made by personal checks, drafts, post office or express money orders, payable to *The Open Court Publishing Company*.

While the editors welcome contributions, they do not hold themselves responsible for unsolicited manuscripts.

Address all correspondence to *The Open Court Publishing Company*,
337 East Chicago Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

Entered as Second Class matter March 26, 1887, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois,
under Act of March 3, 1879.

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Printed in the United States of America.



THOMAS J. McCORMACK

Frontispiece to The Open Court

THE OPEN COURT

Volume XLVI (No. 11) NOVEMBER, 1932

Number 918

THOMAS J. McCORMACK
1865-1932

WITH the death of Thomas J. McCormack on June 24th of this year, his part as a pioneer in secondary education has been brought to a close; but what he has accomplished in the La Salle-Peru Township High School and his influence in educational circles in general, as well as his many excellent articles and translations, insure him immortality, for something of the soul of a man is attached to the work which he has produced, and the good in it lives on for the future to use and to build upon as he has used the work of his predecessors to form his life and to create his ideas. Teaching is perhaps the most influential method of molding future lives, and Mr. McCormack, with the rare combination of his fine scholarship and administrative ability, was an inspiration to all of those who came into contact with him to accomplish great things in the spirit of Science and Truth.

Mr. McCormack came to the Open Court in 1888 soon after he had completed his studies. He was born in 1865 of Irish parentage in Brooklyn. Here he attended grammar school and high school. He then sought a classical education at Princeton University, Princeton, N. J., and was graduated in 1884. He continued his education in Germany spending a term each at the universities of Leipzig and Tübingen, where he devoted himself to the study of History, Political Science, and the Modern Languages. After his return to the United States, he took up the study of jurisprudence first at Columbia and later at the Chicago Law School where he received the degree of L.L.B. He was admitted to the bar, but he never practised law.

During the first years of Mr. McCormack's association with the Open Court his work consisted in translating from German and French some of the most notable essays of the foremost mathematicians, physicists, biologists, physiologists, psychologists, and theologians of Europe. Among these are included Lagrange, Grass-

mann, Poincaré, Klein, Schubert, Boltzmann, Hering, Wundt, Ribot, Binet, Delboeuf, Topinard, Haeckel, Weismann, Eimer, Carus Sterne, Lasswitz, Cornill, and Delitzsch. Although all of his translations are excellent his most noteworthy translation is that of Mach's *Science of Mechanics* on account of the difficulties of the subject-matter.

In 1897 Mr. McCormack became more closely associated with the Open Court in the capacity of associate editor.

Besides the many translations which he rendered into English, Mr. McCormack has edited works by De Morgan, Leibnitz, Hume, Berkeley, and Descartes. He wrote a series of biographies of mathematicians and philosophers which were published with portraits in the *Open Court*. During this time he also contributed many critical notes on current scientific literature, and articles on scientific and educational subjects both to the *Open Court* and to the *Monist*.

In 1903 Mr. McCormack was elected Principal of the La Salle-Peru Township High School. During the fifteen years of association with the Open Court he had always kept in mind the theories of education and the latest scientific methods of teaching. He knew the work of Dewey, Parker, and many others. Not only this type of work, however, but also the close association with the ideas and ideals of Dr. Carus—whose devotion to the history and philosophy of science established ideals for which the *Open Court* has stood—were of inestimable value as a foundation to his later work. His work as translator of the writings of the most eminent men in different fields of science and in the beginnings of new sciences added to this foundation. Thus we feel that he has carried many of the ideals of the Open Court into new fields.

As Principal of the La Salle-Peru Township High School, Mr. McCormack devoted himself to the problems of secondary education and with the sympathetic coöperation of the Board of Education he built up an outstandingly fine school, which has been a great influence in developing the cultural life of that small, industrial community.

In 1924 when the La Salle-Peru-Oglesby Junior College was started, he was made Director. Two hundred and fifty-two students are now enrolled in the Junior College, which is considered one of the best in the country.

The best known of Mr. McCormack's educational projects, made possible by the generosity of Mrs. Adele Blow and Mrs. Eda

Mathiessen and by their interest in this new venture, is the Bureau of Educational Counsel, organized in 1923 for the purpose of studying the individual needs of the young students. Two social psychiatric workers with the coöperation of psychiatrists and psychologists from the Institute of Juvenile Research in Chicago carry on the work. "The School," wrote Mr. McCormack in the introduction to his first report, "must be conceived as an ethical laboratory in which all the mistreadings of childhood are considered as material for ethical observations and as opportunities for ethical amendment. . . . The salvation, not the punishment of the child, is the goal of all disciplinary doctrine. The precedent is peace, inward harmony, emotional equilibrium." This bureau was the first to be established in a public school which supplemented to academic training the aid of mental hygiene, and similar bureaus have since been established in colleges, universities, and other schools.

Mr. McCormack has written many articles on educational subjects for national and technical journals and has been well known as a speaker. For a number of years he was associate editor of the *American Review*. He was given the honorary degree of Master of Science by Princeton University in 1919, and the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Northwestern University in June, 1930.

We are grieved to have lost this loved friend and noble man at an age when he still had useful years ahead of him in which to bear the fruit of his experience and his scholarship, but we are thankful to have known and profited by his wisdom and his rare ability.