

HA

23

.W8W/3

copy 2

*CARROLL DAVIDSON WRIGHT*

---

*A MEMORIAL*

---

*HORACE G. WADLIN*



Class HA 23

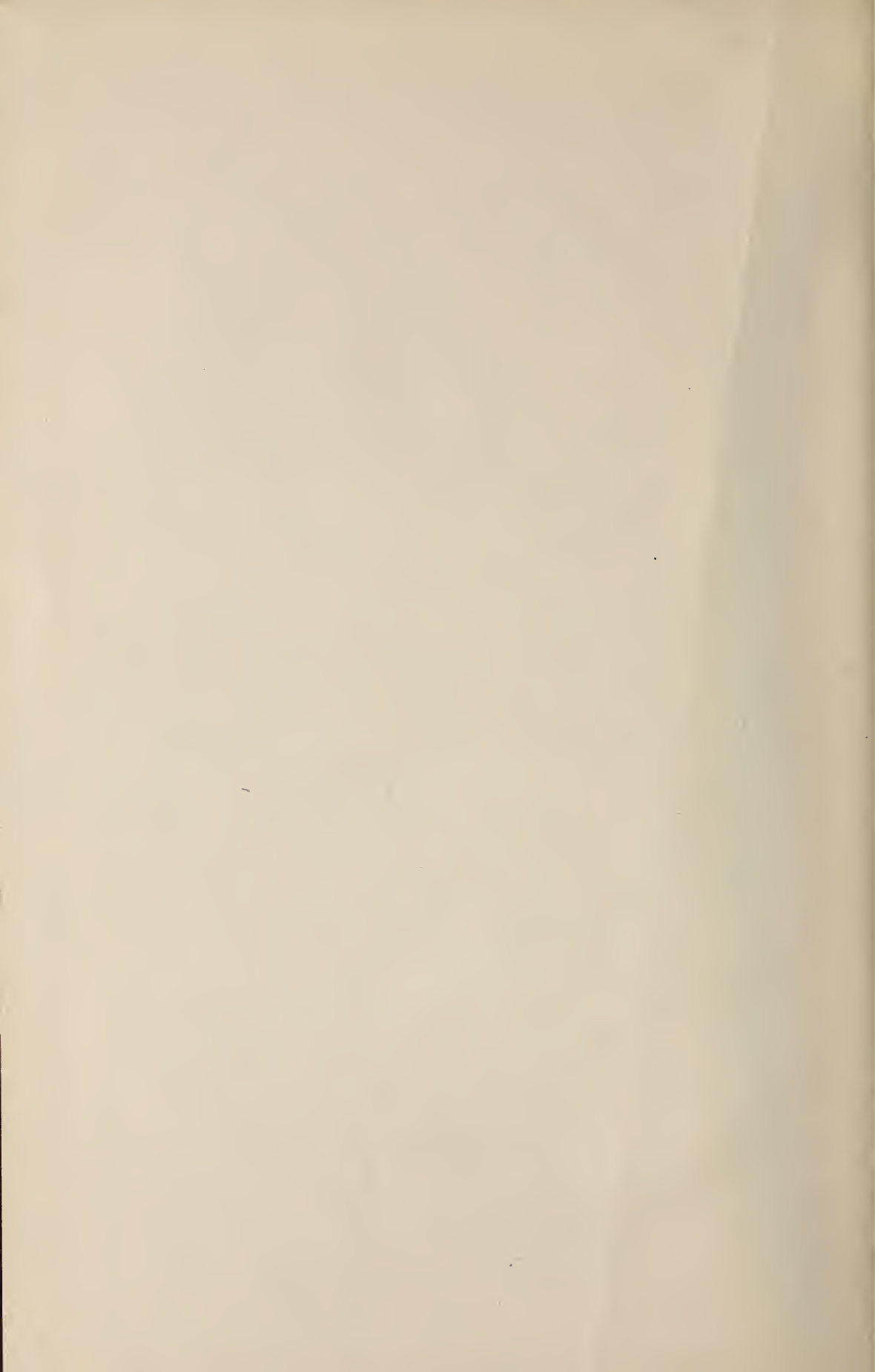
Book W8 W3

PRESENTED BY

copy 2

ack to Mrs. Wright

E, May 9, '11

























Carroll S. Wright.

# Carroll Davidson Wright

A MEMORIAL

BY HORACE G. WADLIN, Litt.D.

Librarian Boston Public Library; Chief Massachusetts Bureau  
Statistics of Labor, 1888-1903

Boston

Wright & Potter Printing Company, State Printers  
18 Post Office Square

1911

copy 2

HA 23  
.WBW 3  
copy 2

Gift

Carnegie Endowment for Int. Peace

DEC 2 8 1924





51,248  
Jan 3 11/29

# CARROLL DAVIDSON WRIGHT.

## A MEMORIAL.

---

### I.

Carroll Davidson Wright, the Second Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, afterwards Commissioner of Labor of the United States and still later president of Clark College, Worcester, Massachusetts, died in the city of Worcester, February 20, 1909. His work, from the point of view of its results, was unique. He created the peculiar department of the public service to which his life was mainly devoted. When he entered this service, bureaus of original investigation devoted to the collection and presentation of statistical information relating to sociology, particularly to that branch of sociology included under the broad term "the labor question," were practically unknown; when he left the office of Commissioner of Labor such offices were recognized as important and necessary branches of government.

The Massachusetts Bureau was not only the first institution of its kind, but, under Colonel Wright's direction, the form of its organization and the theory under which it was operated were found so acceptable that this department served as a model for the creation of similar bureaus in other States, a national bureau at Washington, and Departments of Labor in several foreign countries. This chain of offices, engaged in the accumulation of evidence upon the wide ranges of human activity within the province of sociology, was by no means due to the work of any one man; but, so far as one man may be said to have shaped the general plan upon which they were organized, Colonel Wright is entitled to the credit. The connection between his work in Massachusetts and the establishment of the bureaus in other States and at Washington is direct, and the influence abroad of the American bureaus may be clearly seen. The broad provisions of the legislative resolve creating the

Bureau in Massachusetts were generally followed elsewhere. This resolve was not due to Colonel Wright's initiative, but the law alone, apart from the sane interpretation which he gave to it during the first years of his administration, would not have prevented the abolition of the Bureau before it had won popular favor, nor would it have enabled the department to attract the wide public attention it afterward received. With no previous scientific training which especially fitted him for work in this field, he nevertheless had native qualities of mind which pre-eminently qualified him for the faithful collection and unbiased presentation of evidence, in the form of statistics, relating to the most important problems of modern life. A New England ancestry gave him the advantage due to heredity, but academic instruction had small part in his life. Like so many others in our history, he acquired self-culture based upon the reading required for admission to the bar, supplemented by extended study of the special branch of legal practice to which he proposed to devote his attention, the law of patents; and, later, by wide reading in economics, especially upon social problems and other pressing questions of the day. Beyond this he had the training which neither books nor university can give, gained through sympathetic association with men of affairs; and he manifested the New England aptitude for turning one's hand to the efficient performance of the work which the trend of events makes necessary. He knew, instinctively, how to make the best use of present opportunity as a foundation of future success.

## II.

Colonel Wright was born in Dunbarton, New Hampshire, July 25, 1840. His father, Reverend Nathan R. Wright, was at the time pastor of the Universalist Church in the little town. His mother was Eliza (Clark) Wright, and the boy Carroll was the third of seven children. His ancestors, both paternal and maternal, had for many generations lived in New England, although upon his father's side the line runs to the north of England while his mother's progenitors were Scotch. Both of his great-grandfathers were in the army of the American Revolution, — one, Colonel Jacob Wright, afterward left Westford in Massachusetts to settle in New Hampshire, and the other, Deacon Jonathan Clark, went from Braintree into the same province, thus uniting the families from which Colonel Wright was descended. His parents soon removed

from Dunbarton to Hooksett, New Hampshire, and afterwards to Washington in the same State, where his boyhood was mainly spent. As in the case of many clergymen in rural New England, the pursuit of agriculture was joined with the pastoral duties, and like other country ministers' sons under similar conditions young Wright until his sixteenth year helped in the farm work when out of school, receiving, through intimate contact with Nature in her varying moods, as she presents herself in the changing seasons upon the northern hills, a kind of discipline which city boys unhappily miss. Nature must often be wooed there with patient toil to yield such harvests as may be gleaned from the rock-bound fields of the hill towns, and, with no inborn aptitude for figures, he would sometimes humorously remark of these early experiences that the most familiar arithmetic of his boyhood was the figure that he cut behind the plow upon his father's farm.

But his education was not neglected. Rarely has the country clergyman in New England failed to appreciate the value of books, and the boy's bright face and winning personality, and his keen intelligence, gave promise of a brilliant future. His father determined that the lad should have such advantages as it was possible to secure. He went to the public schools until fitted to enter the academy in the town of Washington, and afterwards, as his parents removed from place to place, he attended the high school at Reading, Massachusetts, and academies in Alstead, New Hampshire, and Chester, Vermont. He early determined to study law, and in 1860, being then but twenty years of age, began a systematic course of reading in preparation for the bar, under the guidance of William P. Wheeler, a well-known lawyer of Keene, New Hampshire, the court town of Cheshire County. Without money, or friends who could supply it, unwilling, even had it been possible, to burden his father, whose slender income was no more than sufficient for the needs of a growing family, Wright had recourse to the usual expedient of young New Englanders under similar conditions, and by teaching school in the country districts where, during the winters, it was customary to employ a schoolmaster, gained such limited funds as with economy would carry him over the pathway he had chosen.

From the first he took an interest in public affairs. The country was in the turmoil of politics that preceded the Civil War. Men were taking sides upon the question of the hour. Intensely interested

in the debates between Lincoln and Douglass, although not yet a voter, with the ardor of youth he followed the fortunes of the Republican party in that great campaign of 1860 which resulted in the election of Lincoln, and he remained a Republican in political affiliations until his death.

In the Spring of 1861 his father became the pastor of a church in Franklin, Massachusetts, and the family removed from New Hampshire to that town. The young man secured a place in the law office of Erastus Worthington, of Dedham, who for many years was clerk of the Norfolk County Court; and in the following year, while living in Cambridge, found opportunity to continue his legal studies in the office of Tolman Willey, of Boston.

The great civil struggle had begun. Everywhere men were leaving the farm, the workshop, or the college to respond to the call for troops. Careers in the making were temporarily suspended. Text-books were closed and desks abandoned. For the moment all things gave place to the supreme duty of the hour. No young man of energy and ambition, filled with patriotic ardor, and with strong opinions upon the question at issue, could have taken any other course than that which Wright now followed. September, 1862, he returned to Keene, New Hampshire, and enlisted as a private in Company C, of the Fourteenth Volunteer Regiment of his native State.

### III.

There was now shown a certain quality of leadership which always brought Colonel Wright to the front in any group of men with whom he happened to be associated. "As much virtue as there is, so much appears," says Emerson. Before his regiment left New Hampshire he became second lieutenant of his company, and this early promotion was simply the initial step in a series of official assignments to positions involving honorable and difficult service. He was soon Brigade Commissary at Poolesville, Maryland; Officer in charge of the Central Prison at Washington; Adjutant to the Provost Marshal in that city; and Aide-de-Camp to General Martindale, Military Governor of the Department. As Adjutant to the Provost Marshal he had charge of all the guards at the bridges and ferries around the Capitol. The effort to pass contraband goods through the lines was constant, those interested in the traffic were unscrupulous in their methods, and bribery was often attempted. Wright's position required not only

untiring vigilance but moral stamina ; qualities that might have been lacking in one so young, — he was barely twenty-three, and without much worldly experience. Under trying conditions he exhibited the executive ability and unswerving honesty that were always conspicuous elements in his character.

In September, 1863, within one year after leaving home, he was appointed Adjutant of his regiment with the rank of First Lieutenant, thereafter serving as Assistant Adjutant General of the District of Carrollton, Louisiana, and of the First Brigade, Second Division, Nineteenth Corps, in that State. In the following year he was assigned to staff duty, during the Summer and Fall, under Sheridan in the Shenandoah Campaign, and at its close he became Colonel of the regiment in which two years before he had enlisted as a private. The strenuous service that preceded this promotion was not without effect upon his health. The marks it left upon him were never entirely effaced, and finally a severe attack of typhoid in the Spring of 1865 forced him to resign his command, one month preceding the close of the war. Broken in health he returned to Boston, at once resumed the study of the law in the office of Mr. Willey, and, as the result of diligent application, was admitted to the bar in Keene in October. But his physical condition was unequal to the strain. His continued ill-health made it impossible for him to enter upon practice in that city as he had intended. His physician thought it imprudent, and, forced for the moment to change his plans, he became connected with a business enterprise in Lynn, Massachusetts, for which he had neither aptitude, training, nor inclination, and which did not long continue.

#### IV.

January 1, 1867, Colonel Wright was married in Reading, Massachusetts, where he had formerly attended school during the pastoral connection of his father with a local church. His wife was Caroline E. Harnden, daughter of Sylvester Harnden, a well-known citizen and prominent manufacturer in the town, and Colonel Wright acquired a residence there which was to continue for many years. In August, 1867, he began practice in Boston as counsellor in patent cases, the branch of law to which his study had been especially devoted. In October he was admitted to the bar in Massachusetts on motion of Mr. Willey, and to the bar of the United States Courts

on motion of George S. Hillard, at that time District Attorney of the United States. His practice immediately became lucrative to a degree quite exceptional for so young a man. Apparently he had found his place in life, and his future seemed secure.

He was then twenty-seven years of age, of distinguished presence and soldierly bearing, to which his military training had contributed; in manner dignified, yet open and cordial, and possessing that peculiar quality called magnetism, by which men were attracted to him and held in the bonds of loyal friendship. He inspired confidence in his ability, but no less in his honesty and integrity of purpose. These personal qualities, together with the reputation he had won in his useful though brief military service and was now gaining as a rising member of an honorable profession, made him at once a leading figure in the town where he resided.

This town was then not too large to prevent friendly relations among all its people. Homogeneous in population it was free from the cliques or artificial distinctions that are sometimes found in towns composed of widely separated classes. It was chiefly residential, containing no one very rich or very poor, and had been little affected by the tide of immigration which was changing the character of the larger industrial places. Democratic in feeling, its citizens mingled in the celebration of the Fourth of July or upon other social occasions after the old New England manner. It had not outgrown the town picnic in the Summer, in which all participated, or the amateur dramatic performance in the local assembly hall in the Winter, supported by all with an enthusiasm that a more sophisticated age has made impossible. Such a town was prepared to accept leadership in the person of this accomplished young man who was ready to join with ardor in its social life. It was leadership conferred without self-seeking on his part, and it grew out of the conditions of the place and the time, and the natural qualifications of the man. He was inclined to promote the various civic activities, and those who needed helpful counsel, or more material aid, turned to him as a matter of course and found him ready with such assistance as he could give. He was devoted to the welfare and improvement of the public schools; active in the little church to which he gave his earnest counsel and support; foremost in every social event; a ready and convincing debater in town meeting, with gifts in oratory and a

facility of expression that were already lifting him to prominence upon the lecture platform. It was inevitable that his friends and neighbors should seek to confer political honors upon him.

In 1871, therefore, he was elected to the State Senate from the district of which Reading was a part, and re-elected in 1872, his service in the Legislature thus comprising two successive years. In the second year he was chairman of the Committee on Insurance and of the Committee on Military Affairs. In this work he exhibited unusual capacity and was prominently connected with important legislation, perhaps the most important being the acts establishing the Massachusetts standard insurance policy and reorganizing the militia system of the Commonwealth. The last, especially, required for its successful passage knowledge of military affairs, capacity for devising an effective military organization, and the ability to present forcibly and convincingly, upon the floor of the Senate, the radical reforms proposed. Chief among these reforms was a system of service examinations for the militia officers intended to prevent the use of influence and patronage which then prevailed. The beneficial effect of this statute was sufficient evidence of the acumen of its legislative sponsor. A measure of considerable public importance was presented to the Legislature in that year by the late Josiah Quincy, providing for the establishment of morning and evening trains for working men upon the steam railroads within the suburban district of Boston, to be operated at low rates of fare. This was pushed to enactment largely through the energetic advocacy of Colonel Wright.

#### V.

The Legislature, merely by resolution passed in 1869, had established a Bureau of Statistics of Labor; probably without foreseeing the future importance of such an institution, and certainly without clearly defining its method of operation. It simply provided that biennially in May the Governor should appoint a Chief, that the Chief should appoint a Deputy, and that these two should "constitute a bureau of statistics with headquarters in the State House;" and that the duties of the Bureau should be "to collect, assort, systematize and present in annual reports to the Legislature on or before the first of March in each year, statistical details relating to all departments of labor in the Commonwealth; especially in its relations to the com-

mercial, industrial, social, educational and sanitary condition of the laboring classes, and to the permanent prosperity of the productive industry of the Commonwealth." The Bureau was given power "to send for persons and papers, to examine witnesses under oath, and such witnesses" were to be summoned "in the same manner, and paid the same fees as witnesses before the Superior Courts of the Commonwealth." Its first Chief was Henry K. Oliver and his deputy was George E. McNeill. Both these men held decided opinions upon certain phases of the labor problem then coming into prominence, and Mr. McNeill especially, was then, and until his death in 1906 continued to be, a prominent leader in the organized labor movement in the State. The first report of the Bureau was presented in 1870 and provoked much criticism. From that time until 1873 the Department was more or less involved in controversy. Under the conditions then existing it was not remarkable that certain important interests in the State regarded its operations and the conclusions presented in its reports with little favor. But the advocates of labor reform were by no means united in its support. It is not now necessary nor is this the place to revive controversies long since happily forgotten. These culminated early in 1873, and during the legislative session of that year the question of continuing or abolishing the Bureau was debated with much heat, but without changing the status of the department, and outside the Legislature different factions of the labor element and representatives of capital were equally outspoken in criticism.

All this was the occasion of some embarrassment to the Governor, His Excellency William B. Washburn. To make the Bureau practically effective, and to win for it popular favor, it was plainly necessary to secure as its chief executive officer a man of executive ability and of great tact; neither so conservative as to be unprogressive nor so radical as to be impractical; sufficiently well known to inspire respect, and at the same time far enough removed from the contending elements to command the confidence of the public. No man then in active public life seemed to the Governor so well adapted to this work as Colonel Wright. With his legislative career the Governor was familiar. He therefore sent for him and offered him the appointment. Wright was at first disinclined to accept. At the moment such a place offered little that was attractive to a young lawyer who



had established a rapidly increasing practice. But, urged by the Governor, he finally consented upon the understanding that he need not abandon his profession, and that he need bind himself to remain no longer than to overcome, if possible, the existing disfavor in which the Bureau was held, and to organize the work of the Decennial Census of 1875, for which provision must at once be made. Neither Colonel Wright nor the Governor foresaw that in consenting to this arrangement he had taken the most important step of his life. In May, 1873, Messrs. Oliver and McNeill closed their connection with the Bureau, and were succeeded by Colonel Wright as Chief, with George H. Long as Deputy.

Eight years had now passed since the close of the Civil War. The Nation had entered upon the era of unexampled prosperity which marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The old order was rapidly changing. Everywhere men were questioning the results of the great industrial revolution. Machinery was displacing manual labor. The cities and great manufacturing towns were drawing the young men away from the pursuit of agriculture. Capital was concentrating in the hands of the great captains of industry. Individual employment was giving way to corporate organization, and the merging of corporations was leading to those great aggregations of capital popularly known as trusts. The conflicts between capital and labor were becoming more bitter. The entrance of women upon factory and mercantile occupations was changing their status, perhaps threatening the permanency of the family relation.

For the manifest evils of this transition period panaceas were freely offered, and theories of social reform were passionately urged, with much *a priori* statement but often with little basis of fact. Socialism was rising, with its promise of a better social state; and anarchism, with its denunciation of the existing order. The economic theory of *laissez faire* was breaking down, and the methods of capitalistic production were seriously questioned by ardent theorists who were no longer content to take their economic principles from the existing text-books. Every legislative body found it necessary to consider a mass of proposed legislation directly affecting the right of free contract as it was then held, nearly all of which carried the police power far beyond its existing bounds. The Massachusetts ten-hour law was not enacted until 1874. Employers' liability rested

upon the common law only. The inspection of factories with its attendant sanitary regulations was practically unknown, and child labor was without effective restriction. Into the turmoil of the changing conditions Colonel Wright was forced by his appointment as Chief of this Bureau.

## VI.

He entered his new office quietly, and found there neither records nor organization of any kind. The slate was clean, and his first duty was to determine a policy and then to devise methods for pursuing it. The friends of Messrs. Oliver and McNeill were outspoken in their criticism of the Governor's action. The labor reform element generally, whether in complete sympathy with the views of the former officers or not, regarded the new Chief with suspicion. He had never shown much interest in the reforms they had at heart, and in the Senate had voted against the ten-hour bill. On the other hand, the employers of labor throughout the State felt, not without reason, that the Bureau had been established to placate the labor element, and were inclined to disregard its inquiries, if they did not resent them as impertinent. If their wishes had been respected the Bureau would no doubt have been abolished, especially after the experience of the preceding three years, and no appointment would, from their point of view, have been commended, if it promised a vigorous administration. No one impugned the energy or the ability of Colonel Wright. The popular feeling simply was that the Bureau existed merely to promote labor legislation. Indeed it was known as the "Labor Bureau." The representatives of capital expected it to show little consideration for their interests, and the representatives of labor looked to it for an energetic propaganda in their behalf. That statistics could be used, or were intended to be used, for any other purpose than to add weight to an otherwise weak argument neither side supposed. The thing to do was to choose your side, and then bring forward such figures as were needed to give verisimilitude to a bald and unconvincing narrative, leaving out or carefully obscuring all others. A Bureau of Labor Statistics, of course, was intended to give the weight of official authority to statistics selected to prove the contentions of the labor reformer. A chief who could not be relied upon to take this point of view was, by the labor element,

viewed with distrust. To those opposed to the Bureau, the mere fact that a man of Colonel Wright's training and position was willing to accept such an office suggested an ulterior motive. Did he not hope to advance his political fortunes by means of it?

But Colonel Wright had no desire to conduct a partisan bureau. He had far broader views. The friends of the Bureau were eventually to learn that their interests were best promoted by the unbiased presentation of all the facts, nothing extenuated nor ought set down in malice; and their opponents were to find that they need not fear unjust treatment, even under a complete portrayal of existing conditions, when they were presented without prejudice.

Colonel Wright began his new work with no pride of opinion as to its place in the scheme of government. He started with no preconceived notions as to the usefulness of such a Bureau, and without perfervid enthusiasm concerning the questions with which it was to deal. This was undoubtedly an advantage, probably unappreciated at the time. The one question he asked himself was whether or not the office could be made useful, not to a class, but to the public generally. With the scientific use of statistics he was not then familiar. Neither then, nor indeed afterward, was he much attracted by the accepted theories of the economists. The immediate problem to be solved was a practical one. Here was an office unlike any previously established. It was unhampered by precedent. It contemplated the exercise of broad powers of public investigation upon matters heretofore covered by the cloak of individual privacy. The machine was now dormant. Every revolution of its wheels provoked animosity and clamor. Could it be made to work without friction and with beneficial results?

There was one man in the United States whose opinion upon this point was pre-eminently entitled to weight. Francis A. Walker was then professor of political economy in the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale. He was deeply interested in economic questions, especially those relating to wages and production. He had completed with marked efficiency the ninth United States Census, and was therefore familiar with the practical difficulties encountered in the collection, upon a broad scale, of statistics relating to the industrial and social life of the people. To him Colonel Wright turned, and in reply received the following letter:

I have given much thought to the letter in which you do me the honor to ask me my views as to the work of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics; but as the result, I find little to say beyond expressing my hearty sympathy with the purposes of your office, and my wishes for its success. I feel the strongest confidence that the Commonwealth is prepared for your work, and that the work can be done to the satisfaction of all citizens; and that your office has only to prove itself superior alike to partisan dictation and to the seductions of theory, in order to command the cordial support of the press and of the body of citizens. If any mistake is more likely than others to be committed in such a critical position, it is to undertake to recognize both parties as parties, and to award so much in due turn to each. This course almost inevitably leads to jealousy and dissatisfaction. If an office is strong enough simply to consider the body of citizens, and to refuse to recognize or entertain consideration of parties, success is already in the main assured. Public confidence once given, the choice of agencies, the selection of inquiries to be propounded, are easy and plain. The country is hungry for information: everything of a statistical character, or even of a statistical appearance, is taken up with an eagerness that is almost pathetic; the community have not yet learned to be half skeptical and critical enough in respect to such statements. All this is favorable to such laudable efforts as you are engaged in, for the difficulty of collecting statistics in a new country requires much indulgence; and I have strong hopes that you will so distinctly and decisively disconnect the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics from politics,—from dependence on organizations, whether of working men or of employers, and from the support of economical theories, individual views or class interests,—as to command the moral support of the whole body of citizens, and receive the coöperation of all men of all occupations and of all degrees, without reference, however, either to their degrees or their occupations.

## VII.

With these helpful suggestions before him, paying no attention to partisan clamor, disregarding the comments of the press, and making no answer to the criticisms of the labor reformers, Colonel Wright planned his first report, and with his usual energy began to collect the required data. He was content to await the verdict of the public upon the result.

This report covered an exhaustive inquiry into wages and the cost of living in Massachusetts and foreign countries, and upon the general condition of the workingmen in this State as compared with those in other communities, especially in the manufacturing centers abroad. When only a part of the needed information had been secured, a leading newspaper remarked:

The results cannot be known until the report is published. But, certainly, no one can justly say that the bureau is not doing a good work. With the matter of regulating hours of labor, the bureau is concerned only to show, by facts and figures, whether a law for such a purpose would be beneficial. *Indeed it is not proposed to volunteer any opinions on any subject, but simply to collate, from sources which are entirely reliable, facts which concern every workingman in the State, and by a knowledge of which he cannot fail to profit.* Whatever opinion a man may have in regard to a ten-hour law, or an eight-hour law, or however he may be inclined to look upon rich men as conspirators against his interest, he cannot visit the Department of Labor in Pemberton Square, and fail to see that the chief and his deputy are honestly striving for the interests of the working man. No better thing could happen to a man who has listened to the invectives which have been hurled against the new Bureau of Labor than to go to the office in Pemberton Square and see for himself the work which is being done. If the forthcoming report shall contain more tables of fact and less dissertation than its predecessor, it will, for that reason, be more valuable to everybody, and especially to the worker who has been the victim of innumerable speech makers, but to whom nothing can be less dry or more interesting than the statistics which shall show to him how he stands in relation to co-workers the world over and what he has a right to demand from the State in which he is a citizen.

The sentence italicized indicates clearly the position Colonel Wright had taken. In all his subsequent work it was maintained. His personal opinions, and he was not without opinions, vigorously expressed on proper occasions, were never permitted to break the force or to color the presentation of ascertained fact, in his official reports. His official position was, in his view, somewhat like that of a master, whose duty lay in the sifting of evidence and its presentation to the court. In due time this first report was published. As indicated, it contained little dissertation, but its contents received the attention they deserved. From that time forward criticism was allayed, and the sincerity and non-partisan character of the Bureau recognized. Cavillers, of course, were occasionally heard. Those who had proposed to use the Bureau in propaganda could not have been expected to at once sympathize with the trend it was now showing. The ardent reformer can seldom brook the colorless presentation of evidence, even upon his own side of the case. To some, Colonel Wright's way of dealing with figures seemed cold and unconvincing. There are those who believe that exaggerated statements are necessary to stimulate progress, and Colonel Wright would never exaggerate.

He would never dwell upon the dark side of the shield without showing whatever brightness appeared upon the other. The picture which he painted was seldom without high lights, but at least it was never distorted. Critics of a different temperament found it difficult to accept calmly this judicial attitude. At the other extreme were certain ultra-conservative representatives of vested interests whose comfortable satisfaction with existing conditions was disturbed by the light of publicity, and whose feeling toward the Bureau, with its periodical series of questions, was far from kindly. But gradually, the press, without regard to party, acknowledged the value of the Bureau, the Legislature relied upon its reports, and the public generally accepted its conclusions and recognized the competency and fairness of its Chief.

The year 1875 came and passed. In that year the Decennial Census of the State was taken by the Bureau, under an organization perfected by Colonel Wright and resting upon legislation enacted upon his initiative, with results far superior to any previously achieved in such work. The social and industrial condition of the Commonwealth was shown by it in such a way as to attract instant and wide attention. The accuracy of detail, the lucid arrangement of the tabulated results, and the breadth and fullness of the analytical treatment shown in this work gave Colonel Wright an assured position among official statisticians in America. Incidentally, it established the Census system of the State upon a firm basis. This system was to be enlarged and perfected in later years, notably by Colonel Wright himself in 1885, and by others who were to come after him. As it grew in importance and magnitude, reflecting the growth of the Commonwealth, it was improved through the aid of staff officers and others whose assistance Colonel Wright was always quick to recognize and acknowledge. But, after 1875, its schedules and methods were deemed of such importance that the National Census office accepted the co-operation of the Bureau, its Chief (at first Colonel Wright in 1880, and afterwards his successors) acting as supervisor of the United States Census within the State, without partisan controversy, and with practically a free hand in the conduct of the work, to the mutual advantage of the Commonwealth and the Nation.

The exacting duties incident to the Census, joined with those of the routine administration of the Bureau, required his entire attention. The law is a jealous mistress and is content with no partial

service. The parting of the ways was reached. Either the work in which he was deeply immersed must be given up or his profession must be abandoned. His choice was at once made. He had not only found statistical research congenial, but he had become interested in its results and impressed with the importance to the welfare of humanity of a just solution of the complex problems that were daily becoming more pressing. Disregarding its possibly larger pecuniary reward, he put behind him the profession upon which he had entered with such promise, and determined to devote himself to the newer field of work. At first, when the fate of the Bureau was hanging in the balance, he had cherished an honorable ambition to be of public service in another direction. There was some effort on the part of his friends, which he did not discourage, to send him to Congress from his home district. But the conditions were not favorable. Had they been otherwise the country might have lost its greatest statistician and gained a Congressman of energy and ability, but without the opportunity for distinguished public service that afterwards opened to Colonel Wright. In fact, his temperament was hardly that of the successful politician, who must often disregard his opponents' point of view, or, if he would accomplish useful results, must frequently subordinate his private convictions to the exigencies of party. At all events, in unbiased statistical investigation political aspirations have no place, and these, also, were finally abandoned. He had made his choice, and thereafter there was neither retrogression nor shadow of turning.

#### VIII.

In 1876 the position of Deputy to the Chief was abolished, leaving Colonel Wright the sole executive head. His theory of the non-partisan character of such a Bureau, exemplified by an administration that was everywhere acknowledged to be free from either partisan bias or personal prejudice, was at length accepted. Even the labor leaders, who were at first disposed to regard the office as their especial prerogative, saw the advantage to them of such an administration. They could use the reports of the Bureau with confidence, since no one might impugn the figures on the ground that a labor advocate had secured them; and both labor and capital, whether or not the results of the Bureau's investigations were acceptable, relied upon the fairness of Colonel Wright. In the language of the day, they knew that

they might expect a square deal from him. Twice during his incumbency his term of service, limited to two years by the legislative resolve establishing the Bureau, expired while a governor of different political faith occupied the chair. But both Governor Gaston and Governor Butler reappointed him, and any other action would have received popular disapproval. He had so fully established the non-partisan character of the office that no governor has ever since raised the question of party affiliations in the selection of its Chief.

While Colonel Wright continued at the head of the Massachusetts Bureau there was hardly a topic of importance within the range of sociological investigation which he left untouched, and to all of the subjects considered his researches contributed data previously unknown. The education of working children, the condition of workingmen's families, the social life of workingmen, illiteracy, the growth of manufactures in the Commonwealth, profits and wages, the relation of intemperance to pauperism and crime, the question of divorce, co-operation and profit sharing, prices and cost of living, employers' liability, early factory labor in New England, the condition of working girls in Boston, Sunday labor, factory legislation, strikes and lockouts, — these and other subjects were treated in elaborate investigations which began with the careful preparation of schedules of inquiry, followed by intelligent agency work in the field, the final tabulation of results and their presentation in lucid statistical tables accompanied by sufficient textual analysis. No statistical work of this kind had ever been done before. The reports were in constant demand. They received European notice and favorable comment, and were used as text-books in the colleges, which were now taking up the study of sociology and the relation of statistical science to economic questions.

Thus the permanence of the Bureau was assured, and liberal appropriations annually made for its support without protracted debate. It was now regarded not as an organ of propaganda to advance any particular theory, but as a source to which the legislator or the economist might turn for evidence upon existing industrial and social conditions, with firm confidence in its statements. Colonel Wright, if he had done nothing else, had made it clear that the usefulness of such a Bureau depended not upon the arguments its Chief might frame for or against the great questions that were agitating the public, but upon the clearness and completeness with



which it presented the facts upon which any valid argument must rest; not some of the facts but all of them, so far as it was humanly possible to collect and show them. To him statistics were not mere figures to be carelessly used, nor, on the other hand, had they any peculiar sanctity. They were at best more or less imperfect evidence of facts which lay behind them, partial and approximate, frequently; rarely final, and those of to-day perhaps to be made useless by others to-morrow. But, until superseded, to be given weight proportionate to the honesty and intelligence of the person who collected them; no more, and certainly no less. One who knew Colonel Wright well at this period remarked:

His familiarity with figures has not bred a contempt but a profound reverence. No man knows better than he the value and the honesty of figures, and no man realizes more fully the grave responsibility which rests upon him who uses them. In his terse, lucid way of speech he is given to epigrammatic expressions. He said once to a friend: "Figures won't lie, but liars will figure." And he said again, "It scares me to death to hear people use figures loosely." These two expressions convey a very clear idea of the spirit with which he approaches statistics. He understands the faith that even careful minds place in figures, and he recognizes the ease with which figures can be made to misrepresent facts. Because of the danger that attends the misuse of figures, he has schooled himself into an absolutely impartial frame of mind, politically and economically, so that he approaches every investigation with a determination to accept unflinchingly whatever conclusion, however disagreeable, the figures may present. Obviously it requires a man of courage to do this, but then he always has had an abundance of that quality.

Although the Chief, as a matter of principle, had refrained from directly advocating legislation, the investigations which he had conducted had materially affected the course of legislation, especially with respect to the employment of labor, and the establishment of an effective system of factory inspection, based upon a definite factory code. He was unquestionably right in his view that the results of such investigations, once the Bureau had established its title to confidence, would carry more weight with the public and with the Legislature than any personal argument however cogent. Indirectly they led to changes in the convict labor system, to the establishment of a Board of Arbitration, to the improvement of sanitary conditions in factories and workshops, and to reform in other industrial condi-

tions. The investigations of the Bureau had an important relation to the establishment of effective provisions for the education of children in factory towns and to limit their employment to reasonable hours; also to the enforcement of the ten-hour law, and its extension to other States than Massachusetts; and to the enactment of an employers' liability law.

The Massachusetts statutes, passed under such conditions, served as precedents for similar legislation elsewhere. The reports of Colonel Wright on these and other subjects of proposed legislation, sent out from Massachusetts, were generally accepted as authoritative. The effect of such reports was cited in answer to those who, questioning the practical value of Bureaus of Statistics of Labor when conducted as offices of investigation merely, wished to see concrete illustrations of their influence. The quiet man who had thus built up the Massachusetts Bureau was now exercising an authority far greater than any mere advocate of reform measures could possibly have secured.

#### IX.

The reputation of Colonel Wright grew with the results he had achieved. He became connected with the leading economic and statistical societies, and was in frequent request as a lecturer both upon the methods and theory of his work and upon its results. In 1879 he was honored by an invitation to deliver a course of lectures before the Lowell Institute in Boston, upon "Phases of the Labor Question Ethically Considered;" and having prepared a special report, in connection with the United States Census of 1880, upon the factory system of Europe and America, he gave a series of lectures on the factory system at Harvard University in 1881. The Lowell Lectures were followed in 1882 by the publication of a little book entitled "The Relation of Political Economy to the Labor Question," in which Colonel Wright reproduced without much revision the first lecture of that course. In characteristic phrase he dedicated this little volume to "sober, industrious, and thrifty workingmen, and humane, large-hearted employers, . . . two types of men I prefer to speak to." This book was never of great importance to the student, and has perhaps become still less so with the passage of time and the general change of sentiment with regard to its subject. As its author often admitted, it would have gained in literary style

had it been carefully rewritten. The spoken word, if effective, and Colonel Wright's platform utterances were always effective, will seldom bear unaltered transcription to the printed page. But this, after all, is a minor matter. The book was never much liked by economists of the type of Professor Sumner of Yale, and for reasons not far to seek. Had Colonel Wright been a trained economist he would no doubt have more carefully discriminated, in some of his phrases, between things that the Manchester school held far apart. His book might have gained thereby in scholarly clearness, but probably it would have lost the element of moral earnestness which alone gave it value. The spirit of his discourse is not obscured, and as a human document the little book is of great interest, since it shows plainly the natural bent of Colonel Wright's mind. After taking up the work of the Bureau he had read much upon the labor question and upon social problems generally. Whatever he may have lacked in economic theory, he was profoundly moved by ethical considerations; perhaps as a result of paternal influence in that humble home among the New Hampshire hills. In all his future work the ethical bearing of the different problems with which he was dealing became his first subject of thought.

The statements Wright put into this book show his point of view with regard to the labor question, — the position to which he had been brought by his reading and by his practical experience in investigating social problems. He was afterward to gain in breadth and strength of statement, as his experience and reading broadened, but, essentially, his convictions remained unchanged. At the outset he says: "I shall constantly use the term 'labor question' as embracing the wants of the wage-laborer, or, in a general way, as representing the discussion of the just and equitable distribution of profits, or the products of labor and capital." That is to say, the labor question was not a question of wages or hours of labor only. It comprehended all the varied *wants* of the laborer, and labor and capital were partners in a joint effort to produce a surplus product or profit, to be equitably distributed between the partners. This conception of the wage-earner, not as a servant or even as an employé of a capitalist whose obligations were discharged by the payment of a wage fixed under conditions largely beyond the control of the recipient, but as a partner with the capitalist in a joint enterprise, in the results of

which each partner was to share equitably, was central in Colonel Wright's thought. And, from his point of view, the relations between the partners were reciprocal and fixed by considerations moral rather than economic. In dealing with industrial problems throughout his after life, even in the practical adjustment of serious labor difficulties in which he took an important part, we shall find him dominated by this conception.

Profits, as he used the word, included not merely the capitalist's share of the joint product, but the common fund to be divided between the partners. This showed a disregard of the common use of terms, to say nothing of the usual distinctions of the economists. But, terminology aside, the conception of industrial operations as in a very real sense coöperative, and of the relation of employer and employé as not confined to the mere payment and receipt of wages, was less familiar then than now. "A just distribution of profits," he goes on to say, "by which support and provision for old age may be secured, depends much more upon the cost of living, habits of frugality, temperance, good morals, sanitary conditions, educational privileges, and various forces of a moral nature, than upon purely economical conditions."

The influence of Chalmers, of Le Play, of Walker, and of other writers to whom Colonel Wright returned acknowledgment is plainly seen in his little book, but he is entitled to credit for thus early bringing the new conception clearly before a popular audience. The essay, with others of a similar tenor, was afterward reprinted and, as one of the publications of the American Unitarian Association, attracted readers particularly interested in the moral aspects of sociology. It was without doubt helpful to clergymen who were beginning to discuss phases of the labor problem, and who were naturally attracted by Colonel Wright's views. In its final paragraph, Colonel Wright said: "I have not been ambitious to promulgate these principles, or theories, if you choose, with an idea that they were to cure existing difficulties, or prevent the recurrence of past evils, but simply to make a new application to the wants of the future industrial world of those principles which alone have been successful under like circumstances in the past; and they are in accord with the Decalogue, the surest platform for the labor question — which involves capitalists and laborers — to rest upon, and by which to insure success." This,

also, is characteristic of his constant attitude. He always asserted that there was no panacea for industrial evils apart from the ten commandments and the golden rule.

## X.

On the 23d of April, 1879, the Massachusetts Legislature sent a resolution to Congress asking for the establishment of a National Bureau of Labor. No greater tribute, although not so intended, could have been paid to Colonel Wright's administration. The same legislative body which at the date of his appointment, and for some time after, was upon the point of abolishing the Bureau it had created, was now moved by what he had accomplished to seek to introduce similar methods in a wider field. Congress did not then take affirmative action. Various bills proposing such a Bureau were afterward introduced, considered, and either postponed or rejected outright. Finally, however, the United States Bureau of Labor was established by an Act of Congress approved June 27, 1884. It was created as a bureau of the Interior Department, given broad powers similar to those conferred upon the Bureau in Massachusetts, but although the Commissioner was to be appointed by the President, the chief clerk was to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Colonel Wright's experience naturally made him the one person in the country conspicuously qualified to organize the new Bureau. He was without question the man for the place, if he could be induced to leave Massachusetts. There were considerations of weight which made him disinclined to sever official relations which were now congenial. In the Massachusetts office he was practically independent; at Washington he would become a subordinate officer of the Interior Department. There was also the possibility that the new office might be controlled in its investigations, and therefore limited in its usefulness, by the personal idiosyncracies of the Secretary of the Interior. It was now Wright's firm opinion that statistical investigations such as were within the province of the Bureau must be controlled by one mind, free from the exigencies of party politics, and must not be complicated by possible differences of opinion between a cabinet officer, for example, and its nominal head. The wider opportunity offered by the National bureau was fully appreciated, however, and Colonel Wright decided to undertake the work. He was assured of a

free hand in its administration, and, happily, there was never any friction between him and the Secretary, as long as that form of organization continued.

The election of 1884 terminated the Republican administration at Washington, and the propriety of leaving the appointment of a Commissioner open until after Mr. Cleveland's inauguration was considered, especially as Colonel Wright could hardly be expected to resign his position in Massachusetts if the incoming administration held different views from those of Mr. Arthur as to the new office. Mr. Cleveland, however, having been informed of the conditions, let it be known that he would himself nominate Colonel Wright if the appointment were not previously made; and the official relations between the new President and Wright were always cordial.

The new Bureau was organized therefore by the selection of a Commissioner solely with regard to fitness, a result to which, as will be seen, Mr. Cleveland materially contributed. In January, 1885, Colonel Wright received his commission from President Arthur, and a chief clerk selected by the Commissioner was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior early in the following month. Colonel Wright was permitted to retain his connection with the Massachusetts Bureau until the important work of the State Census of 1885, then in progress, should be so far advanced that its relinquishment by him would cause no embarrassment. He remained at the head of the State Bureau, notwithstanding his appointment at Washington, until August, 1888, making frequent railway journeys to and fro as required for the administration of both offices.

## XI.

On assuming the position of Commissioner of Labor at Washington, Colonel Wright defined the policy of the Department as he intended to conduct it, in a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Interior, and there said:

Declaring this, then, to be the positive policy of the Bureau of Labor, this office makes its initial work that of pure fact; and any desire on the part of individuals or associations of individuals, whether of labor or of capital, seeking more or less than this policy indicates, must be considered as their wanting the work of the Bureau to conform to adopted theories or to be influential to shaping special ends. This being the case, I trust that this policy will meet the approval of all engaged in carrying on the

industrial enterprises of the country, as well as of the Government which has so generously established the Bureau; and I assure you that no other policy can bring success, but that any variance from that declared will result in failure. . . . It should be remembered that a bureau of labor cannot solve social or industrial problems, nor can it bring direct returns in a material way to the citizens of a country, but its work must be classed among educational efforts, and by judicious investigations and the fearless publication of the results thereof, it may and should enable the people to more clearly and more fully comprehend many of the problems which now vex them.

His first National report was promptly planned and in due time submitted. It covered the subject of industrial depressions. In this report, Colonel Wright also recommended that the Bureau be given authority to publish special reports, independently of its annual reports, whenever in the judgment of the Secretary of the Interior such reports might be of value to the public; as, for example, when it might be wise to investigate promptly some great industrial movement. This authority was given. The next two reports related respectively to convict labor and to strikes and lockouts. The Bureau then ceased to exist as originally established, and was superseded by the Department of Labor, created by an act approved June 13, 1888. This was thereafter an independent department until, by the Act of 1903, Congress created a Department of Commerce and Labor, and put under its jurisdiction, with other branches of the public service, the existing Department of Labor with the original designation of the Bureau of Labor.

The character of the office was not changed, except through enlargement and independence, by the Act of 1888. Its subsequent annual reports under Colonel Wright covered the subjects of working women in large cities; railroad labor; the cost of production in our great industries; industrial education; building and loan associations; strikes and lockouts; the work and wages of men, women, and children; the economic aspects of the liquor traffic; the effect of machinery upon labor; the municipal ownership of gas, electric, and water plants; wages in commercial countries; trade and technical education; wages and hours of labor. Besides these, several special reports were issued under his direction on important subjects, including the social statistics of cities; divorce; labor legislation; compulsory insurance in Germany; the housing of the working people; the Gothenburg system of the liquor traffic, and others. By his recommendation the

Department was authorized to publish regularly a Bulletin of Labor, in periodical form, the first issue appearing in November, 1898. This Bulletin was intended by the Commissioner to convey to the public, more promptly than could be done by the annual reports, the results of the minor investigations undertaken by the Department, and to contain digests of the State labor reports, and of the foreign documents of similar character, and reprints, immediately after passage, of the labor laws of the Nation and of the States.

Colonel Wright regarded this work as in the highest sense educational. He believed that "the popular education of the masses in the elementary facts of political and economic science is the greatest educational need" of the moment, and, to use his own words:

The Bureaus of Statistics of Labor are . . . facilitating this grand work by their faithful investigation . . . into all the causes of bad conditions of whatever nature, and by their fearless promulgation of the results of their investigation. . . . The character of the work of the Department has been critical, involving the closest application of the statistical method, and has been free to a large extent, if not entirely, from any desire to argue a point. If there have been errors in the origin of investigations they have arisen from a misconception of what constitutes labor statistics. A glance at the different volumes . . . may perhaps give the best evidence as to whether the Department has properly construed the character of its work.

Again, as to the value of such statistics, he says:

The altruistic spirit of the age undertakes to ascertain what social classes owe to each other, and statistical science helps the world to the answer. . . . If the answer is in the spirit of "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me," then we have put the Christian religion into social science, have answered the question rationally, and must have the light of facts in order that the action, either of governments or of communities, under the spirit of this answer shall not be either futile or absurd.

The reports contain a mass of information derived from original sources, reduced to orderly arrangement and accompanied by explanatory comment and analysis; and they are nowhere paralleled by other official documents. They are to be considered a series of valuable contributions to social and political science. The volumes impressively portray the intelligence, industry, and breadth of view displayed by Colonel Wright during his twenty years in Washington.



## XII.

Besides the administrative work directly connected with the Department, Colonel Wright, by reason of his official position, was called upon to render other public services, sometimes of a confidential nature. Senator Hoar once referred to him as "the counsellor of several Presidents." His judgment and discretion could be relied upon. After the resignation of the Director of the Eleventh Census, Mr. Robert B. Porter, that great work was placed in his hands and brought to completion. His *ex officio* service in connection with the adjustment of serious labor troubles in the two following conspicuous instances was especially important.

In 1894, controversy arose between certain railroads terminating in Chicago and their employés, leading to one of the most serious strikes ever known in the United States. This was generally referred to as "the Pullman strike," since employés of the Pullman Company and other members of the American Railway Union were united upon one side against the General Managers' Association upon the other. Large losses were due to the controversy, in property destroyed and in wages sacrificed. The State and Federal military forces were required to suppress crime and preserve order. The whole country suffered on account of the suspension of traffic at Chicago, a great distributive centre.

On the 26th of July, President Cleveland, by virtue of authority contained in section six of chapter 1063 of the laws of the United States, issued a proclamation announcing the appointment of a temporary Commission to examine the causes and conditions of the controversy and the best means of their adjustment. Colonel Wright, by a provision of the statute, being the Commissioner of Labor, became the chairman of this Commission. The other members were John D. Kernan, of New York, and Nicholas E. Worthington, of Illinois. In their report, besides presenting the facts, the Commissioners made important recommendations, among others the establishment of a permanent National strike commission to adjudicate labor controversies involving railroads, with powers similar to those vested in the Interstate Commerce Commission as to rates; the adoption by the States of a system of arbitration and conciliation like that, for instance, in operation in Massachusetts; the recognition by employers of labor organizations, to be dealt with through representatives, with

special reference to arbitration and conciliation when disputes occurred; and finally: "The Commission is satisfied that if employers everywhere will endeavor to act in concert with labor; that if when wages can be raised under economic conditions they be raised voluntarily; and that if when there are reductions reasons be given for the reduction, much friction can be avoided. It is also satisfied that if employers will consider employes as thoroughly essential to industrial success as capital, and thus take labor into consultation at proper times, much of the severity of strikes can be tempered and their number reduced." The report was in effect a critical review of the whole controversy. It condemned, by implication and in direct language, the attitude of the employers in summarily rejecting the demands of the employes at the beginning. It was approved by the labor organizations, but strongly criticised by the conservative press. "It is not for us to say," said the American Review of Reviews, "whose hand prepared the document which the Commissioners present as their joint unanimous work, but it bears marks, from beginning to end, of the unusual knowledge, as to conditions of labor and employment, which its distinguished chairman, Colonel Wright, has attained through many years of study and investigation. The Commissioners have met with a deluge of newspaper attacks and have even been accused of allowing Mr. Debs himself to write their report. . . . Whether one likes the document or not, it is weighty and it is destined to exert a lasting influence."

The attribution to Mr. Debs of any part of the document was, of course, absurd. The suggestion as to the influence of Colonel Wright upon the conclusions of the Commissioners was probably correct. It is significant of the gradual change in public sentiment during the next eight years that another report upon a great labor controversy, which treated the matter from almost the same viewpoint, was received with general favor.

In 1902, from May to October, occurred the great anthracite coal strike. This was probably the greatest strike on record. One hundred and forty-seven thousand mine workers abandoned their employment in May, and remained out until after the appointment of a Commission of inquiry by President Roosevelt in October. The financial loss to all concerned was enormous, there was much inconvenience and suffering, and the results of the strike were felt throughout the country. The President acted upon the request of both operators and

miners, under an agreement between the parties to accept the findings and awards of the Commission. The Honorable Judge George Gray was Chairman, and, by the consent of both parties, Colonel Wright, the Commissioner of Labor, was added to the Commission and became its Recorder.

The Commissioners held numerous hearings, took a large amount of testimony, and made an exhaustive report with findings and awards which, under the agreement, became binding. Whether or not the Recorder framed the report, his well-known opinions are embodied in it. The following passage is a pertinent instance:

When production is controlled despotically by capital there may be a seeming prosperity, but the qualities which give sacredness and worth to life are enfeebled or destroyed. In the absence of a trustful and conciliatory disposition the strife between labor and capital cannot be composed by laws and contrivances. The causes from which it springs are as deep as man's nature, and nothing that is powerless to illumine the mind and touch the heart can reach the fountain head of the evil. So long as employers and employes continue to look on one another as opponents and antagonists, so long shall their relations be unsatisfactory and strained, requiring but a slight thing to provoke the open warfare which is called a strike. It is in this spirit the Commission has made its investigation and submits its report and award, and it is in this spirit the award must be received by all the parties to the submission if it is to have the effect desired by them, and by all good citizens.

There had been four demands by the miners: increase in pay; decrease in hours of work; the weighing of the coal mined when practicable; and the recognition of the union. The first two were compromised by the award of about one-half of the increase asked for; the third dismissed as asked for, but by the award conditions were reformed; and the fourth, while not formally approved, was practically secured by the award. The position taken by this Commission was almost universally commended by the press, and this time the American Review of Reviews remarked: "The Commission's services to humanity are almost inestimable. It has made the most important of all contributions to industrial peace."

It is of course invidious to select any one of the Commissioners for especial commendation. Their work was jointly done, and their report unanimously presented. To its conclusions, perhaps to its text, probably all contributed. Nevertheless, as in the case of the Pullman

strike, Colonel Wright's knowledge of labor conditions, his comprehension of the ideals of the working people and of the attitude of their employers, gained through long experience, made him an invaluable member of the Commission, and his work upon it was appreciated by the others and especially commended by the President. For the arrangement of the statistics contained in the report he was responsible, but to one familiar with his theories upon the reciprocal relations of labor and capital, and as to their ethical basis, his influence plainly appears elsewhere in the document.

### XIII.

The example of Massachusetts in establishing the Bureau of Statistics of Labor was followed by Pennsylvania in 1872. In 1873, Connecticut established such a bureau, afterward discontinued and again established. Bureaus were established in Ohio and New Jersey in 1877 and 1878, respectively; in Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana in 1879; and in New York, California, Michigan, and Wisconsin in 1883. In each case the essential features of the Massachusetts Bureau were adopted, with such minor differences of function or in organization as were considered necessary to meet peculiar local conditions. In 1883, representatives of six of the twelve existing bureaus met at Columbus, Ohio, and adopted a form of organization for an annual conference or convention, which met the following year at St. Louis. Two additional departments had then been created, in Iowa and Maryland. The organization was perfected under the name of "The National Convention of Chiefs and Commissioners of Bureaus of Statistics of Labor in the United States." At this second meeting a committee considered the best form of organization of State bureaus. The report of the committee, presented by Colonel Wright and undoubtedly drawn by him, was unanimously adopted at this convention. It stated that the best organization of such a bureau consisted of a chief officer and subordinate officers and other assistants as circumstances might require, all however to be appointed by the Chief and subject to his control. Colonel Wright's experience in Massachusetts had shown this to be true, and it was therefore impressed upon his colleagues. The report also said: "The chief value of statistics is to be found in their preservation for comparison on a uniform basis and under the continuity of the system which comes

from one mind. A numerous Commission, or a Chief and a Deputy not under control of the Chief, cannot work with that singleness of purpose essential in statistical undertakings." Later in that convention Colonel Wright presented a resolution, also unanimously adopted, which was of even greater significance, illustrating not only the convictions of its author but intended to influence popular sentiment in the States which had already established bureaus and in those which were expected to do so. This resolution was as follows:

*Resolved*, that the best interests of the State Bureaus of Statistics of Labor, and of the industrial forces of the Country, demand that such bureaus should be administered without reference to political influence; and that all officers of such bureaus should be selected for their fitness for statistical work, and not on account of allegiance to or services rendered any party.

Thus early was Colonel Wright's influence felt in leading the bureaus in other States along the road he had already cleared in Massachusetts. He was recognized, by virtue of his pioneer work, as entitled to speak with authority. In many of the newly-established bureaus the officers were entirely untrained, and the high standard set by Colonel Wright in Massachusetts, and constantly adhered to by him in these annual conventions, was of the greatest possible benefit in restraining ill-advised action, and in unifying and improving methods of administration. No one could attend these conferences, and be brought into contact with him, without gaining a broader view of his official duty. It was not unusual for a new Commissioner, who perhaps had been selected for political reasons, to come to his first convention with either a vague notion of the work he had undertaken, or impressed with the idea that his office should be conducted as part of a political machine or in the interests of a class. Such a man seldom failed to return to his home with higher ideals gained through personal contact with Colonel Wright or inspired by his remarks in the meetings. His continual influence in this way cannot be overestimated. It was exerted without ostentation but was none the less effective. Changes in the personnel of the different bureaus were frequent. It was difficult to impress the appointing power in the different States with the importance of continuing in office a Commissioner who had, by experience, gained some insight

into his duties. The example in Massachusetts, with its unquestioned benefit to the public service, was honored more in the breach than in the observance. Under these conditions, Colonel Wright's ideas upon official propriety, upon the place which a department of investigation should occupy, upon the value of statistics and upon their relation to sociological questions, set forth year after year in these conventions, were of the highest importance. A few illustrations will indicate the character of his remarks, and will show better than in any other way the theory upon which his own official acts were based. The third convention of Chiefs and Commissioners was held in Boston in 1885. At that time sixteen different bureaus had been established, and the officers of thirteen were present. Colonel Wright was then Commissioner of Labor at Washington as well as Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau. He was chosen President at this convention, and remained President by successive re-elections, except in the years 1892 and 1893, until he closed his connection with statistical work in 1905. In addressing the Convention, Colonel Wright said:

It has been my good fortune, as Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, to have the friendship, and, I am glad to say, the confidence, of the workingmen of Massachusetts, but there has been one point on which they have differed from me, and still differ, and that is in regard to the methods which I have adopted in administering the affairs of the bureau. . . . It lies in this, that our labor reformers . . . have always felt that the bureau should be conducted as a means for agitating or discussing propositions for the amelioration of the condition of the working classes, rather than for the mere collection and presentation of facts. It is just here that we differ, even on questions where I have been in the fullest sympathy with them, and for this reason on my part: If a Bureau of Statistics of Labor presents facts, those facts will show their bearing and constitute the strongest arguments. If the bureau should simply present arguments even with the facts, or use its reports in agitating labor reforms, it becomes an advocate, and necessarily partisan in its views, and could expect to have but little weight attached to its conclusions.

Again, at the fourth convention, held at Trenton, New Jersey, in 1886, a resolution had been presented by Mr. Enos, the Commissioner from California, which sought to put the Convention on record in opposition to Chinese immigration. It was not adopted, but, after it had been disposed of, Colonel Wright said:

Our business is to collect information which shall bear forcibly and emphatically upon the conditions of labor, and which shall tend to enlighten the public in regard to those conditions; but the moment the convention puts itself in the position of urging upon Congress or upon the legislatures of the States in which the various bureaus are situated, the enactment of any laws, however beneficent those laws may be, the convention puts itself in the position of a body of advocates, in contradistinction to the position of investigators. . . .

To all these questions there are two sides, and one session of our convention may be called upon to pass resolutions memorializing Congress to adopt a certain measure, and the next . . . to advocate the reverse. In either case the convention transcends its peculiar province as a body of investigators.

The fifth convention met at Madison, Wisconsin, in 1887. In his opening address, Colonel Wright returned to the subject of non-partisanship in bureau administration. He said:

I have often pointed out to the members of this Convention the dangers which may arise should the bureaus become the object of political contest; that is, should they be considered by the State governments under which they act as places for ordinary political service. Nothing can be more detrimental to the permanent uses for which the bureaus have been established. Let it be granted, if you wish, that they have been established in accordance with the demand of labor alone; let it be granted, if you wish, that they have been organized for scientific purposes; or let it be granted that they have been organized that capital may learn all the conditions of labor; what has all this to do with the legitimate work committed to our charge? It is our bounden duty to see to it that nothing goes to the people that is not absolute truth, so far as it lies in our power to give the truth. In this lies the key-note of the success of the bureaus. And it is a matter of congratulation to be able to say that notwithstanding the attitude of the executives of the different States to the bureaus, in so far as they may have in any instance considered them as the spoils of office, the gentlemen who have occupied the chief positions in these bureaus have been content to serve the best interests of the people without regard to their political proclivities and without regard to the fact that they may have been appointed for political purposes. . . .

At this convention Colonel Wright also alluded to the distinction between the bureaus in America and the departments devoted to official statistics in Europe. He pointed out the peculiar conditions under which the American bureaus were operating, and the necessity of establishing a high standard of official duty. He said:

The European statistician, trained in the schools for his work, skilled by his experience for the very best accomplishments, has not yet devoted much attention to the line of investigations which are specifically the province of our bureaus. He has devoted himself to the movements of population, to the statistics of life; but he has not yet gone into the vital questions which grow out of the progress of industrial organization; he has not had the facility of governmental protection and stimulation, nor has he had the benefit of the great intelligence of the masses which comes from free educational custom. These give the American bureaus of labor an advantage over the governmental bureaus of statistics of European States. Our field is a broad, open one; our functions are of the most important character, and our services, our consciences, our abilities should be bent in the direction of exploring these broad fields in the most careful and accurate manner.

The seventh convention met at Hartford in 1889. There were then twenty-one bureaus in operation, besides the department at Washington. The progress that had been made deserved recognition, but the wider Colonel Wright's experience became the more he was impressed with the limitations of the work and the deeper moral responsibility he felt regarding it. This is shown in the following:

Let me call your attention to the progress of the work of the bureaus of labor statistics in the United States; to the greatly increased interest which the work of these bureaus commands from all parts; to the support given to it by the manufacturers and workingmen; and to the confidence which the results of our labors inspire among all classes. These results are making actual contributions to political and economic science. The bureaus are not solving great labor or economic problems, but they are contributing most important information and presenting it without bias. It is not our business to seek or offer solutions; it is our business to collect information and present it impartially and fearlessly to the public. But the work in which we are engaged is surrounded by a great many difficulties. The limitations of the statistician's peculiar province are so great that after a wide practical experience, extending over sixteen years, I am sometimes somewhat discouraged. Our business is then, and under such circumstances, to do the best we can, and give nothing to the public but what has a sound and solid basis.

At Philadelphia, in 1891, Colonel Wright, addressing the eighth convention, mentioned the establishment of certain foreign bureaus or departments of similar character, and referred to the influence of the American offices upon them, as follows:



There is no bureau in the old world that can accomplish what the most poorly-equipped bureau in our convention can accomplish. England created, a few years ago, a Correspondent of Labor, connected with the Board of Trade, one of the cabinet offices of the British Government. . . . There is not an office represented here to-day so poorly equipped as is that which stands for the "Bureau of Labor" of Great Britain. Belgium has established a Bureau of Labor which is doing most excellent work, but it also lacks equipment. The French Government is about to create a Commission of Labor, and is studying the work of the bureaus in the United States to see how best to carry on the service it will be called upon to perform; I believe . . . it will accomplish more than either of the other creations in Europe. . . . I assure you that foreign statisticians and foreign students of economic questions are very carefully following the work of our bureaus. . . . These gentlemen abroad are seeking the work of the American bureaus not only for standards for their own work, but as . . . suggestions as to what they should do themselves.

Ten years later the British, French, Belgian, and Austrian governments, as well as those of New Zealand, New South Wales, the Dominion of Canada, and the Province of Ontario had followed the example of the United States in establishing Departments of Labor, adopting the essential features of the American plan. To this result the reports of Colonel Wright, his methods of work, and in many cases his personal advice had contributed. In 1902, in opening the eighteenth convention at New Orleans, he was able to refer to the Departments of Labor abroad, then established upon a permanent footing, in the following words, which recognized the influence of the American bureaus and at the same time were intended to bring to his colleagues a needed word of encouragement:

I am sure that this great chain of European statistical offices would not have been established or completed had not the work of the State bureaus of the United States been fairly successful. . . . While your own people in your respective States may sometimes criticise you, and may sometimes ask what is the worth of the work you do, rest assured that it is appreciated in other countries.

His own direct connection with the work was drawing to a close. He resigned his position as Commissioner of Labor in 1905. The twenty-first annual convention of Chiefs and Commissioners, or, as it was then called, of Officials of Bureaus of Labor Statistics of America, was held at San Francisco in September of that year. Be-

sides the Department of Labor and the Census Office at Washington, the Department of Labor of the Dominion of Canada and the Bureau of the Province of Ontario, there were then thirty-three State bureaus connected with the Association. The seed sown in Massachusetts in 1869 had borne fruit. Colonel Wright, acting under the advice of his physician, was unable to attend this convention, but sent to it, in manuscript, an address which was read by the Secretary. It was, in a sense, his valedictory. He said:

I shall never cease to regret my inability to be with you on the occasion of our convention. Rest assured, my absence is not due to any personal desire, but to conditions which I cannot overcome.

I have been with you and your predecessors at every meeting of the Association but one, and have experienced your and their cordial support in presiding at all conventions but three since its formation.

He then reviewed the official events of the twenty-two years during which the Association had existed, and continued:

When it is considered that the life of the Association has extended over a period of the most marvelous industrial development the world has ever seen, and in a country that has outstripped all others in that development, and which covers what may be called the great era of strikes and labor controversies, the development of labor organizations, the complicated and ever-increasing economic and social problems, the vast influx of immigrants, the questions of taxation and the multitude of theories advanced on all hands for the solution of prevailing problems, it seems to me that the Association has conducted itself with great discretion, dignity, and wisdom. It is so easy to be led away by plausible arguments and to feel the necessity of endorsing some proposed scheme, that we are to congratulate ourselves that we have not been so led away, but have persevered in the distinct and legitimate work of the Association. But this is true of the individual bureaus as well as of their representatives in convention assembled. Every report that has come out of the bureaus,—and they now aggregate over 600 volumes,—I have carefully scanned on its receipt, and I remember but very few instances, probably not half a dozen in all that vast number of works, where a Commissioner has taken it upon himself to argue for or against any special or prevailing theory. The Commissioners have been content to conduct their investigations with the sole view of arriving at the facts, and then systematizing and publishing them. The conclusion that, during all the industrial turmoil covering the existence of bureaus of statistics of labor in the United States, they have constantly gained in public confidence, cannot be avoided.

After pointing out some of the salient features of the different conventions he left with his colleagues these final words, his last official utterance as a member of the Association :

I know of no greater crime than that of falsifying statistical returns. You, gentlemen, need no warning in this respect. You all understand it. You come to your work perhaps through political influence, perhaps as a reward for political labor, perhaps as a friend of the executive who wishes to do you a favor, but I have found this: that no matter what motive led to the appointment of the commissioners of labor, they have, with one or two exceptions, seen at once the sacredness of the duty and service committed to them. This has been an inspiration to me, but there has been a greater inspiration. . . . Our membership has represented all shades of political thought, of social and industrial and economic theories. . . . Yet you cannot find a single instance, through the whole twenty sessions of the past, when debates have been in the slightest degree acrimonious, or where there has been a single expression of ill-feeling or ill-will. . . . We have always met in the most fraternal spirit, discussed methods and kinds of work presented to our views fearlessly, but always recognizing the independence and equality of all other members. I do not believe this statement could be made of many associations with such varied complexions. We have never had any political differences. We have met in the North and in the South, in the East and the West, and no semblance of a sectional spirit has ever been displayed. We have not been great men perhaps, but we have recognized the one duty before us and attended to it. . . .

In parting with you officially let me assure you that my own interest in the work of the Association, in the work of each of your bureaus, will continue, and I shall hope to be with you at times to renew old associations, to become acquainted with new Commissioners, and to keep in touch with the statistical work of the country. . . . You have a grand mission to perform and you appreciate the responsibilities placed upon you. . . . Statistical investigations are in their infancy. The methods of statistics will become more scientific, more analytical, results will be reached that are not now comprehended, co-ordination will succeed confusion and chaos, classifications will be broader and more far reaching; in all these things you perform your part.

No one knew better than the members of that convention how much Colonel Wright's personal influence, — his tact and intellectual poise, — had contributed to the harmony which had marked the annual meetings during the twenty-two years that had passed since the little group of officials assembled in Columbus in 1883. No one appreciated more fully than they how much his advice had aided in

holding the bureaus to a high standard, and how much the work of statistical investigation in the United States had profited by his example, and by the fruits of his experience, freely shared with his colleagues. He alone, among those then connected with the Association, had served continuously since it was organized. His official life since he accepted appointment at the head of the Bureau in Massachusetts had continued thirty-two years. From the establishment of the Massachusetts Bureau down to 1905, one hundred and seventy different persons had held the position of head of a bureau, either designated as Commissioner or Chief or by an equivalent title. Hardly one of them had entered upon his work without in some way availing himself of suggestions made by Colonel Wright. With practically all of them he had had personal relations growing out of their official position. Only ten of the whole number had served ten years or more. At the date of this twenty-first convention, the Commissioner in Maine had served eighteen years, but, with this exception, there were but ten men in charge of bureaus in the United States who had been in office five years. Four of these had served eight years and two six years. With such brief tenure of office on the part of those administering the bureaus, the importance of Colonel Wright's influence is apparent.

Before the convention adjourned the following resolution was adopted:

*Whereas:* The Hon. Carroll D. Wright, for twenty years the United States Commissioner of Labor, and covering a period of twenty years the President of this Association, has retired from the field of statistical work to take up important duties in the field of collegiate education; and,

*Whereas:* He has been one of the foremost pioneers in the field of labor statistics, and has won an international reputation in this domain of work; and,

*Whereas:* To the example he has set and to the efforts he has made in its interest this Association owes much of its usefulness and success; therefore,

*Be it resolved,* That the Association of Officials of Bureaus of Labor Statistics of America, in convention assembled, at San Francisco, take this occasion to record the high professional and personal esteem in which its members hold the Hon. Carroll D. Wright, the sense of loss they feel at his retirement from the common field of labor, the deep appreciation of the debt they owe him for his long and untiring labors in the interests of this Association, and for the inspiration he has been to them in their work of statistical investigation.

## XIV.

During the last years of Colonel Wright's connection with the Department of Labor the disease which finally overcame him was gradually making the performance of his work more difficult. He fought bravely, and for the time succeeded in keeping it at bay. Meantime the change in organization whereby the Department became a bureau under the Secretary of Commerce and Labor restricted, in theory at least, its independent action. To Colonel Wright, had he remained at its head, this would probably have made little difference, but it became possible to return to Massachusetts under exceedingly congenial conditions. The trustees of Clark College, in Worcester, were preparing to organize that institution, and they tendered the presidency to Colonel Wright. Upon deliberation he accepted, engaging in the preliminary work while still remaining in Washington, and after his resignation of the Commissionership of Labor in 1905 devoting himself entirely to his new duties.

Clark College was established by the will of the late Jonas G. Clark, of Worcester, under conditions somewhat different from those of other collegiate institutions. It was Mr. Clark's belief that the average student might materially shorten his college course without injuriously affecting his preparation for his life work. He therefore provided a foundation for a college which should offer to young men a regular three years' course of instruction leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Out of his great wealth he also provided for a university, and this was put in operation before the college. But the separating line between the university and the college was sharply drawn. Each institution had its own funds, its own president and faculty. The opportunity was open to develop the college and the university side by side with perfect harmony and yet independently.

The scheme of a three years' course leading to a degree was not in itself novel, provision having been made in other colleges for conferring this degree upon students who were able to cover the four years' requirements in the shorter time. But Clark College was to be a regular three-year institution, and was to offer only the Bachelor's degree. It was to start unhampered by traditions that might interfere with this plan. It possessed an endowment sufficient for its needs, regardless of tuition fees, and therefore need not fear to decline to

receive or to retain students not up to its standard. This, and other distinctive features, seemed likely to attract to it a body of earnest students. In the words of its catalogue, "This college desires to attract only men of worth. It is not solicitous as to the number of students it receives or the number it retains, and it is its constant practice to require the withdrawal of men who make plain their inability or disinclination to do the work set before them." In short, to quote again, "Clark College might be described as a hard-working academic democracy. There are no social distinctions and no class enmities. A general feeling of good fellowship prevails among the students themselves and between students and faculty. Such an environment fosters friendly competition and keen intellectual enthusiasm. It establishes a standard of honest endeavor, gentlemanly conduct, and loyalty to obligation."

This was a programme, not an accomplished fact, when Colonel Wright went to Worcester, but he was in entire sympathy with the scheme. To make this ideal real he devoted the few remaining years of his life. The time, although short, was sufficient for him to impress his individuality upon the college. With untiring energy, working often beyond his strength, fighting against odds with unabated courage, he gave himself to the details of organization. His plans were not completed when he was called upon to lay down the burden, but Clark College was an entity not merely a dream, and it had found an established place among the educational institutions of which the Commonwealth is justly proud. It was a matter of regret to him, as he found the end approaching, that he had not quite realized his hopes; that some things still remained undone. But to one of Colonel Wright's temperament this regret would have remained had the time of passing been longer delayed. His ideal was always in advance of his achievement, however honorable his achievement may have seemed. While at Clark College, Colonel Wright accepted appointment upon the State Board of Education, remaining a member until his death.

#### XV.

Colonel Wright had received various appointments to lecture upon statistics and social economics during his long official service in Washington, not only upon the lecture platform but in connection with college courses; and he was a frequent contributor to periodicals,

writing upon subjects connected with his work. The lectures upon the factory system at Harvard, 1881, have been mentioned. He afterward lectured upon statistics of labor at Johns Hopkins, the University of Michigan, the Northwestern University of Illinois, and again at Harvard. He was honorary professor of social economics at the Catholic University of America, 1895 to 1904; professor of statistics and social economics at Columbian (now George Washington) University, after 1900; and, besides the presidency of Clark College, held the professorship of statistics and economic science in Clark University from 1904. He was a member of the American Unitarian Association, its president during the years 1896-1899, and prominently identified with its denominational and educational work. He was a member of many learned societies, including the American Statistical Association from 1876 (its president from 1897, until his death); fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, from 1892; member of the American Antiquarian Society, from 1893; and of the Washington Academy of Science. He was a trustee of the Carnegie Institution from its foundation in 1902. The foreign learned societies with which he was connected include: the British Economic Association, from 1891; the Royal Statistical Society of England, from 1893; the Society of the Friends of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography at the Imperial University of Moscow, from 1904; the International Association for Comparative Jurisprudence and Political Economy, Berlin, from 1897; corresponding member of the Institute of France, from 1898; honorary member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Russia, from 1898.

He received the following honorary degrees: A.M., Tufts, 1883; LL.D., Wesleyan, 1894; Clark University, 1902; Tufts, 1902; Amherst, 1905; Ph.D., Dartmouth, 1897. He was a member of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, had received the Cross of the French Legion of Honor, and was a Chevalier of the Order of Saints Lazzaro and Mauritz, Italy.

Besides his contributions to periodical literature he had published several volumes. A bibliographical list of his principal writings may be found in the Quarterly of the American Statistical Association for September, 1909; new series No. 87.

## XVI.

Colonel Wright's life aptly illustrates the truth that the things men accomplish, which really count, are often not those they set out to do with deliberate intention. He fitted himself for the practice of the law, and, with natural graces of oratory and a distinguished and magnetic personality, entered political life with prospects of going far in that direction. But it was neither at the bar nor in the field of partisan politics that he was destined to expend the energy and talent with which he was so richly endowed. With no particular love for statistics, he was nevertheless to devote the best part of his life to their collection and interpretation. With no prior attraction to the problems of labor and capital, it was to him, more than to any man during the strenuous last quarter of our most strenuous industrial century, that men were to look for a wise solution of those problems. He won an international reputation for honesty of intention and fullness of achievement in the field of sociological investigation beyond that of any other man. His conclusions were sometimes questioned, but no one could ever fairly question the integrity of his methods.

With high endeavor he gave the best service of which he was capable in the ever-widening opportunities of usefulness that came to him. The course that opened before him he followed with energy and singleness of purpose, although in a different direction from that he would have chosen at the beginning. Whether as statistician, sociologist, or economist, Colonel Wright was an ethical teacher. His best work was educational, along ethical rather than coldly intellectual lines; and the service he was more or less unconsciously performing, whether in Massachusetts or in Washington, whether regarded in its bearings upon the special interests involved, in its effect upon the public to whom he made his wider appeal, or upon the young men who finally came within the sphere of his influence, was essentially the service of an ethical teacher.

That part of his work which will probably live longest will not be the expansive volumes which contain the results of his elaborate statistical investigations, valuable as these may be, but the papers and various addresses through which he sought to give an ethical interpretation to the trend of social progress. No one can measure the indirect influence which his words have had and will continue to



have in modifying or in inspiring the teaching of others — clergymen, professors, and students of social problems. This indirect influence of his life, very great because of the authority with which he spoke, and because of the various channels through which he was able to direct its course, is undoubtedly his most enduring monument.

His success was largely due to certain qualities which would have made him distinguished in the law. He could always see both sides of an issue and determine a controversy with judicial fairness. Neither a trade unionist nor a capitalist, he had the power of distinguishing the elements of justice in the conflicting claims of each, and of adjudicating their differences, so as to bring the contestants together on a platform of reciprocal relations. He could make the capitalist see the good points in unionism, or the unionist recognize that the capitalist was not necessarily his enemy; and in addressing the general public he was able to present the phases of the conflict in such a light as to win a large measure of sympathy for the contentions of labor without exciting that animosity against capital which is, unfortunately, too easily aroused. Without the slightest sacrifice of principle he was a peacemaker, founding his appeals on ascertained facts, and upon the sentiment of human brotherhood that lies at the heart of Christianity, rather than upon *a priori* economic theory.

He was called an optimist but his optimism was supported by a faith strengthened, no doubt, by his early training, but in large part due to his temperament. This faith gave to every utterance of his a hopefulness quite unusual in current economic discussion. Upon points of dogmatic theology he had little to say, but he believed firmly in the essentials of practical religion, and few men in dealing with the difficult social questions that in one form or another engaged his attention, could so carry to the mind of the man or woman of ordinary intelligence the conviction that such questions have no other solution than through the application of these essentials in life. He never lost courage under the discouragements that are inseparable from the vicissitudes of life, and he inspired courage and enthusiasm in others. Few men had a wider range of acquaintances than he, a more magnetic personality, or a greater power of attracting and holding friends. He was also a good judge of men, of their capacity for work, of their qualifications for especial duties. He drew around him from time to time efficient aids, from the colleges or from the ordinary walks of life, selecting with keen discernment the kind of man required for the

particular work in hand, and promptly acknowledging the services rendered by his official staff.

When Colonel Wright was appointed Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau, in 1873, a newspaper correspondent of high reputation, who, being long dead, need not be named, wrote to his paper as follows :

The appointment of Carroll D. Wright as Chief of the Labor Bureau is the strangest piece of blundering, almost, that I ever heard any of our governors to be guilty of. . . . His appointment will probably complicate the existing difficulties of the Bureau with those who are interested in labor questions. . . . I should say, that if his excellency had chosen by lot out of all persons who would probably be named, he would not have made a worse selection, under the present circumstances.

The result could not have been foreseen by Governor Washburn, but during his administration he did no better thing for the Commonwealth and for the Nation than to make the appointment thus criticised. Measured by the fruits of the life now ended the statement of the correspondent shows the futility of human prophecy and the weakness of human judgment.

Colonel Wright died in his prime, still in harness, sparing nothing of himself from his work, when to spare might have meant prolongation of his days. Yet he lived long enough to see firmly established the institutions he had upbuilt and the theories for which he had contended. His ashes lie in the peaceful Laurel Hill Cemetery at Reading, the town in which he began his married life, where his two children, Cornelia E. (Wright) McPherson and Grace D. (Wright) Capen, who, with his wife, survive him, were born, and where he lived until his removal to Washington. For this town, and for his old friends and neighbors, he retained a warm regard, and for many years he cherished anticipations, never realized, of returning to them. Not far away is his former home, now materially changed by the inroads of trade upon the main street of the town; and, near it, the church to which he was devoted when in residence there. The grave is marked by a simple memorial of granite, bearing no inscription other than his name and the date of his birth and death. Against the statement of the newspaper correspondent quoted above may be placed another, written of him by Theodore Roosevelt, to which many others who knew Colonel Wright would, with full hearts, subscribe: "He was a public servant of the highest type. I mourn him as such, and I mourn him as a personal friend."

## ADDRESS OF REV. SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.,

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF

CARROLL D. WRIGHT,

IN THE CHURCH OF THE UNITY, WORCESTER, FEBRUARY 24, 1909.

---

We have often been told that we Americans are interested only in money getting; that we worship no God but the God of the market place; that we pay our homage primarily to men with large powers of acquisition. How utterly false is that estimate of the American spirit! This gathering, representative of the best life of the Commonwealth, testifies to the fact that what Americans primarily honor is public serviceableness.

What a rich and varied life it was! How many the points of contact with the crowded activities of an eventful age! What rare adaptation to a career of manifold usefulness! What rounded completeness of achievement! Other friends we have had who attracted us through some peculiar gift or faculty, or the possession of some special virtue, but in Colonel Wright it was the whole individual that won our love and admiration. Here was a man who took life in a large way, unvexed by disappointments, unspoilt by successes, giving wholesome energy to many enterprises. The champion of many good causes he escaped the narrowness that comes from devotion to a particular cause.

I cannot begin to enumerate all the duties done or trusts discharged or honors modestly worn. Soldier, lawyer, teacher, head of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, United States Commissioner of Labor, Director of the Eleventh Census, arbitrator of industrial disputes, author and lecturer, officer and trustee of many educational, philanthropic, and religious institutions, college president. In almost all of the many different occupations in which he engaged he began at the bottom, doing his duty in a humble place, and by proved capacity rose to the top. A boy of twenty-one, he enlisted as a private in the army of the Union and came out at the

end of the war the colonel of his regiment. He began teaching in a district schoolhouse and ended a college president. He began professional life as a boy in a lawyer's office and rose to be our most distinguished economist and statistician. The son of a New England country minister, he began his connection with religious affairs at the very entrance of the Sunday-school and he ended as the president of a great national conference.

In domestic or professional life, in civil, military, educational, and religious affairs he displayed the same consistent traits of mind and heart. He was honorable and true, just and generous. He had firm convictions and moral courage. The armor of his honest thought sufficed to shelter him from the seductions of mere conformity. His tastes were democratic, his speech plain, his sense of humor keen, his temperament optimistic. He hated bigotry and hypocrisy and was readily won by sincerity and directness. His spirit was that of consecration to duty without saying much about it.

From the mere passing impression which he made on casual acquaintances one discovered the sterling quality and symmetry of his character, his rational confidence in American institutions, and the abiding sense in his soul of the reality of the things which are not seen and eternal. Devotion to the public good and obedience to the call of his country were his distinguishing characteristics. His public life was long and unblemished, and the confidence of the Nation rewarded his unmistakable devotion to the public welfare. His career afforded to his powers large opportunities for exercise, growth, and successful activity, yet he never thought of himself more highly than he ought to have thought, but judged himself by a standard higher than that to which he achieved. He saw things in right proportions. He was always willing to hear the opinions of others and able to defer making up his mind until a case had been thoroughly presented. That which he knew himself capable of doing he was honorably anxious to do and to all his tasks he brought unflinching tact and good temper and great executive ability.

In public office it is impossible to overestimate the efficiency which he put into what seemed the common round of daily duty. His time was elastic and seemed always to stretch to new demands. He was a wise administrator, a conscientious trustee of public powers, an enlightened friend of business methods and of the principles of

civil service reform, believing in appointment and selection by merit, in tenure during competency and good conduct, and in promotion for cause. No suspicion of self-seeking could ever rest upon him. His integrity was something more than honesty. It was the explicit utterance of whatever thought or feeling any other person had a right to know. He assumed nothing on the score of public place. Humanity meant to him more than its differences. He met people, rich and poor, high and humble, on common ground. His whole social influence and his intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men tended toward a leveling upward, the raising of the grade of those who came in contact with him. He believed in the American people and had a genuine, thoughtful regard for his fellow-men. His habits were those of perpetual industry and a careful economy of time. It will be found that the portion of his life-work which had not a direct reference to the well-being of his fellow citizens was surprisingly small.

As a statistician he was our highest authority. A competent statistician requires four gifts of nature. First, accuracy, a desire for the exact truth which grudges no time and pains in tracing facts; second, discernment, which can discover in isolated facts the basis for some judicious generalizations, or the illustration of a principle; third, patient judgment, which subjects all inferences and generalizations, both one's own and other people's, to searching review and weighs their validity in delicate scales. Some men are quick in observation and fertile in suggestion whose conclusions are worthless, because they cannot weigh one argument against another. Others, while honest and careful, are unable to combine facts and set forth principles. To accuracy and keen observation and sound judgment Carroll Wright added the fourth indispensable quality, — the gift of expression. He could make pallid facts spring into vivid life. He could turn sight into insight.

There have been economists who were equally prolific and perhaps more learned, some whose accuracy was as scrupulous and whose judgment was as cautious, but none in whom so much knowledge and so wide a range of interest were united to such power of presenting the results of investigation in such pictorial form. The combination of the gift for patient and impartial research with the gift of readable exposition is rare.

To the presidency of Clark College he brought broad experience and a restless energy combined with genial sympathies. He exerted discretion in the selection of teachers, upheld them in their influence and authority, made himself a beneficent friend among the students, stimulating their intellectual efforts and their moral purposes and making them feel that they had in him a cordial well-wisher who would never fail in their need to give them his countenance and aid. He did not pretend to possess deep or varied learning on subjects outside of his own field of research, but he made up for this lack by practical common sense and unusual ability to understand human nature.

In his home and in his social relations he was a man to be rejoiced in and to take pattern from, and while none failed to do him honor he was most loved where he was best known. He was a man of many friends, always kindly, tolerant, attractive, and his attachment to those he honored with his friendship was strong and unchanging. He was a charming companion and could gather from his varied experiences many an enlivening anecdote, for though he was a man who took life seriously there was always a wholesome and cheerful tone about his ways and his conversation.

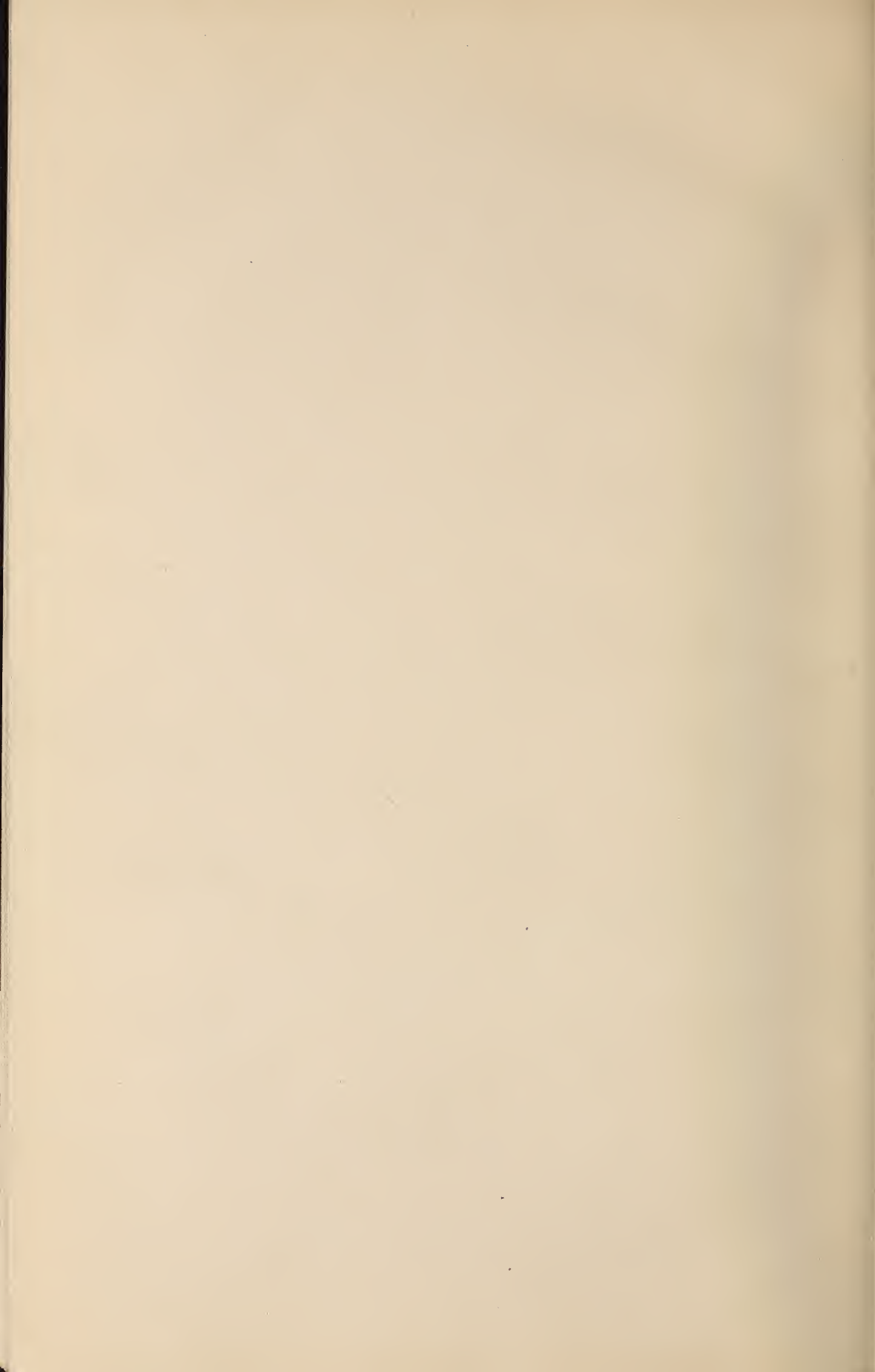
We who were made glad by his fellowship may rejoice to-day to remember the virtues that grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, the posts of usefulness and honor met and filled with fidelity, the good causes sustained and guided with prompt and intelligent devotion, the years of successful industry in public life and of manly tenderness in domestic relations. That path of service has no ending. In the maturity of his powers his earthly career has been arrested, yet is the message to us still a message of abundant life. His very going may have power to waken in our minds a deeper sense of the blessings we enjoy in a free land and a free church and of the obligation of public-spirited service and private honor which rest upon us. He has left us the inspiration of that which the grave cannot enclose nor death itself disintegrate, — the solid substance of a firm-knit character. May our mourning be turned into prayers of gratitude for the life lived so long and so nobly with us, the life of good comradeship, useful activity, broad humanity, and sincere and simple Christian faith.











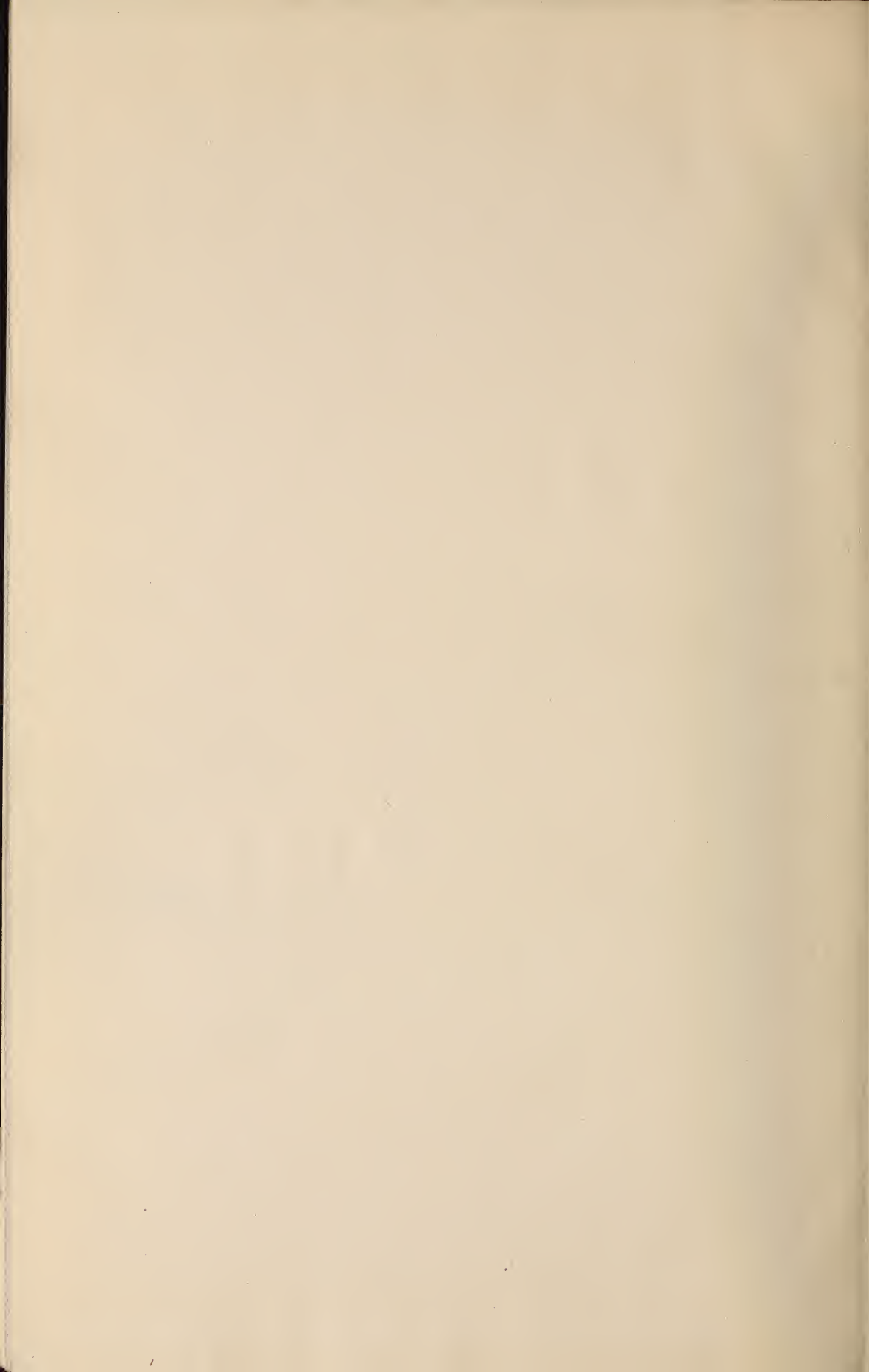
















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 899 168 3