

IN MEMORIAM

EPHRAIM EMERTON, PH. D.

On March 3, after a life of eighty-four years, Ephraim Emerton entered what he once named "the tender darkness of death." Forty-two years were spent in the teaching and writing of history in Harvard University, and persistent study in the years following his retirement in 1918 enriched our literature with five more volumes, the last appearing in his last year of life. Many are those who have prized his clear narrations and the guidance of his critical, clarified, and comprehending intelligence in knowledge of past centuries. Many are those who treasure the memory of a rich culture, a happy temperament, a cheering friendliness, a steadfast faith and piety, a wide erudition and the quiet dignity of his just and modest spirit.

Born in Salem, Mass., February 18, 1851, he graduated from Harvard College in 1871. His interest in history was quickened in college by Henry W. Torrey whom he called "a born teacher," by E. W. Gurney, and in the last year by Henry Adams. The "strong legal bent" which Adams aimed to give to the study of mediaeval civilization possibly had its influence on Emerton, since, after graduation, he began a law course in Boston University; but the law was not his chosen vocation. In the summer of 1873 he began a year of European travel and devoted the two following years to historical study in Leipzig University where in August 1876 he won a doctorate.

He returned to Harvard as instructor in Roman and Mediaeval History, but in 1882 was elected to the Winn Professorship of Ecclesiastical History. This chair had been created, as Emerton expresses it, "in the hope that the history of the Christian Church treated as a part of the general history of mankind might be profitable to other than divinity students." Thus Emerton, a layman, began to serve primarily lay needs by courses on Christianity's conflict with paganism, on the development of Roman primacy, the effect of the mediaeval church on intellectual and social progress, the transition to the modern world in the Renaissance and Reformation with study of the Canon Law in reference to the legal basis of Protestantism. For the divinity students he provided a special course in the history of Christian doctrine as related to successive phases of thought in the changing world. His classes numbered men of all branches of faith who were gratified by his irenic respect for the right to differ, "the most precious right of the thinking man." This phrase sprang from his own deep concern in religion. The pervasion of his heart and mind by religion is revealed in his volume on Unitarian Thought and the gentle reverence of the faith there given systematic exposition has been a solace to many.

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.