HENRY SEELY WHITE—IN MEMORIAM

Henry Seely White, emeritus professor of mathematics at Vassar College, died in Poughkeepsie, New York, on May 20, 1943, his eighty-second birthday. In his death mathematics has lost a distinguished geometer, the college a wise and helpful guide, and his colleagues and the community a much loved friend.

Professor White was born in Cazenovia, New York, on May 20, 1861, the son of Aaron White, principal and teacher of mathematics in Cazenovia Seminary. Of English stock, his first American ancestor was John White who came to the United States in 1632, one of the original settlers of Hartford. The schools and seminary of Cazenovia gave Mr. White his early training and preparation for college. He entered Wesleyan University and graduated with honors in 1882 at the age of twenty-one. During the following year he assisted in astronomy and physics at Wesleyan and returned there again in 1884 after a year at Centenary College where he taught mathematics and chemistry. On completion of three years as registrar and tutor in mathematics in Wesleyan he went to Göttingen to work with the unusual group of mathematicians in the university at that time, and completed his doctorate there in 1891.

It was during this period that he received stimulus and training which gave shape and scope for his mathematical development, strengthening of his independence in research, and a beginning in reading in a variety of fields which is no longer such a common attribute of our great specialists. While his publications were in the field of his specialized geometry, his studies ranged over the entire field. It was this wide scope that made him such a valued adviser and guide both to his own generation and to younger mathematicians.

On his return to the United States, Professor White spent two years in the department of mathematics at Clark University and then was called to Northwestern, one of a large group of unusually able young men. It was from Northwestern that he came to Vassar, in 1905, to be head and guide of the department of mathematics until the age of 75, and close friend and frequent lecturer for the remaining years of his life. Students as well as faculty members prized each opportunity to enjoy his mind. In the week of his death he was scheduled to lecture to a class in the geometry of space curves.

In the mathematics organizations Professor White took an active part as organizer, editor and officer. He was on the editorial staff of

the Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society for a number of years, was editor of the Annals of Mathematics from 1899 to 1906, and editor of the Transactions of the American Mathematical Society from 1907 to 1914. He served the American Mathematical Society as president from 1906 to 1908 and the American Association for the Advancement of Science as vice president in 1915. In the same year he was elected Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences. Honors conferred upon him included an LL.D. from Northwestern, 1915, and D.Sc. conferred by Wesleyan at the time of its 100th anniversary in June, 1932.

Among Professor White's publications were contributions to the Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society, the American Journal of Mathematics, and a text of *Plane curves of the third order*. While his studies ranged over a large field in the subject and far outside it, his main interest was in the theory of invariants, the geometry of curves and surfaces, correspondences, algebraic plane and twisted curves, homeomorphic sets of lines in a plane, and relativity in mechanics.

Professor White's life in the community was broad and rich. He and Mrs. White had wide connections through church and city organizations, especially through the University Club, the Yacht Club, and the Vassar Institute. Many in all these varied groups mourn the loss of an acute mind, a friendly, courteous wit, and a great heart.

<div align="right">MARY EVELYN WELLS</div>