

BISHOP POTTER: THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

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Bishop Potter: The People's Friend by Harriette A. Keyser

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HARRIETTE A. KEYSER

**BISHOP POTTER: THE
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BISHOP POTTER

THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

By
HARRIETTE A. KEYSER

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PREFACE.

It appears to me that Bishop Potter was the greatest citizen of this country. I write this deliberately, because, having been an observer of men and events during a part of the nineteenth century, as well as the early years of the twentieth, I have racked my brain in vain to discover any one so many-sided and able to touch the people in so many ways.

As he was for several years President of C. A. I. L., and I was Secretary, it was my great privilege to come near to him concerning matters relating to the betterment of all sorts and conditions of men.

In August, 1908, when, under the shadow of sorrow caused by his loss to the Church and social reform, the idea flashed in my mind to use material which I had at hand, or could obtain, with the hope that I might be able, in this way, to give out an impression of this great citizen. This work was begun in Octo-

ber of that year, and has been delayed in various ways; but, at last, this little book is sent out, as my tribute to the memory of the greatest man I have known.

Acknowledgments for documents or letters are due first to the Executive Committee of C. A. I. L., the entire records of that Society being placed at my disposal; to Archdeacon Nelson; to Mr. John Newton Bogart and Mr. H. Oscar Cole, both members of the New York Council of Conciliation and Mediation; and to Mr. Ralph T. Easley of the Civic Federation. I am also indebted to Miss Margaret Schuyler Lawrance, a member of C. A. I. L. from its earliest days, for assistance in various ways, and to Mr. Edward Ransford, former editor of *Hammer and Pen*.

H. A. K.

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CHAPTER I.

A PROPHET OF SOCIAL REFORM.

It is interesting, yet not always profitable, to speculate concerning the heredity and early environment of any man or woman of mark. Such speculations are often useless, because of the distinction of individuality which seems to defy these potent influences. Heredity and environment certainly were felicitous in their relation to the child who entered this life in 1834, and was baptized Henry Codman. Because Henry Codman Potter belonged to a family of spiritual force, ecclesiastical prominence and intellectual supremacy, the members of which generally possessed either genius, or talent, it might have been foreseen that he would become distinguished in some of the walks of life; but surely it would have been difficult to foretell his career, not only as a great ecclesiastic, but, also, as a distinguished citizen. For these were the days when it was often thought necessary that the citizen should be lost in the ecclesiastic. With rare gifts of expression, fearlessness, and an exuberant sense of humor,