

# **A TRIBUTE**

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A Tribute by Elisabeth Rebecca Sprague

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**ELISABETH REBECCA SPRAGUE**

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*When hearts whose truth was proven,  
Like thine are laid in earth,  
There should a wreath be woven  
To tell the world their worth.*

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THIS is the story of a quiet life, a life for the most part devoted to the nearest duties. Yet this quiet life was so full of wide and ever-widening influence and beneficence, so rich in friendships, so inspiring in its example of devotion to duty, whether to the family or the state, so beautiful in its loving kindness and exquisite courtesy of daily habit of intercourse, so deeply encouraging in its never flagging growth, that its story is the right of those who loved her.

It is interesting, also, as the portrait of a New England gentlewoman living during a most picturesque epoch of our history, connected by her birth and position with the most eminent of New England, associated with all the forces of the time.

Most of all is it a life to give hope. The service to her family, her state, and her country was not the less important that it was given

so unobtrusively. She was a blessing to her kindred and her friends, and an ever present help to the poor and needy. Nor did this power of helpfulness wane with the years; rather it grew steadily and continuously as years advanced.

And finally, from the days when a laughing, quick-witted, and high-spirited child, sometimes sharp of tongue to her followers, but always generous, loyal, and loving, played in Pemberton Square, with the ample old Georgian houses blinking their many paned windows above their wrought-iron balconies, and the old-fashioned doorplates bearing historic names on their shining brass, to the days when the courteous and gracious lady whom we all loved gathered her friends about her in her stately drawing-room on the noble avenue which had not so much as a foothold during her childhood, it was a happy life — a life of many keen sorrows, but a happy life; and the happiness as well as the sorrow sprang from her unselfish love. She was a happy daughter and sister, and a most happy wife; this in spite of the fact that her mother died,

that her father's health gave way immediately after, making him dependent on her care for the short remainder of his life, that her husband's father was an invalid, confined to his room for many years, and later, that one by one the brothers and sisters whom she loved left the world, until she was the last of her family. Through sickness, through loss and anxiety, through weary bodily pain, her high courage remained and her daily cheerfulness.

Surely such a life has an enduring inspiration.

The one who knew her best has briefly outlined its main events.

"Mrs. Sprague filled so large a place in the hearts of her relatives and friends, and gave so much of her time and labor for the benefit of others, that her memory deserves something more than a passing notice, and claims a recognition that shall endure. Although her life was an uneventful one, it was filled with good deeds and kindly courtesies and warm affections, and behind these was a personality which created for her a wide circle of friends and admirers, to whom these few words of affectionate remembrance are addressed.