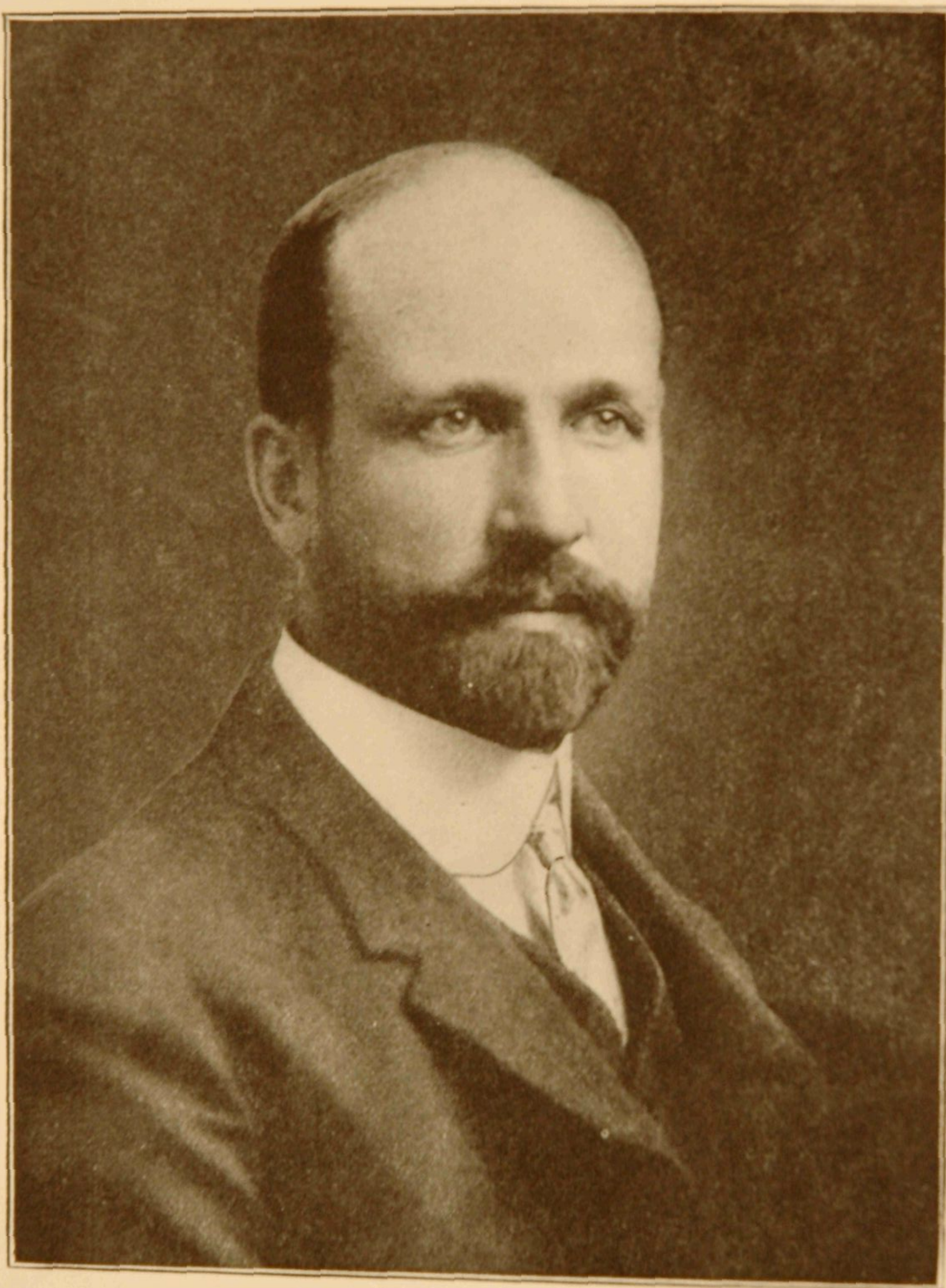


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CYRIL GEORGE HOPKINS



Cyril G. Hopkins

In Memoriam
Cyril George Hopkins



Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-Six
Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen

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BY this record of the Memorial Exercises following the passing of Doctor Hopkins, the University of Illinois pays lasting tribute to the character, the scholarship, and the service of one of the most distinguished members of its faculty.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



YRIL GEORGE HOPKINS was born upon a farm near Chatfield, Minnesota, on July 22, 1866. As a small child he moved with his parents to South Dakota, where, as he grew up, he lived the life of the pioneer. While teaching country school as a means of earning money for a college course, he nearly lost his life in a blizzard when caring for the children under his charge, a loss he would have cheerfully met rather than abandon his duty, as his later life abundantly testified.

He was graduated from South Dakota Agricultural College, at Brookings, in 1890, obtained his state teacher's certificate in 1891, earned his master's degree at Cornell in 1894, and his doctor's degree in 1898. A year later, 1899-1900, he studied agricultural chemistry at Göttingen.

Doctor Hopkins began his college service immediately after graduation, serving as Assistant in Agricultural Chemistry in his Alma Mater from 1890-1892, then in Cornell during 1892-1893, returning to Brookings as Acting Professor of Pharmacy during 1893-1894. In May, 1893, he married Emma Matilda Stelter, of Brookings.

In the autumn of 1894, he was appointed Chemist of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Illinois. This responsible position he held continuously thereafter. In accepting the appointment, Doctor Hopkins made a reservation covering his purpose to work for the doctorate, and this he secured at Cornell four years later, offering as a thesis his famous treatise "The Chemistry of the Corn Kernel," reporting a piece of work which he had begun at the University of Illinois.

CYRIL GEORGE HOPKINS

It was the desire to prosecute further studies with starch that took him to Germany a year later; and while there, he was appointed Professor of Soil Fertility and Head of the newly organized Department of Agronomy of the University of Illinois in 1900, a position tendered and accepted by cable, and one which he held until his death. In 1903 he was appointed Vice-Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

It was characteristic of the man that he said long afterward, "I accepted the position to head the agronomy interests, not because I coveted prominence and responsibility or because I felt myself qualified, but because such men as President Draper, Doctor Burrill, Professor Forbes, and the Dean of the College considered that I was the best available man; and whenever four equally good men feel that another is better qualified, then I am ready to surrender the position at any time." And in this statement he was perfectly sincere.

He threw himself at once and unreservedly into the problems of the department. In attempting to discover its field of service to the Commonwealth he organized a soil survey of the state, the most comprehensive ever undertaken, and he studied the problem of production from the standpoint of maintaining unimpaired the power of the soil to produce crops. His textbook, "Soil Fertility and Permanent Agriculture," embodies the results of his studies both scientific and philosophical, and has long been recognized as a classic.

Doctor Hopkins lost no opportunity to preach the doctrine of soil conservation and this disposition to serve, combined with a desire to broaden his experience, led him in 1913 to accept for one year the position as Director of the Southern Settlement and Development Organization with headquarters at Baltimore.

It is needless to observe that it was as Professor of Soil Fertility that Doctor Hopkins performed his great service to mankind. This is not the place to speak of that service further than to say that he literally put his life into the problem

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

of permanent agriculture, holding himself at any time ready to meet any sacrifice in the line of duty, and no martyr ever journeyed where duty led more cheerfully than did he.

It was this spirit that took him to Greece in an effort to do something that might help to heal the wounds of a war that he bitterly deplored and whose methods of combat he vigorously resented. It was during this year's service that he contracted the ailment that cost his life and deprived the world of one of its most valuable scientists and benefactors in the very zenith of his powers. He worked cruelly hard in Greece, in company with his old friend and student, Dr. George Bouyoucos, of Michigan. He collected and analyzed hundreds of samples of soil, drew his conclusions, made complete reports, was decorated by the King with the rarely bestowed Order of Our Saviour, and sailed for home in what seemed to be a perfect state of health, only to be stricken four days later with an attack of malaria, from which he died at the British Military Hospital at Gibraltar on October 6, 1919.

Memorial exercises were held at the University of Illinois on January 22, 1920, of which this little volume is the record.

So closed the career of one of the noblest characters the world has ever known; a scientist of the highest order and a benefactor to mankind; a firm friend and a courteous Christian gentleman.

EUGENE DAVENPORT