The Tech

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Office: 30 Rogers Building, 491 Boylston Street

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The Tech wishes to acknowledge contributions to this issue by the following gentlemen: R. H. Richards, '68; Eli Forbes, '68; J. P. Tolman, '68; C. R. Cross, '70; J. P. Munroe, '82.

To-day, as Technology students, we have the privilege of attending the exercises which are to commemorate the birth of William Barton Rogers, founder and first president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We all know something of the efforts which President Rogers made to found a technical school, but we can only partly understand and respond to the difficulties and reverses which fifty years ago beset his attempts to organize what was then a unique experiment—namely, a broad and liberal education in pure and applied science. The commemoration is held in order that we of to-day may understand and appreciate more fully what the work of William Barton Rogers was, and that we may know something of the indomitable energy and of the spirit which made possible the education which we are striving to attain.

At the opening of the Centennial Commemoration at 11 A.M., the student body is requested to rise when the President, and members of the Corporation, and Fa[illegible] appear on the platform, and [illegible] main standing until they a[illegible]

Some Reminiscences of President Rogers.

The first time that I met Professor Rogers was in 1867, when I came to Boston from the town which was my home to find whether I could enter the second year of the newly-established "School of Technology," and if it would give me the opportunity, which I could not find elsewhere in the country, to pursue the study of Physics as a specialty. I made my way to the temporary quarters then occupied by the Institute on Summer Street, and there introduced myself to the first person whom I met, who chanced to be Professor Runkle. There were no office clerks in those days of small things. I told Professor Runkle what I had studied in Mathematics, and he patted me on the shoulder and said, "I guess you will do," which constituted my entrance examination in that subject. I did not get off so easily, however, in Mechanics, then a first year subject, and Chemistry. On learning my wishes as to the study of Physics, Dr. Runkle said he would introduce me to Professor Rogers, who was in an adjoining room, and at the moment when we entered was in the act of asking a student to go to his house on Temple Place for a certain piece of apparatus. Temple Place had not ceased to be a residential street. I was both surprised and pleased at the benignant manner in which he dealt with me, with his readiness to speak with me at some length, and still more with the interest which he showed in my plans for study, and the encouragement which he gave me. I saw less of him as a student than later when an instructor, as he was prevented by illness from giving the lectures which I had looked forward to attending. It was the greatest regret of my student life that I was for that reason unable to hear his unequalled course on Geology.

President Rogers was a man of the utmost dignity of character and demeanor, and moreover of great cheerfulness. Through all the darkest days in the history of the Institute this cheerfulness never forsook him, and he showed the most magnificent courage when younger men were disheartened and dewn[illegible]st. He had a kindly [illegible] was always [illegible] ings we[illegible] rea[illegible] a [illegible] S[illegible] [illegible]nced [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible]ne [illegible]ciety of Arts at the last moment sent word that he could not come, and Professor Rogers asked me if I could not find something of interest which could be presented. Fortunately we had two new pieces of physical apparatus, one of them home-made, which were of general interest, and these were made to do duty as the subject of a lecture. Professor Rogers had seen neither of them before, and it was refreshing to witness his great enthusiasm when at the close of the paper, as was his habit, he spoke to those present of what was especially new in that which had been shown. To his latest days this quality of enthusiasm for anything new in science was most strongly marked. After the meeting was dismissed he observed, "Well, the Society of Arts sometimes falls, but it always comes down like a cat, on its feet!"

Professor Rogers would sometimes say, when we commented on the difficulties under which the Institute at that time labored for lack of instruments suitable for research, that one always had at his command "the instrument within his own cranium." The significance of the remark becomes very apparent if we note how many of the recent discoveries in physical science have been made with apparatus that was even then at the command of almost every physical laboratory,—for example, hysteresis, the high-frequency coil, the Hertzian waves, the coherer, the electrical effects of radiations of high refrangibility, the Röntgen rays, the radio-activity of uranium.

It will be interesting to many to know what was the extreme expectation of President Rogers as to the size to which the Institute might grow. He once told me that when the school was first opened he said that should it ever come to have as many as 250 students he would be satisfied and take his hat, make his bow, and leave. It had reached this number long before his death, but he little dreamed of the enormous growth in numbers, resources, and influence which the institution which he founded was to have in the twenty years following.

C. R. Cross, '70.

Prof. F. C. Smith.

Prof. F. H. Smith, of the University of [illegible]gin[illegible] o is one of the [illegible]ker[illegible] the memorial exercises. [illegible] student of Natural Philosophy [illegible] President Roge[illegible] favorite of [illegible] [illegible]s [illegible] [illegible]fessor chair o[illegible]

(Continued from Page 1.)

masses was always dear to his heart, and the lecture was his favorite means of enlightenment. He also presented so forcibly to the community the claims of a technical school and the value it would prove to the public, that funds to establish it came in, although slowly.

His Society of Arts meetings became centres of interest for the leaders of scientific thought in Boston and gave him the influence he sought. Not infrequently an inventor would make a lame attempt to describe his invention, leaving the audience not quite sure what it was. Rogers, who had never before seen the machine, would in the clearest language and fewest words describe its construction, operation and use. But he did it in such a quiet way that the inventor went away supposing the words were his own.

The end of that first term found us twenty-eight in number; of these, thirteen stayed on into the fourth year, eleven were given degrees with three others who entered later, making the first graduating class of fourteen in 1868. The Faculty had doubled with the addition of Atkinson, Eliot, Henck, Osborne and Ware when the fall term of 1865 opened with an additional space in a dwelling house on Chauncy Street. In January, 1866, we came to this building, the Rogers Building, standing in lonely grandeur, a more fitting habitation than we then recognized for the New Education. Think of the boldness of this step! Such a fine, large structure for a school one year old and with only seventy-two students! Of the surroundings I may say that there were no buildings west of Berkeley Street except the Central Congregational Church. The tide rose and fell in an inlet where Trinity Church now stands. Horse cars came up Boylston Street at infrequent intervals as far as Clarendon Street. The neighboring open squares were used for our games of football, and the newly filled lands for our practice ground in surveying.

It is said that in 1865 there was not a single professor of Mechanical Engineering in any school in the United States, but although the early instruction would seem laughably meagre compared with the Institute's equipment to-day, one student, A. F. Hall, took his degree in that course in the first class, six in Civil Engineering, six in Geology and Mining, and one in Science and

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