

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Professor-Emeritus Ernest Gustav Lorenzen, 1876-1951.

ERNEST GUSTAV LORENZEN

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My acquaintance with Ernest Lorenzen began in 1916. He was then still under forty years of age; but he had already established himself in the law teaching profession as an accomplished legal scholar and teacher. He had come to this country from northern Germany in his teens. Without doubt his early instruction had already impressed upon him some of the best elements of German education—its thoroughness and industry and completeness of detail. After doing his college work in this country, he returned to France and Germany for graduate work and for his doctor's degree in law. The result was that he had something that was individual and valuable to give to an American law faculty and to American law students.

At the same time, he had utterly divorced himself from the then prevailing Prussian attitude toward the state. He had the utmost love and admiration for his adopted country and no sympathy whatever in either of the World Wars with the efforts of the rulers of Germany to conquer their neighbors and the world. One night on the streets of Washington, as we turned a corner, the lighted dome of the Capitol came suddenly in view. Greatly moved and with no premeditation, Ernest stopped short, gazed at the beautiful spectacle, and spoke straight from the heart, "My Country!"

With the coming of Dean Swan in the early part of 1916, the Yale Law School was in the process of building up a new faculty. The school had some years earlier adopted some new and revolutionary educational policies. Among these were the case system of study and instruction, the requirement of a college degree for admission, and the employment of a faculty of full-time professional teachers who would devote their whole energies to educational work—to teaching, to writing, and to research. There were then not more than five such men on the faculty; and it was necessary to supplement them at once with men of

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proved ability and some maturity. The teaching profession was scanned; and Ernest Lorenzen was one of four men who were that year induced to join the Yale faculty. He brought his full share of every desired quality, with a grand personality, fine teaching capacity, and exceptional learning in the fields of Roman and Comparative Law and the Conflict of Laws. His productive written output in these fields was not tremendous; but it was ample, it showed mastery of the best thought of the time, and it is not surpassed by the work of any competitor. Every note and article that he produced was free from the fallacies so pervasive in the field of Conflicts; and it made a strong and lasting contribution to legal scholarship.

It is of few scholars that one can truthfully say as much. But of Ernest Lorenzen as a man there is much more to be said. He was a man to live with as well as to admire. He won the affection and respect of every colleague and every student. The students very generally referred to him as "Gus," from his middle name Gustav. He had a great, a kindly, and a loving heart. He had an unswerving loyalty to his school, his friends, his profession, and his country, a loyalty that carried both deep emotion and intellectual conviction. Withal, he was possessed of the most enviable modesty and the most inflexible honesty. He served well at Yale for nearly thirty years; and no man had reason to regret his presence there. If a man like him can be found, not a moment should be lost in calling him to fill the vacancy.