RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MARCH 13, 1914

WHEREAS, Silvanus P. Thompson has rendered service of far-reaching value to the electrical science and arts by numerous contributions to their literature and bibliography, and also admirable service in securing general recognition of the previously little known work in the field of Electricity of men of other times, notably Petrus Peregrinus, Gilbert and Reis; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers provides that by the unanimous vote of all the members of the Board of Directors, Honorary Members may be chosen from among those who have rendered acknowledged eminent services to electrical engineering or its allied sciences; it is

RESOLVED, that Silvanus P. Thompson, of London, England, be elected, in recognition of the achievements above related, to honorary membership in the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.

6-17-16.

Whereas, The sudden death on June 13, 1916, of our honorary member, Dr. Silvanus Phillips Thompson, removes from the scientific world and the electrical profession one of their most distinguished ornaments; and

Whereas, Dr. Thompson in addition to his many notable achievements as a scholar, ~~educator~~, scientist and inventor, did ~~brilliant~~ great service ~~in rescuing from neglect the memory and work of some of the great pioneers of Electricity, and~~ in giving to the world the first systematic text-books in modern electrical science and some of its important technical applications; be it

Resolved, That the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers hereby record their deep sense at the great loss to the world of an untiring worker in its higher interests, of an accomplished scholar and an inspiring personality; and be it

Further Resolved, That a ~~suitably engrossed~~ copy of these Resolutions be forwarded to his family, to whom ~~deep~~ profound sympathy is extended in their bereavement.

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS
33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET
NEW YORK

TELEPHONE, 4600 BRYANT
CABLE, CYANDRIC

MEMORIAL TO DR. SILVANUS P. THOMPSON
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS
AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE INSTITUTE
CLEVELAND, OHIO, JUNE 28th, 1916

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WHEREAS, the sudden death on June 13, 1916, of our Honorary Member, Silvanus Phillips Thompson, removes from the scientific world and the electrical profession one of their most distinguished ornaments; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Thompson, in addition to his many notable achievements as a scholar, educator, scientist and inventor, did brilliant service in giving to the world the first systematic text-books on modern electrical science, and some of its important technical applications; be it

RESOLVED, that the members of the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers hereby record their deep sorrow at the loss to the world of an untiring worker in its higher interests, of an accomplished scholar and an inspiring personality; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the members of his family, to whom profound sympathy is extended in their bereavement.

July 24th, 1916.

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Secretary.

Silvanus Phillips Thompson.

(Prepared by Mr. W. Blaikley)

Dr. S.P. Thompson, honorary member of the Institute, died at his home in London on Tuesday, June 13, following a stroke of apoplexy on the preceding Sunday morning from which he did not recover consciousness prior to death. Dr. Thompson had been greatly overworked since the beginning of the war, and recently expressed a fear that the strain was becoming too great to endure. His staff at the Finsbury Technical College had been much depleted, his two chief assistants and secretary, among others, having joined the colors, and he was also engaged on a thorough revision of "The Electro-Magnet"

Silvanus Phillips Thompson was born at York, on June 19, 1851, of Quaker parents, to which sect he adhered throughout life. His early education was received at Bootham School, York, a Quaker institution, and at Flounders' Institute, Ponteefract. In 1869 at the age of 18 he received the degree of B.A. from London University; in 1875 the same institution bestowed the degree of B.Sc. with first honors, and three years later the degree of D.Sc., the subject of examination being experimental science. He also attended lectures at the Royal School of Mines and was for a time at the University of Heidelberg. After a short term as science master at the Bootham School, he was called to University College, Bristol, as lecturer in experimental science and promoted to the chair of that subject in 1879. In 1885 he became Principal of the City and Guilds London Technical College at Finsbury, occupying also the chair of physics. Dr. Thompson was the holder of three honorary degrees, that of M.D. (Königsberg) conferred in 1894; LL.D. (Birmingham) conferred in 1909, and D.Sc. (Bristol) conferred in 1912.

Throughout his career Dr. Thompson was an active member of a large number of scientific and similar bodies, and had been president of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Institution of Junior Engineers, the Physical Society of London, of the Optical and Röntgen Societies, and was one of the [illegible] President of the British Illuminating Engineering Society.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Manager of the Royal Institution, a Senator of London University in which he also held a chair, member of the Academies of Science of Stockholm and Bologna and of the American Philosophical Society. As a British official representative Dr. Thompson was present and took a prominent part at almost all international electrical gatherings meetings beginning with that held in Philadelphia in 1884.

Though best known for his work in the electrical field, Dr. Thompson was also an authority in optics, in which branch he was the discoverer of "Stroboscopic Circles", and his "Optical Tables" have long been a standard works of reference. Among his contributions to fundamental physical theory was an application of Maxwell's electromagnetic theory of light to the explanation of the behavior of tourmaline crystals in their action on polarized light, which furnished a final proof that the displacements in a wave of light are perpendicular to the so-called plane of polarization. He also discovered that the heavy metals, such as uranium and osmium, have a superior capacity for the emission of Röntgen rays. His paper on "Ocean Telephony", presented at the Chicago (1893) International Electrical Congress, brought prominently before the world the possibility of greatly extending the range of telephonic communication by means of compensating inductances.

As a writer of books, Dr. Thompson had to his credit a long list of works, some of which were epoch-making, both in substance and in method of exposition. The first systematic text-book on modern electricity was his "Elementary Lessons in Electricity and Magnetism", which is yet in later editions in large use throughout the world, having been translated into many languages. His Cantor Lectures of 1893 formed the first systematic treatment of the technics of modern applications of electricity, and the following year appeared his monumental work "Dynamo-Electric Machinery". Only those who at the time were engaged in the study of Electrotechnics can fully appreciate the value of this book to the students of the day and its phenomenal influence in advancing that branch of knowledge, on which information previously was hopelessly scattered in many form in cyclopedia and other periodical publications

in many languages. At the time of his death Dr. Thompson was re-writing "The Electro-Magnet". As illustrations of the author's thoroughness it may in this connection be mentioned that he had in course an investigation of the work of Charles Grafton Page, of Washington, on the induction coil, and intended to examine two unpublished Latin MSS. on the magnet, one of the seventeenth century by Sir Matthew Hale and the other of the eighteenth century by Swedenborg. As professor of applied science at the University of London, he delivered in 1914 a series of lectures on "Historic Magnetism", which doubtless would have been drawn on largely in the revision of this book.

Other books from his pen are "Polyphase Electric Currents and Motors", "Light, Visible and Invisible", lives of Philipp Reis and Faraday, and the authorized life of Lord Kelvin, published in 1910 but begun during the lifetime of the great savant and partly completed with his assistance. The work on Reis and subsequent writings on Gilbert and Petrus Peregrinus were prompted by a worthy desire to rescue from neglect the names of these electrical pioneers. From time to time Dr. Thompson delighted friends with the gift of beautiful little books privately printed for presentation. Among these are a translation of the Epistle of Petrus Peregrinus, which is hand illuminated; Notes on Gilbert's "De Magnete"; several reprints of articles and addresses on Gilbert, and a reprint of Boyles two very rare tracts (1675-6) on electricity and magnetism. As a member of a book club, "Sette of Odd Volumes", in which his title was "Magnetizer of the Sette", he contributes at one of the dinners when a member presents to each fellow-member a printed book written for the occasion, a little volume printed at the Chiswick Press entitled "Gilbert of Colchester, An Elizabethan Magnetizer".

Dr. Thompson was granted a number of patents and in earlier years gave considerable time to practice as an electrical consultant. He was a linguist of rare ability and able to deliver public addresses in French, Italian and German. He was also a master of Scholastic

Latin and as a member of the Gilbert Club had a large share in the translation of "De Magnete"; what as issued under his care has also a high rank as a beautiful specimen of book-making. Among his other accomplishments were music and water-color painting, of which latter work examples were hung at Royal Academy exhibitions. He was a collector of jewels and rare stones, and possessed a valuable scientific library, largely electrical, comprising about 13 000 titles and including some rare manuscripts, among these being two fourteenth century copies of the Epistle of Petrus Peregrinus. A handsome catalogue printed at the Chiswick Press in 1914 gives an annotated list of nearly 900 rare electrical books contained in the collection.

Space permits only mere mention of Dr. Thompson literary ability, which was of an order rarely found among scientific writers; of his lucidity of exposition which attracted large audiences to his popular scientific lectures at the Royal Institution, Physical Society and elsewhere; and of his wide influence as an educator. It should be added that in this latter capacity he has, as a senator of the University of London, been a forceful factor in reorganizations of the educational policy of that institution.

Dr. Thompson was the father of four daughters, one of whom is the wife of Thomas Edmund Harvey, member of parliament, author, formerly deputy warden of Toynbee Hall and prominent in British social welfare work.

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(Prepared by Mr. W. D. Weaver.)

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Throughout his career, Dr. Thompson was an active member of a large number of scientific and similar bodies, and had been president of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Institution of Junior Engineers, the Physical Society of London, of the Optical and Roentgen Societies, and was one of the founders and past-presidents of the British Illuminating Engineering Society. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Manager of the Royal Institution, a Senator of London University, in which he also held a chair, member of the Academies of Science of Stockholm and Bologna and of the American Philosophical Society. As a British official representative Dr. Thompson was present and took a prominent part at almost all international electrical meetings, beginning with that held in Philadelphia in 1884.

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