

**A MEMOIR OF
SAMUEL G.
DRAKE, A. M.**

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A memoir of Samuel G. Drake, A. M. by John H. Sheppard

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JOHN H. SHEPPARD

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OF

SAMUEL G. DRAKE, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF THE INDIANS,
HISTORY OF BOSTON, ETC., ETC.

BY JOHN H. SHEPPARD,

LIBRARIAN OF THE N. E. HISTORIC-GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.



ALBANY:

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Few realize the Antiquary's worth:
He pioneers the march of History;
Exhumes the relics of long buried lore;
Gathers up scraps and saws; lost pedigrees
Found by the blazon of armorial shield;
Black lettered parchments; coins, books odd and quaint;
Wills, deeds and ballads; — waifs of olden time
Dearer than oracles from Delphi's steep
Or Sibylline leaves, rescued from sport of winds;
And as the Explorer of Diluvian rocks
Unveils events in distant ages passed,
So he his deep foundation lays on fact.
For, like the signal on a mountain top
Fact points the way alone which leads to Truth:
Thence the Historian draws his rich supplies
And pictures scenes of life, that live forever.



TO THE REV. WM. JENKS, D. D., LL. D.

DEAR SIR: Knowing the early and continued interest you have taken in our Historic-Genealogical Society, of which you are an Honorary Member, and in the antiquarian researches and writings of Samuel G. Drake, Esq., it seemed proper and a testimony of respect to dedicate to you this Memoir. And I avail myself of this opportunity with more pleasure, from the reflection that a long life, blessed with much happiness to yourself in doing good to others, has been in a great degree amidst the pursuits of sacred theology and the ministerial and pastoral cares of many years, devoted not only to the acquisition of numerous languages, but to elegant literature and archæology. While the studies of the Greek and Roman Classics may have been too much neglected by men of academical education in this age of busy Commerce and aspiring Politics, you have taught us their intrinsic value and exemplified in your honored length of days the truth of those beautiful remarks of the Great Orator, when pleading for Archias before a Roman audience :

“Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.”

If the opinion of some of the wisest philosophers be true, that in a purer and happier world there will be a reminiscence of all our intellectual acquirements, your joy and reward must be great in so many treasures laid up in Heaven. But, that you may yet be long with us and “*serus in cælum redeas,*” is the sincere wish of your many friends; among whom I have the honor to subscribe myself with the highest respect.

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN H. SHEPPARD.

P R E F A C E .

This Memoir was written at the request of the Editor of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, for the quarterly of July, 1863, and with the cordial approbation of several members of our Society. The subject of it, Mr. Drake, was one of the five original founders of the institution, and has ever been a warm and energetic promoter of its success. He was the first Corresponding Secretary, and held the office twelve years. In 1858 he was chosen President, and fulfilled the duties of that station acceptably, until his departure for Europe in the fall.

Some eminent writer has remarked that the life of an Author is so uniform and monotonous, that it offers few events to make his biography interesting, as though the eloquence of the forum or the thunder of the battle-field were necessary to rouse the attention by a kind of dramatic excitement. True it is we feel the influence and we honor the lofty rank and commanding position of such men; but there is also a gentle and noiseless charm in meditating on a faithful transcript of

what passes in the inner life, the intellectual world, of a student; the effect upon us is pleasing and profitable. His incessant effort of industry—his gradual accumulation of knowledge—still, self-denying manner of life—moral courage in surmounting difficulties—and victorious struggle with adversity can not fail to interest every lover of excellence; and to the young such biography is full of instruction.

Mr. Drake has been a most indefatigable and persevering student in the early history of our own country, and especially in the investigation of the habits and customs of the Indian tribes. A devotion of more than forty years to antiquarian researches has gained him an honorable and reliable character as an Author; and the following brief and imperfect Memoir is but a just tribute to merit.

MEMOIR.

"Bayle's dictionary is a very useful work for those who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most."—*Boswell's Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, vol. 1, p. 375, *Malone's edition*.

Such was the opinion of that great and good man, whose life, by Boswell, is one of those inimitable biographies which will be read while our language endures; for it is a fixture in the mind of every lover of the English classics.

There are some who call in question the wisdom and propriety of writing memoirs of the living, as though it were a sacred duty we owe to truth and good taste to defer the history of a meritorious character until the grave has closed over him forever. But, is not a judgment of this kind too stringent and fastidious? For if a man, in "passing through nature to eternity," has done his country some good, whether in peace or war—if by his inventions or discoveries he has opened a new path of usefulness or enjoyment to our race—if he has exalted either of the learned professions by his talents and erudition—if, by his morning toil or midnight lucubrations, he has added, like Irving or Longfellow, a fresh charm to the elegancies of