

**SERVICE IN MEMORY OF
LARKIN DUNTON, 1828-1899:
HELD AT THE BOSTON NORMAL
SCHOOL. APRIL 28, 1900**

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ANONYMOUS

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Larkin Dunton

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[1828 - 1899]

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BOSTON-NORMAL SCHOOL
APRIL 28, 1900

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Introduction

THOSE of us whose great privilege it was to attend the service recorded in this little volume will rejoice that others are, in a sense, to share the memory of that service with us. We wish that it were possible to perpetuate, not merely the words that were spoken, but the complete beauty of that touching memorial. As we entered the old school hall, where we had so often sat at the feet of our dear master, we were greeted by the grave, kind eyes of the noble portrait which it had been our privilege to secure in the days when his strength was as yet unimpaired. The portrait had been placed upon the platform where he had sat to teach us; and all around it in great profusion bloomed the flowers that he had loved. The room was sweet with their fragrance and hushed by the solemn notes of Handel's "Largo." Those of us who were there can hardly read the pages that follow without seeming to see again the beloved face with the flowers about it, and to hear again the deep tones of the 'cello, the sweet voice of the young singer, and the strains of the dear, familiar hymns. Almost all who took part in the service, and almost all who share in it for the first time through these pages, remember Dr. Dunton's love for "Fountain of Light." Year after

year at graduations and reunions we have sung that hymn because he loved it. And all will care to know that Mendelssohn's "Consolation," played by the 'cello, was also very dear to Dr. Dunton; night after night during the last months of his life he asked for it and listened to it before he fell asleep.

Those of us who knew him best had often occasion to mark that although he had not received especial training in music and art and literature, and never made any pretension to a large knowledge of those subjects, it was always the best they had to offer that he most cared for. It was characteristic that the noble measures of "Fountain of Light" — adapted from a great Haydn symphony — should have appealed to him so strongly. His old pupils will never forget the deep feeling with which he always spoke of Raphael's Sistine Madonna and of the hours that he had spent in Dresden sitting reverently before it. It was my especial privilege to spend many hours in reading poetry with him, because of some work for children which we were planning together. I would pass one poem after another to him and wait for his decision as to its value to "the little folks," as he so loved to call them. His pleasure in what he read was beautiful to see; sometimes it was positive delight. When the melody of the poem especially pleased him, or when the glimpses of nature brought back the dear experiences of his own boyhood, he would

read aloud with an almost boyish joy. I shall never forget submitting to him a little poem of William Blake's called "Infant Joy." He read it aloud, exclaiming, with that never-to-be-forgotten light in his eyes, "Beautiful, beautiful!" I once heard him say that in his boyhood, attracted by its wonderful splendor and dignity, he had committed to memory chapter after chapter of the book of the Revelation. This quiet but profound love of the beautiful balanced the keen, logical quality of his mind and gave a proportion to his whole nature which we all recognized and which was one of his greatest sources of strength. Indeed, the balance and proportion of Dr. Dunton's nature impressed very deeply those who knew him best. To those who knew him but slightly it may have seemed that some one phase of his character—because of its conspicuous strength—was disproportionate to the rest. Those who discussed educational problems with him felt his intellectual grasp and the force of his relentless logic; those who opposed him and those who toiled in sympathy with him for the realization of some great professional reform—such as tenure of office for teachers—recognized his strong will, unconquerable by difficulty or defeat; those who came to him in trouble found him as tender-hearted as a woman. The clear intellect, the tender heart, the indomitable will,—these made the complete man.

In the pages that follow we shall find again and again that what we would have said has been said for us. Here we shall find the profound gratitude which so many of us feel expressed by one of the younger graduates, Miss Clark, of the class of '92; and the closer relation, natural and possible between teacher and pupils when the school was small, recalled by Mrs. Rand, of the class of '74. Here, too, we have in Mr. Boyden's address a glimpse of Dr. Dunton's earlier life—a glimpse so touching and inspiring that we wish it were possible to know more of those early, significant years. Here, too, we may see what Dr. Dunton was to the men and women with whom he was associated in the larger educational interests. Mr. Seaver, as superintendent of schools, Mr. Martin, as supervisor of the Normal School, Dr. Courtney, as chairman of the special committee on the school, Dr. Tetlow and Mr. Lincoln, representing the high schools from which the Normal School draws its pupils, Mr. Owen, representing the grammar schools, and Miss Moses the corps of teachers in the Normal School itself, here speak of the many qualities which made his life and work so strong and beautiful. The voice that could have spoken most adequately of Dr. Dunton's own inner life has long been silent. The friendship between Dr. Dunton and Delwin A. Hamlin was peculiarly close and beautiful. Trained in the same arduous

school of life ; graduates of the same college ; associated in the same daily work ; neighbors ; constant companions in reading, study, and thought ; agreeing, and differing, and always respecting each other's opinion ; they were bound together as few men are.

Beautiful and complete as is the expression of respect and gratitude and love found in these pages, I doubt not that many will think of some phase of Dr. Dunton's character or of some especial cause for grateful memories that has not found utterance here. It is good to have it so ; it is sweet to think that although these spoke for all, each of us has her own peculiar share of sorrow at his death, of gratitude for the strength and beauty of his life. To some of us the first conception of what teaching really is came through him ; for some of us the meaning and duty of intellectual honesty was first made clear by him ; to some of us came, as we listened and learned, a truer philosophy of life. It is for this last, I am sure, that not a few of us would most earnestly thank him. Life never seemed so full of large responsibility, so crowded with great opportunity, as when he spoke to us of it ; his profound belief in the freedom of the will, the absolute democracy of his point of view, and his great faith in the possibilities of human nature made us feel that we were in very truth building our own lives. But his entire lack of any morbid quality, his sanity, and his