

**FOUNDER'S DAY AT HAMPTON:
AN ADDRESS IN MEMORY
OF SAMUEL CHAPMAN
ARMSTRONG, JANUARY 30,
1898**

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Founder's Day at Hampton: An Address in Memory of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, January 30, 1898 by Francis Greenwood Peabody

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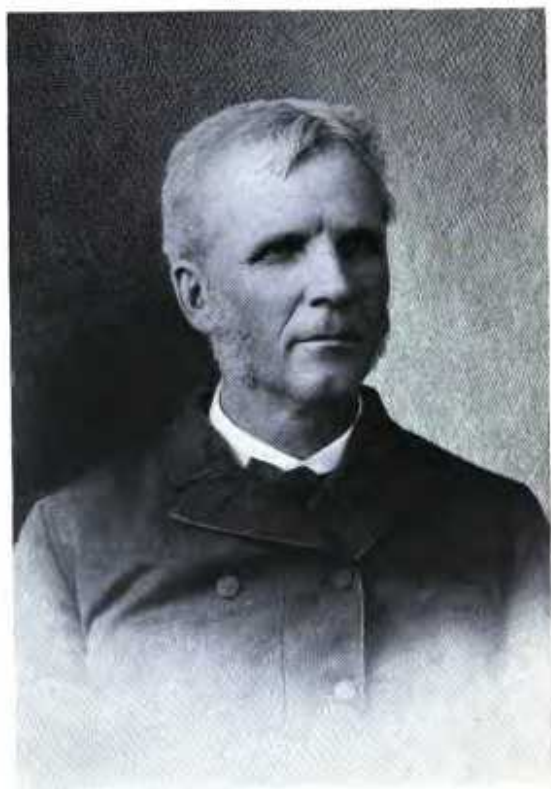
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FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

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1898

General Armstrong

Was born in the Hawaiian Islands, January 30, 1839; graduated at Williams College in 1862; was appointed Captain in the 125th New York Volunteers, and later Colonel of the 9th Colored Troops; was in charge of the Freedmen's Bureau at Hampton, Va., from 1866 to 1868; founded the Hampton Institute in 1868; and died at Hampton, May 11, 1893.

The school which he established and inspired holds each year a memorial service to mark its

founder's Day

FOUNDER'S DAY AT HAMPTON

THIS day is reverently set apart by us to recall the life of our Founder, and to repeat to ourselves the lessons of his teaching. It is a familiar story which we love to tell to each other from year to year; but it is a story very difficult to tell with the moderation of statement of which our Founder would approve. He expressly desired that no formal eulogy of him should be permitted. "The truth of a life," he wrote, "lies deep down." His searching eyes would look with reproach on any friends who should speak of him to-day with exaggerated praise. Yet, on the other hand, it is impossible to speak of General Armstrong at all without seeming to those who did not know him extravagant and uncontrolled. No one who was per-

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mitted to observe his life can recall it without a thrill of reverent loyalty. Beyond any possibility of question our Founder was one of the half-dozen men of his generation in America who must be unqualifiedly described as great. His plans, his hopes, his habits of thought, his personality, gave at once the impression of greatness. He must be spoken of then to-day with all possible reserve of language; yet he cannot be spoken of at all without preliminary recognition that language, which in most cases would be mere undiscerning praise, is to-day severely restrained and scrupulously just. And fortunately for this demand laid upon us to hush our personal praise, we may tell our story to-day, not in terms of the man, but in terms of his work. For there are two ways in which an institution like this may have its beginning: it may begin with a plan, or it may begin with a man. Sometimes it happens that a college, or a church, or a phil-

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anthropic scheme is first sketched on paper, then endowed with money, and finally supplied with a person. Such foundations, however, must remain unstable and insecure until the last step is taken and the man arrives; and many a rich endowment has failed of its intention because it has failed to attach to itself a leader of men. Sometimes, on the other hand, such a work begins with a person. The man sees his heavenly vision and is obedient to it. He begins just where he is and with what he has, as if he resolutely said to his dream: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Then the work expands as the life of nature does. It is not built up, it grows. It puts forth its shoots and branches like a tree in spring, because at its heart there is the warmth of a personal power. Such a growth may in due time come to be a great institution with a world of routine and detail and mechanism; but the mechanism of a work

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thus inspired feels the personal quality within itself as the whirring wheels of a factory testify to the engine at its heart. I need not say to you that Hampton represents this natural expansion, from the vision of a man to the myriad branches of a great institution. In a degree almost unparalleled, I suppose, in American education, this great, busy, growing place is the incarnation of a person. Every step we take is taken in the thought of him. With every change we ask, "What would the General say to this?" At every enrichment of our resources and every evidence of worth and promise we say, "How the General would have rejoiced in this!" And each year we pause in the midst of our busy life and reverently keep our Founder's Day. This is our greatest blessing,—that we are not built upon a plan, but upon a man. You remember how the prophet Ezekiel in his vision of heaven saw about him a be-