

**Frederick Morgan Padelford**  
1875-1942

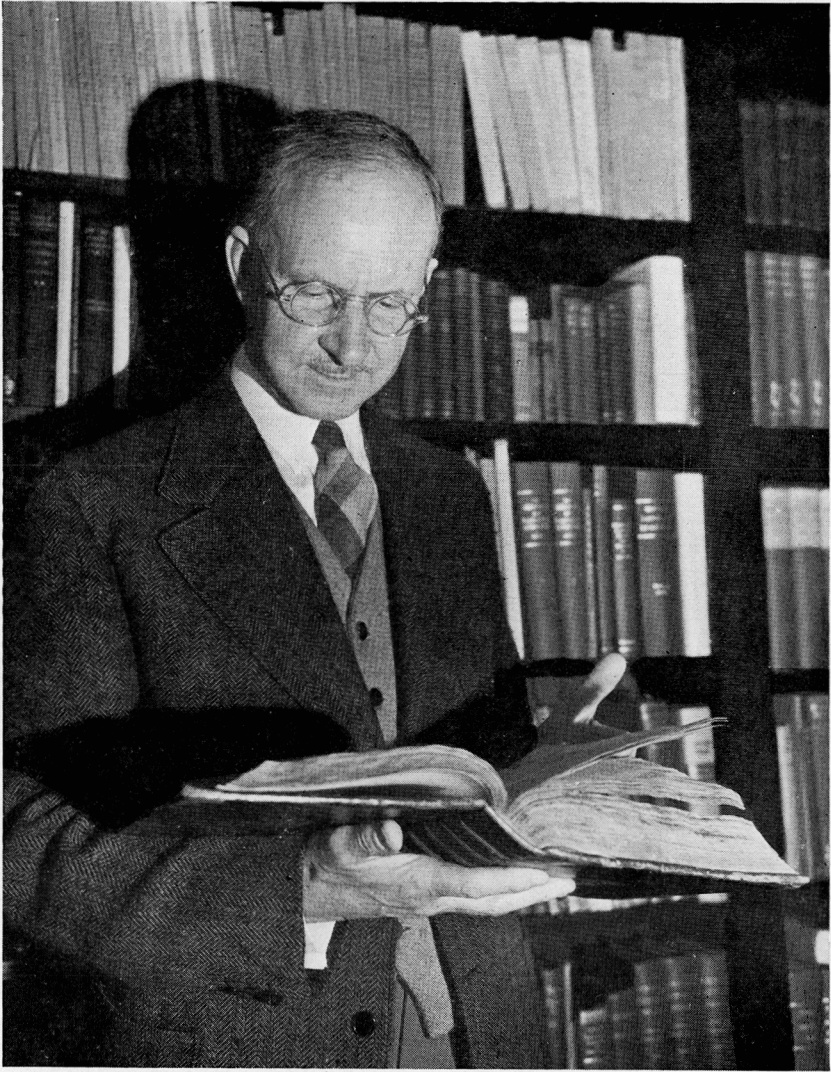
ON December 3, 1942, in Pasadena, Dean Frederick M. Padelford, President of the Modern Language Association for 1942, died suddenly of coronary thrombosis. He was on his way to preside at the annual meeting of the Association which was to have been held in New York. His death imposes a grave and irreparable loss upon American humanistic education and scholarship. It falls unhappily at a moment when our humanistic culture, in its present peril, can least spare the kind of support and service to which Dean Padelford devoted his whole life.

Frederick Morgan Padelford was born of a clerical family, in Haverhill, Massachusetts, on February 27, 1875. He attained to the degree of B.A. at Colby College in 1896, and of Ph.D. at Yale in 1899.

His three years at Yale under the training of the late Albert S. Cook were highly significant in the shaping of his career. In the graduate study of those days teacher and student were usually on intimate and informal terms with one another, and perhaps the best teaching went on through personal and unprescribed association. Cook had brought back from Germany the severe scientific discipline in the study of literature which English, just then coming into its own, sorely needed for substantial qualification among the Liberal Arts. But such discipline, though essential, Cook administered as a lesser part of the whole subject. He used it, and taught others to use it, without compromise in the service of humanistic appreciation in the largest sense, an appreciation through imagination, emotion, and intellect, convertible into living and fertile personality.

Instinct with such ideas and their corollaries, and abounding with a youthful enthusiasm which never ebbed, Padelford went, a newly fledged doctor, to the University of Idaho, and after two years, in 1901, to the University of Washington, where he spent the remaining forty-one years of his life. He saw the University's registration grow from 600 students to 14,000. In this expansion he played a determinant part. But into the institution's less visible and more essential growth, its standards, its culture, its ideals, he infused his energies and projected his counsel unsparingly. Whether as administrator, teacher, or scholar, he deployed his powers with equal balance and effect.

All this service has been illuminated with his characteristic gay and buoyant spirit, and warmed by reflection from the genial hearth of his family where hundreds of students and friends have found cheer and comfort.



*Frederick Morgan Padelord*  
1875-1942

With all else he found time and energy for service to his city and community. He served as a trustee of the Seattle Public Library, and of the Art Museum, and was at one time President of the Art Institute.

From academic and civic bounds his influence, through his inspired students and writings, has gone forth into all the regions of English literary scholarship. Honors and calls to other institutions have followed one another, but these were not the matter of his quest.

His talents as administrator, teacher, and scholar were tempered in rare balance, unless indeed we should think of them as but three manifestations of one talent. He loved affairs, not with ambition or a taste for intrigue, but with something of the same gust that he satisfied in golf or handball, or in the contest with nature in hunting, or cruising, or mountain-climbing. It was a game. But the stakes were in terms of service rendered. He bore his part with patience, tact, humor, sympathy, fair generosity. His quiet pointing of the real issue often settled the dust of prolonged and confused discussion. No struggling, or even negligible, aspirant ever felt himself neglected or ignored by the Dean, or went out unblessed by his compassion. But his allegiance to high standards of honest culture were none the less unexceptional and steady. Without seeming to fight, he won. Or, if he lost, he did not give up, but rose cheerfully again to the everlasting issue, and came through somehow without enemies.

In like manner his whole personality went into his teaching—his warmth, his drollery, his sympathy, his keen and accurate search for a student's real potential, his careful nurture of such powers by the particular means of literature—all with a single clear conception before him of the happier and more effective person which that student might, with his help, turn out to be. Fitting it is that his last utterance, his Presidential Address, published in this issue, should embody his reason of faith in the study of literature and his doctrine of the art of teaching it.

He understood young people by a kind of divination, partly because he never forgot the common frustrations and dissatisfactions, as well as the joys, of his own youth; and partly because an unfailing abundance of youth welled up in his own irrepressible nature. It was thus that he met the exhausting demands of his last year, and took his very end easily in his stride.

Padelford's performance as a scholar expressed his whole nature as much as did his teaching or his part in affairs. The Bibliography of his writings, running to nearly ninety items, published in the December number of *The Modern Language Quarterly* (pages 519–524), tells the story. The dates of these items show how unremitting were his inquiries. About one third of them are concerned with Edmund Spenser, and illustrate how his interest concentrated on this poet more and more with the years. His studies in Spenser were principally occupied with the ideas that entered into the com-

position of Spenser's poetry—theological, political, philosophical, and social—with Spenser's part in the tradition of chivalry and his affinity with the thought and temper of the Renaissance. But Padelford could on occasion take off his coat and descend to wrestle with a date or a text, to "settle *hoti's* business" or a statistical matter of vocabulary.

Nearly a third of the list treats of other Elizabethan and Tudor poets, especially Wyatt and Surrey. The rest of the titles range through various fields. Among other works in the list are his translations from Plutarch, Basil, and Scaliger, on the art and effect of poetry (1902, 1905), his edition of *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics* (1907), his edition of Surrey (1920, revised 1928). For more than a dozen years he has lavished his knowledge, skill, and energy upon the *Variorum Edition of Spenser's Works*, both as one of the General Editors, and as Special Editor of Books I (1932) and III (1934) of the *Faery Queen*, and, with others, of Books VI and VII (1938). It would be impossible to describe or measure his generous share in this laborious project.

Perhaps his most conspicuous feat as a scholar was his discovery in 1932 of the lost translation, certainly by Spenser, of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Axiochus*, of which no copy had been seen or accurately described by a Spenserian scholar for nearly two hundred years. This text Padelford recognized, reclaimed, and identified in an exhaustive edition (1934).

Lastly, just before his death, he completed and prepared for press the *Spenser Allusion Book*, originally proposed and sponsored by the Spenser Group in this Association, and carried forward under the editorship of the late Ray Heffner. For this book Padelford has supplied a long and detailed prefatory essay on the influence of Spenser before 1700. There is a present hope and possibility that this book may appear as one of the volumes in the *Variorum Edition*.

As a scholar Padelford was strict, sceptical, untiring, tolerating no research for mere research's sake. He never suffered from the scholar's melancholy which is emulation. His most highly specialized work was never cloistered and irrelevant to life. He was a humanist in the best sense, whose humanism transcended the bounds of academic specialism, and drew into its sunny scope men and women of all types and followings, business, politics, art, the professions; and not least of all, hundreds of inconspicuous people who were notable for character or quality, or for humor in any sense old or new.

C. G. O.