

**SAMUEL
JOHNSON:
A MEMORIAL**

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Samuel Johnson: A Memorial by Anonymous

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A Memorial.

"ALL THINGS THROUGH THEE TAKE NOBLER FORM,
AND LOOK BEYOND THE EARTH."

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed at the Niverside Press.

1882.

THE death of Mr. Johnson was a great surprise and shock to his immediate family as well as to the large circle of warm and close friends outside of it. Though he had looked weak and worn for the last two or three years, and at times had been seriously ill, no one suspected that the end of his life and labors was at hand until a very few days before it came. It now seems that he had long suffered from a disease which it was impossible to detect until his last sickness. But when it did reveal itself near the close of that, his case was seen to be hopeless. He passed quietly away near midnight on Sunday, February 19th, and apparently without realizing — unless some imperfectly understood words a short time before consciousness left him indicated it — that he was going, and must leave unfinished the great work of his life in which his interest, toil, and hopes for so many years had centered. He was aware, however, that he was unusually ill.

Referring to this the day but one before his death, he spoke with great satisfaction of having things about him to his mind, of his library and home, and of his materials for his book, — which, in his series on Oriental Religions, was to be entitled "Persia," — being all ready under his hand, and said, that now he only wanted just a few weeks of health and strength to complete it; but added, with

his wonted patience and submission, "I shall be cheerful under this enforced postponement."

It is not the purpose of this sketch to deal with his life at any length, but simply to give to his many friends, whose tender interest in everything that pertained to him is well known, a glance at his early years and private life, that they may see how in keeping they were with all his teachings and acts as they knew him.

He was born in Salem, October 10, 1822, and was the oldest child of Dr. Samuel and Anna [Dodge] Johnson. His father was born in North Andover, in the old family homestead where his own life closed, and belonged to that line, of which it is said in the history of that town, "the name of Johnson has been one of the most continuously influential in the history of the Andovers." His mother was of an old Salem family, and connected with many names eminent in the annals of that city and of the Commonwealth. His brilliant powers and noble character, therefore, were the legitimate offspring of ancestral intelligence and worth. So his native grace of speech and manner, as well as his refinement of thought and feeling, gave evidence of wide ancestral culture. His boyhood had in it the promise which was so well fulfilled in his after years. It was passed under the influence of the social and intellectual life, as well as of the commercial activity, of Salem, at a time when these were at their highest, and were doubtless as favorable for the development of the young as they were anywhere in the country. A de-

lineation of him at this time has been received since his death from a playmate in a distant State, who had not seen him for more than twenty-five years.

She writes: "Looking over all the past from childhood, and calling up the sweet gentle spirit that has passed away, I see how few there were like him. It always seemed to me that a perfect soul was given him from his birth. He never seemed to do or say anything that was not pure. And one ever knowing him could not help thinking that, where every word and act was so good, his thoughts must always be pure and holy. He is before me as he used to be in our young days, with his serene and calm face, one of the few that leave a lasting impression on the memory."

In boyhood began his unselfish devotion to others, in amusements for younger brothers and sisters, and in literary efforts for their improvement. Then, too, began his interest in public affairs and in religion. They furnished the subjects of his earliest poems just after he had entered his teens, which glow with all the earnestness that characterized his writings upon slavery in later life, or are reverent and trustful as was his later religious faith.

He was prepared for college at private schools in Salem; was graduated from Harvard in 1842; from the Divinity School in 1846. The year before his graduation from the Divinity School he spent in Europe, visiting Italy and Switzerland as well as England and France. The year 1861 he also passed abroad, revisiting some of the scenes

of his first journey, and bringing home mental pictures, which it was ever the delight of his friends to hear him describe.

He entered the ministry without ordination. His first permanent engagement was at the Unitarian church in Harrison Square, where he remained one year. His political preaching and anti-slavery sentiments, however, gave offense, and the engagement was not renewed, except for a short time after the lapse of a year. In the years that intervened before 1853, when he became minister of the Free Church in Lynn, he was active, preaching, and lecturing upon anti-slavery, whenever and wherever an opportunity offered. His ministry in Lynn continued until 1870, and covered the most important part of his public career, of which there is an account in the tributes of his parishioners which follow.

His friends, for whom this memorial is prepared, do not need to be told how cheerful and joyous he was, brightening with his beaming face and gleeful laugh every bright scene, or how sympathetic, gentle, and tender in every disappointment and sorrow of life, entering with wonderful insight into every human experience, and bringing near the Infinite Source of comfort and strength; or how inspiring his zeal for justice, freedom, and truth, and how entire his consecration to human virtue and welfare, — but it will not lessen their esteem and affection for him to be assured that all this he was, and more tender and helpful, as circumstances permitted, in the closer relations of home

and family. There the wealth of his deep tenderness, serene faith, and exuberant gladness flowed full and free. There he took the burdens of others, without their knowing it, upon his own strong shoulders, and their sorrows upon his heart, while his presence ever ministered strength and gladness. And that presence ever abides in the homes that he thus blessed like a sweet melody, that comes back after its strains have ceased to the outward ear, and sings itself over and over again in the soul.

His absorption in purely intellectual and spiritual things, and the satisfaction he derived from them, together with that from his deep and tender love of all in the parental home, were so complete that he naturally felt little inclined to form other relations of home and family which he truly appreciated and revered. Early in life, also, he saw that duty called him to a way of hardship and sacrifice, which his fine sense of honor and regard for others' feelings would not permit him to ask another to share with him. But his esteem of woman's nature, in wealth of sentiment and deep appreciation and insight, was something before which every true man would bow, never permitting anything trivial in thought, word, or act toward her, but demanding the utmost reverence as for the highest manifestation of the tender, sympathetic, and loving in the Divine nature.

A. M. Haskell

Samuel Johnson.

BORN IN SALEM, MASS., OCTOBER 10, 1822.

DIED IN NORTH ANDOVER, MASS., FEBRUARY 19, 1882.