

## BARBARA STODDARD BURKS

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With the death of Barbara Stoddard Burks on May 24, 1943, American psychologists lost one of the ablest of their number. The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues has suffered a particularly direct loss. Foreign psychologists, both in Europe and in this country, will miss the understanding intelligence of one who learned from them, and the warmth of one who became a friend while helping them. And no catalogue of her friends and admirers would be complete without including the twins and orphans who served, year after year, as her subjects.

Though less than 40 years old, her scientific contributions were of the proportions of a full life-time. With her first publication in 1928—a comparative study of own-child with foster-child resemblance to parents—Dr. Burks began to blaze new trails. Few psychologists have ever contributed so much pioneer work in so short a time as did she in the next dozen years. She was the first to make use of such modern mathematical procedures as path coefficients in determining the contribution of environment to intelligence. She was among the first to conduct systematic comparisons of twins reared apart, with respect to intellectual, temperamental, and behavioral similarities; the patience and the zeal with which she sought out these subjects, and with which she continued to follow their careers, was probably unique. She demonstrated a practical method of clinically validating the vast family trait materials gathered by the Eugenics Record

Office. She was the first to demonstrate the reality of human auto-somal linkage in the case of two pairs of objectively defined characteristics, establishing the method as the basis of later studies of the inheritance of psychological traits.

During several of these years she carried out warm-heartedly and indefatigably her duties as chairman of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Aiding Displaced Foreign Psychologists. Probably no such difficult service function has ever been performed in the name of the Association so effectively, nor has earned so much gratitude.

At the time of her death she was engaged in an ambitious study of the inheritance of psychological traits among children separated from their parents. She had just been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship which would have enabled her to add no small amount to the published literature of the methodology and the findings of the study of twins.

Though her field of special work might easily have led to narrowness, she was singularly untrammelled in her interests. Since it was her problem to study heredity by the use of children as subjects, she studied children as well as heredity. She was at home in the fields of statistics and genetics, in developmental, clinical, and social psychology. She was sensitive to the social problems of her time, as affecting not only her children-subjects but also herself and her colleagues as professional psychologists.

The purposes and the activities of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues were par-

ticularly congenial to Dr. Burks. She was a charter member; she was for several years a member of its Council; and for nearly two years she had served as Editor of this BULLETIN, being responsible for introducing important and creative innovations.