

A

Biographical Sketch
of
the Founder



Anatolia College

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

of

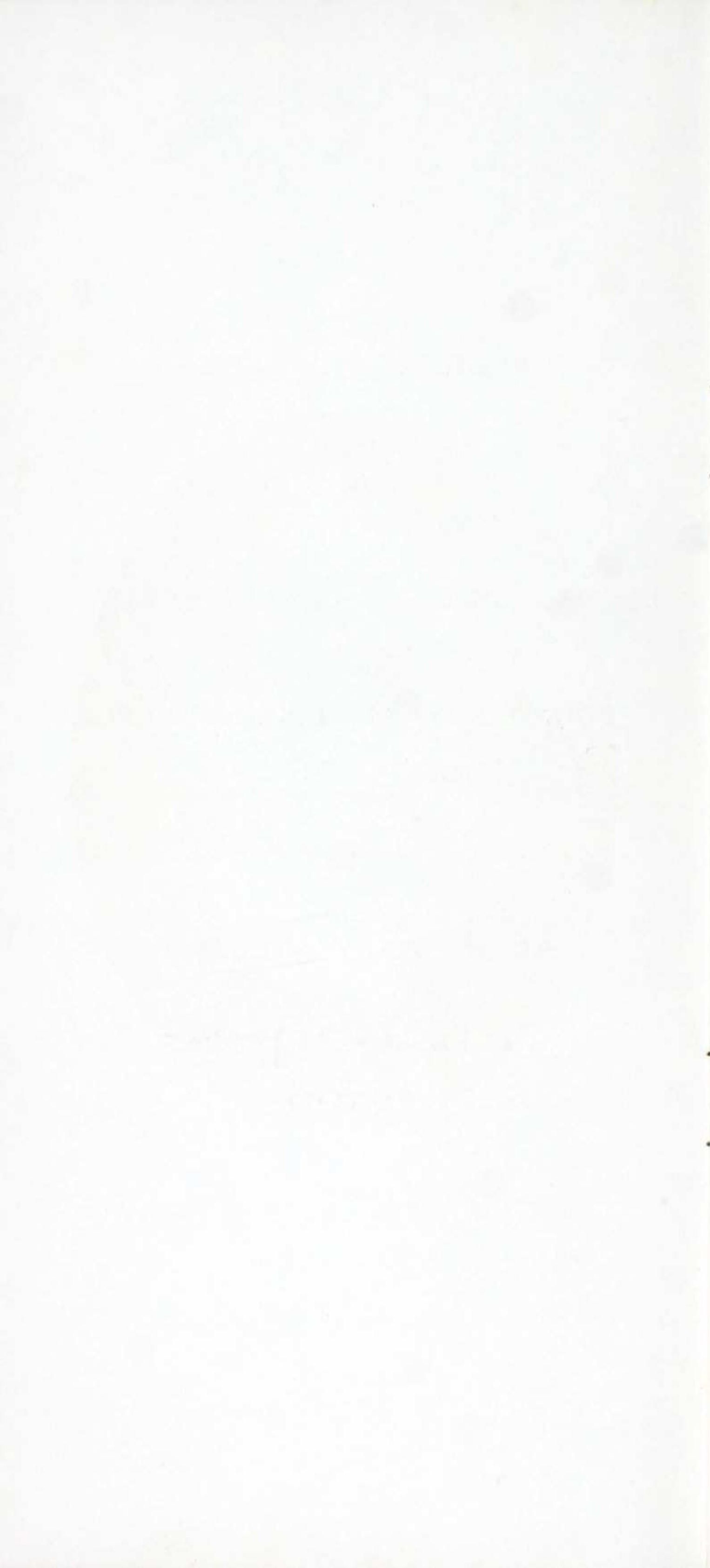
DR. CHARLES CHAPIN TRACY

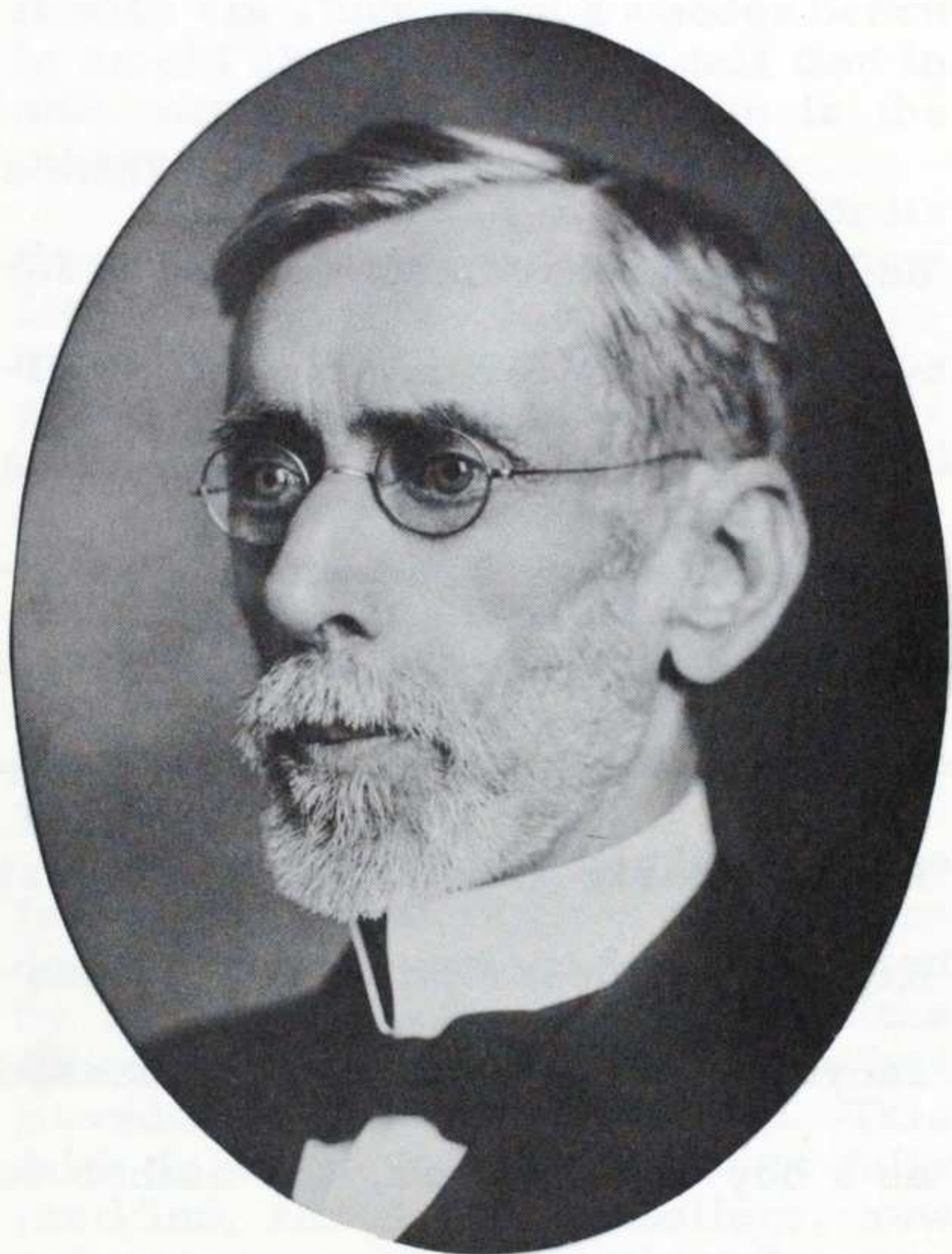
FOUNDER OF ANATOLIA COLLEGE

by

RUTH TRACY MILLARD

To Lynda + Jack -
R.T.M.





DR. CHARLES CHAPIN TRACY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. George E. White's book, "Charles Chapin Tracy" for many facts concerning the early College; to Henry Chester Tracy and Charles Kellogg Tracy for reminiscences of their happy boyhood in Marsovan, and for an account of their father's early life; and to Dr. Ernest Riggs for a description of the massacres of 1895, which he witnessed as a boy in Marsovan, the author is greatly indebted.

My grandfather, Charles Chapin Tracy, founded a great international college, Anatolia. He began it with six students on a wooden bench in an old shack that had a calf tied in one corner and a setting hen in the other.

Anatolia College was for its first thirty years in Marsovan (now Merzifon) Turkey. In forty-six years as founder and first President, my grandfather raised large sums of money for Anatolia. He once secured an interview with the eccentric philanthropist, Dr. D. K. Pearsons, who told him, "I will listen to you for fifteen minutes, but I will not give you any money." Before their association ended, Dr. Pearsons had given \$75,000.

My grandfather lived to see friends and associates brutally murdered, his beloved college occupied by a military power at war with the United States -- but he never once believed that this would be its end. This faith in which he died has been fully justified, for Anatolia College, now relocated in Thessaloniki, Greece, will celebrate its seventy-fifth Anniversary in 1961.

When we visited my grandparents in Marsovan in the days just before World War I, it was a four days' journey from Smyrna (now Izmir) where my father taught in the American College. We went two days by steamer on the Aegaeon and the Black Sea to Samsoun, then two more days of jolting over mountain roads

in a springless "arabah", or Turkish "covered wagon". We traveled with our own camp cots, bedding, and all cooking paraphernalia, as the Turkish khan, or Inn, would have no facilities except shelter in a bare upstairs room, with our animals stabled directly underneath. I can still see my parents putting six little tin pans sprinkled with bedbug powder under the six legs of each cot to ward off invasion while we slept.

But these rugged mountain roads had been only trails when my grandparents first came to Marsovan in 1868; it took them three days on horseback to travel the seventy miles up from Samsoun.

I remember grandfather as tall, lean, and vigorous, with a beard like Abraham Lincoln's, bright blue eyes, and a fine singing voice with which he could lead a hymn at family prayers or take me on his knee and sing all the marvelous nonsense verses of my favorite "Mr. Frog." I can see him striding off to supervise some new construction on the college buildings which were, literally, his own creation -- soft black felt firmly on his head, long black coat flapping about his knees in the fresh Marsovan wind.

There was nearly always a Black Sea breeze across the campus at Marsovan, on its 2500-foot-high plain surrounded by the 6000-foot Tavshan Mountains. When my grandparents arrived in 1868, there were five missionaries in an overcrowded Turkish and American village of some 15,000 people, with streets so narrow a cat could jump from the roof on one side across to the other. In 1913, having survived the scourges of famine, typhus, cholera, and Armenian massacre, there was a wide-open college

campus with thirty-two teachers and four hundred twenty-five men students, Greek, Armenian, Russian, and Turkish. There was a girls' school with two hundred seventy-five students, and a hospital numbering about one hundred patients. The missionary families, campus employees, and their households, brought the college community to about one thousand souls. All these were housed in a college plan built, with native materials and labor, at a cost of about \$150,000.

My grandfather loved to show off his marvelous conglomeration of buildings. The earliest were of sun-dried mud brick, plastered white on the surface, the very adobe of the Egyptian Pharaohs and of the Hittites. Later ones were of kiln-burned brick, filled in between timbers of a wooden framework; most of the American homes were built in this way. In the later years, however, my grandfather had achieved modern buildings of stone, brick, cement and iron girders. The stone came from a quarry he had located himself, and was similar to that used in Cologne Cathedral. He liked to say that the three types of buildings represented three milleniums of human progress.

In the actual construction, the college President had to be his own architect, contractor, and supervisor, from sunrise to an hour before sunset. He had to direct everything from excavation to the last pane of glass and touch of paint, with workmen who had never seen buildings like these before. He had to plan water-courses and fountains, a deep well and a drainage system -- all this while teaching, administering, and regularly working till midnight to take care

of his classroom work. Since he seldom had money to plan a whole building at once, and Turkish building permits were almost more difficult to secure, his method was to maintain the friendship of the Turkish governor, who would sometimes say, "I cannot authorize a new structure, but I can allow you a permit for repairs, and I will construe it liberally." In this way several college buildings grew out of rebuilt sheds, and were added to part by part, doing service over many years.

My grandfather made friends locally with every man from the governor down to the lowest peasant. On furlough years, when his health had broken down, he was still making new friends for Anatolia in England, Scotland, Switzerland and America. When lecturing and showing pictures of the progress of the college he would sum up by saying, "I lead an objective life, and this is the objective."

Charles Chapin Tracy was born in 1838, the sixth of seven children, in a two-room, dirt-floored cabin built of solid cherry boards, on a farm his father had cleared out of the primeval forest in Bradford County, Pennsylvania. The family produced everything, including flax and wool which the mother and sisters spun, wove and sewed into the family garments. An itinerant cobbler made their home-tanned leather into shoes. The whole family walked three and a half miles each way to church, offered family prayers twice daily, and by the light of the fire and one tallow candle, they read the Bible aloud, twenty-two times through from Genesis to Revelation.

Young Charles attended the neighborhood school taught by his eld-

er brothers for three months each winter. Beyond that, his education was taken over by the local preacher, Charles Chapin Corss, for whom he had been named. Always sharing the farm labor, young Charles often held his Greek or Latin text before him as he walked with the slow-footed oxen and the farm wagon or the plow. Always adept with a pocket knife and tools, he also made and taught himself to play a violin.

At fifteen, Charles was a champion speller and a writer of occasional poems. At sixteen, he felt his call to the Christian ministry; it was at the same age he acquired his first "store-bought" shirt, with money he had earned himself. At twenty-four, he presented himself for admission at Williams College.

They looked at the raw-boned country boy and asked him where he had prepared for college.

"On the farm," was the answer. He was told he might have half an hour to prepare to translate a passage from Caesar.

"I am ready now, sir," he said. He did the Caesar, then Horace, Livy, and various Greek authors. After some other examinations, he was admitted with advanced standing -- to the Junior Class.

At Williams he slept in the tower to earn part of his expenses as official bell-ringer -- "Tintinnabulator," the other boys called him. He was particularly happy under the teaching of his revered President, Mark Hopkins, who used to climb the belfry stairs to see and encourage young Tracy, or invite him to his home to read Shakespeare aloud -- for Dr. Hopkins had discovered the quality of his speaking voice. Thus began an

affectionate friendship that lasted all his life.

Charles Tracy graduated from Williams in 1864 with Phi Beta Kappa rank. In June 1867 he graduated from Union Theological Seminary. In July he was ordained; in August he married Myra Park, the most beautiful schoolteacher in his own home county in Pennsylvania, and within ten days of their marriage the young couple sailed for Istanbul, Turkey. Istanbul was a key city of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Here, within a year, my grandfather had mastered both Turkish and Armenian, and was ready for the hard trip up the mountains to the pioneer station at Marsovan.

On the practical side, my grandfather brought with him to Marsovan a complete set of dental tools with hand-operated drills, along with silver amalgam and dental gold, which he used not only to fill his children's teeth later on, but also his own. On the aesthetic side he brought music, in the form of a tiny reed organ from Boston; it had come 6000 miles across three seas and an ocean before it climbed the mountain on muleback. But for him there must always be music in the home; he played it for hymns at morning and evening prayers, then for gay college songs after supper, when his children and grandchildren grew old enough to delight in them.

But for Charles and Myra, the first few years were dogged with illness and sorrow. Their first two children died almost at birth. Their third was little Myra, and their fourth was Charles, my father, born in 1874. That winter there were three months of snow three feet deep. Cattle died and the peasants were forced to eat up

their seed grain, so the result was famine. And famine is always followed by plague. Typhus was the dread epidemic; Myra, little Myra and baby Charles all had it. All but grandfather, who never went to bed for five weeks, taking only short naps in a rocking chair, while his beloved wife lay delirious nearly all that time. The rocking chair may have saved his life. Although he didn't know it then, typhus is carried by fleas, and fleas were a constant threat in the beds; they were carried into the house by the sick and the poor who came daily for help. So it may be that keeping out of bed kept him from the fleas.

But people were still dying all about. Broken down in health from the long siege of illness and work for famine relief, Charles and Myra took their first furlough after eight years. And now, little Myra was lost to diphtheria, in America. Her father wrote and published the story of her short life, so simply and beautifully told that it still moves the reader to tears. And in the same year, another son, Chester, was born. The family returned to Marsovan.

My grandfather's sons have only the happiest memories of their faraway mission home. They always had good company when they had their father's presence; in his absence they had each his lessons and chores to do. For the chores they were paid, and must keep correct accounts of the proceeds -- also, each boy must save enough during the year to buy one book and one pair of shoes. Each had a garden, and their father, being a good craftsman himself, provided a workshop and tools where his boys learned to build their own sleds and toboggans, working up from that in time to build fine furniture.

There was often reading aloud at table after meals, and there was always the blackboard that hung opposite the dining table; on this the father would write some quotation or wise saying which might not be fully comprehended but would stick in a child's mind. Sundays were good family days; birthdays had picnics, Thanksgiving was a real feast and Christmas a supreme joy, with a tree that touched the ceiling. In summer, when a quiet village up the mountainside became a favorite retreat, grandfather and his boys built a substantial summer cabin where the whole family could resort -- although he himself would never take more than a day away from his work; he even rigged up a heliograph by which he could be summoned at any time from the Anatolia campus down below.

In his teaching and administrative work Charles Tracy was the same sort of person as at home, the only difference being that here he was concerned with the needs of many boys besides his own. A self-help department was one of his earliest concerns; it enabled boys from all over Armenia to support themselves while taking a full course that would fit them for a wider usefulness to their people. When fundraising in America he stressed this aspect and always made a deep impression; in one church the two Misses Wickes were moved to give a prized family heirloom, a fine silver tea set. Rather than sell for what it would bring, my grandfather began exhibiting the tea set wherever he spoke and asking that it be filled with cash for the work in Marsovan. In all, some \$6000 was poured in and out of that teapot. This money served to establish the wood-working and

iron-working shops which furnished self-help employment to students and were henceforth known as the "Wickes Industrial Self-Help."

Charles Tracy's driving energy and gift for organization made him the inevitable choice for first President of what officially became Anatolia College in 1886. The name ANATOLIA is from the Greek and means "Land of the Rising Sun"; it was the local name for Asiatic Turkey. The college seal, designed by the first President, represents the sun rising over the mountains as it does in Marsovan, with the motto "Morning Cometh."

Four American teachers headed up the staff, but the college was international from the start. A majority of the instructors would be promising young graduates, Armenian or Greek, who were encouraged with loans to take advanced courses in Europe and return for permanent service. The winning personality of Charles Tracy seemed to keep men of many nationalities cooperating loyally and to bring out the best in each.

Many of Anatolia's students came so poorly clad that they were cold all winter, and so poorly shod that they claimed to "know the location of every thistle on the campus." They lodged willingly in attics or sheds, never complaining of material discomfort. Discipline was strict, and the college table was the plainest nourishment, with a price of \$26.40 for all of ten months' board. Yet the enthusiasm of the President somehow kept attention fixed on the outreach for knowledge, civilization, and a man's chance in life.

Eight children in all had now been born to Charles and Myra -- four

had died in infancy. There were now young Charles, Chester, and two girls, Annie and Mary. In 1890, after twelve strenuous consecutive years in the field, the family again went on "furlough," extended to three years because the President himself was everywhere far and away the most effective fund-raiser for the College. For three years he unceasingly traveled and lectured, wrote and planned and interviewed for the benefit of Anatolia; it was on this trip that he met his eccentric benefactor, Dr. Pearsons.

In 1894, back in Marsovan, Charles Tracy was honored by his Alma Mater with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

But in that same year the countryside came under the scourge of cholera. Now the first door in the Tracy hallway was the room where Myra Tracy received the sick and the poor; this then became the dispensary where she was on duty from six in the morning until midnight -- or until she fainted from exhaustion. Hundreds of lives were saved, and the dread disease never invaded the college compound. The fine College Hospital eventually grew out of her work with the sick poor.

And even then, a more terrible ordeal was building up. Through inter-racial and international tensions too complicated to explain here, the Turks had become inflamed against the Armenians within their borders. In the fall of 1895 came the massacre.

On Friday, November 15th, at the hour of the noon call to Moslem prayer, the whole city of Marsovan was turned over to the mob for the murder of Armenians and the looting of their property. Crowds of terri-

fied refugees swarmed into the homes of the Americans in the College compound. About four in the afternoon, order was restored and the Governor made a great show of visiting the American grounds and placing forty swarthy soldiers on guard. But the refugees were afraid to return home for three days. They slept all over the floors, and they had somehow to be fed. When my grandfather appealed to his friend the Governor for extra flour to bake bread, the flour sacks arrived in wagons all bloodied from carting away victims of the massacre.

It was a black winter that followed. Seventy thousand Armenians had been murdered throughout the country, thousands more were plundered, impoverished and bereaved. All the missionaries worked desperately distributing relief supplies from England and America. Dr. and Mrs. Tracy led in establishing an orphanage where two hundred children were rescued, fed, housed, clothed and taught. The Orphanage work now became a part of the Girls' School.

Human resilience is an amazing thing. Only four years after the massacre, in April, 1899, there was a great day for the College in which both Armenians and Turks took part. Civil and religious authorities were present, as well as troops with bugles and drums. On a balcony draped with flags and Turkish rugs, the Governor presented President Tracy with the Imperial Firman, or Charter with the signature of the Sultan.

My grandfather was often compared with Abraham Lincoln, whom he somewhat resembled in rugged form and feature. Both had the same moral earnestness and large

spiritual outlook. Both had their own homely wit, expressed in favorite maxims. My grandfather's were:

"It is easier to do a big thing than a little one."

"Keep a stiff elbow and a limber wrist," -- meaning be persistent on the main issue, pliant on the details.

He always believed that much of youthful hardship is privilege - that hatred of work can be replaced with enthusiasm -- and that "when one encounters the impossible it is well to walk all around it looking for the hidden possibility."

The last years in Marsovan were full of honors and blessings. Dr. and Mrs. Tracy were to return to America, to live in Los Angeles near the younger son, Chester, and many West Coast Armenians who appreciated the work of Anatolia. President Tracy's resignation was tendered, effective at the Commencement of 1914, and he was elected President Emeritus.

But right here came the crushing impact of world events, catching up the retired missionaries, denying their well-deserved rest.

Early in 1915, Turkish officials, aided and abetted by their Allies, the Germans, decided to eliminate the Armenian problem by eliminating the Armenians. The resulting atrocities, massacres and mass deportations are a part of the history of World War I. All of 12,000 Armenians in Marsovan were mercilessly deported; eight members of the College faculty were slain, and only one student was left to represent the hated race.

The effect of these events on a warm and sensitive heart can hardly be imagined. Armenians, to my

grandfather, were the Christian friends among whom he counted the teachers, preachers, students and fellow laborers of all his life-work of forty-six years. He was far from well, but he threw himself heart and soul into the California organization of Armenian and Syrian Relief. His son Charles, my father, was doing the same thing 3000 miles away in the state of Vermont.

The college itself continued in session with Greek, Russian and Turkish students in attendance until the tenth of May 1916. On that day, all the grounds and buildings were taken over by the Turkish officials for use as a military hospital, and the Americans on the ground, ten adults and four children, under the compulsion of mounted police, were put on the road to Istanbul.

Meanwhile, for my grandfather's frail health, the great Relief effort had been too much.

He had been in hospital when, in April of 1917, his doctor warned that he must have complete rest. But he would take no rest. On April 12th he made an address in which, although he was almost too weak to stand, those who heard reported that he surpassed himself in eloquence for his beloved Armenians. His life lasted just five more days.

On the day before he died, a good friend came to tell him that money had been raised to pay off the mortgage on his house for his wife and daughter. He said, "It is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes." The next evening his heart began to fail, and with his wife and two children with him, he smiled and died.

Two Armenian pastors shared in his funeral, and two hundred

Armenians were present, including his pallbearers. Payment for his burial lot and monument was through a "Tracy Love Fund" entirely contributed by Armenians.

My grandfather never believed that the military occupation of Anatolia was a defeat; he saw it as a challenge to rise and build anew on broader foundations. His faith was justified when the College was removed to Thessaloniki in 1923, where it has survived another World War and now continues with over six hundred students.

Charles Chapin Tracy's life continues in the life of the College, which holds its Founder's Day celebration annually on his birthday, October 31st. As one student wrote of him:

"his death brought me face to face with immortality, and I said to myself that death has nothing to do with such a life."

ANATOLIA COLLEGE
THESSALONIKI, GREECE

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