## • *T. P. Hilditch*

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early years of this century university courses in chemistry included the History of Chemistry. As a student Hilditch found no satisfactory text so in 1911 he produced his own *Concise History of Chemistry*. His second book, *The Industrial Chemistry of the Fats and Waxes*, ran to three editions, but it is for his third monograph, *The Chemical Constitution of Natural Fats*, that he is most widely known and acclaimed. First published in 1940, the fourth edition appeared in November, 1964, having been completed with the assistance of P. N. Williams. This has been, and remains, a mammoth work of incalculable value to many generations of chemists. I have always considered this book to be a combination of critically appraised facts and of informed comment upon them and I have found the one as valuable as the other. The third edition was published in 1956 and therefore the fourth should last to the end of this decade. Even that is uncertain, for work reported at gatherings like this soon render such books out-of-date. But what then? Will Hilditch live to a great age like Chevreul and give us yet another edition? We do not know. But it is clear to me that we shall continue to require collated information of this kind and that when we can no longer rely on Hilditch for it we will have to find someone else—probably a corporate body able to recruit the assistance of several people—to continue this task.


**Award presented to Professor T. P. Hilditch at the Hilditch Symposium on Analysis of Natural Fat Triglycerides held at the AOCS meeting in Houston, April 25–28, 1965. The award is an aluminum reproduction of the old alchemist's symbol for olive oil, one of the earliest forms of chemical nomenclature for a fat. The inscription reads: "The American Oil Chemists' Society proudly presents this alchemist's symbol for olive oil to T. P. Hilditch in recognition of his fundamental research to define natural fat triglycerides in terms of modern chemical symbols."**

Hilditch's third big contribution to fatty acid chemistry is, in my opinion, the way in which he trained and inspired nearly eighty research students. Thirty of these came to the Liverpool laboratories from overseas. They came from several European countries, from all the former British Dominions, and from many of her former colonies (including America) but, above all, they came from the subcontinent of India, and we welcome Dr. Achaya as the unofficial representative of that large group of Hilditch's students. Many of his students maintained their interest in and their practice of fat chemistry. They are to be found in high office in industry and in government research establishments. A few entered academic life and one of them (H. E. Longenecker) is now the President of Tulane University, New Orleans. It is not for me to assess the contribution which each of these has made to the further study of this subject—the names of Jasperson, Lea, Lovern, and Shorland, to mention only four, are well known to you—but the influence of T. P. Hilditch in the academic and industrial pursuit of fatty acid chemistry has been extended and is still exercised through many of his students.

It has been easy to speak of Hilditch the chemist for his publications speak for him. It is less easy to speak of Hilditch the man but I must try.

From 1943 to 1946, when he was approaching sixty, I was a young postgraduate student of his. Since then my contact with him has been mainly through correspondence and, to a lesser extent, through infrequent meetings at lectures or in visits to his home. Through this limited knowledge certain facts emerge.

There is the respect and affection of his former students. Most of them are still in touch with him though they may have graduated from his laboratory over thirty years ago; many of them still visit him. All those I have met hold him in high regard and most of them can tell at least one good story which reflects the essential humanity and the many-sidedness of their former teacher. There is his generosity towards his students and here I speak from personal knowledge for I have received from him, at various times, advice and encouragement and an obvious, though difficult, attempt not to overshadow my own effort to build up a reputation. He is also a humble man of scientific integrity. He is surprised, but pleased, when honours came to him. The march of science is such that at conferences such as this much of the work done in earlier years, usually under more difficult circumstances, is superseded by newer results obtained by newer methods. Hilditch welcomes these new techniques and the new insight they bring, he is not unduly envious of present day opportunities, and he accepts those new ideas which he considers sound even when they replace his own earlier views. This is clear from the generous way in which he has treated some of the newer concepts of glyceride structure in the fourth edition of his monograph. He is indeed a Christian gentleman and I believe that his faith inspires his honesty of purpose, his service for others, and his interest in his students as chemists and also as men and women.

In dedicating this symposium to Thomas Percy Hilditch I know that we have brought him great pleasure. I am certain that you have honoured me in inviting me to contribute in this way, and I consider that we honour ourselves by associating our discussion and our work with the name of this man whom we all respect and for whom many of us have a great regard and affection.

## • *Obituary*

J. E. Maroney (1940), Chief Chemist, Service Laboratory, American Meat Institute Foundation, Chicago, died March 31, 1965.