

LUCIUS ROBINSON PAIGE, D.D.

BORN MARCH 8, 1802.
DIED SEPTEMBER 2, 1896.

A Memorial Sketch,

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MEMOIR.

Lucius Robinson Paige, D.D., died at his residence in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the afternoon of September 2, 1896, in the ninety-fifth year of his age.

He was born in Hardwick, Massachusetts, on the 8th of March, 1802, and was the youngest of the nine children of Timothy and Mary (Robinson) Paige of that town. His grandfather, Colonel Timothy Paige, was active in the war of the Revolution as a member of the "Committee of Correspondence" and as an officer of the militia. From the "History of Hardwick" we learn that he led his company to Bennington, at the alarm in August, 1777, and to West Point in 1780; that on the organization of the militia after the adoption of the Constitution, he was commissioned Colonel, which office he held during the remainder of his life; that he was a strenuous supporter of the government, and rendered service in the suppression of the Shays rebellion.

Mr. Paige's father, although but eighteen years old at the time of the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington, Concord and Cambridge, in April, 1775, joined the "Minute Men" and marched with them to Cambridge. In his maturer years, the suffrages of his fellow-citizens placed and retained him in positions of responsibility during the greater part of his life. He was a representative in the General Court for seventeen consecutive years, and a delegate to the Convention for revising the State Constitution in 1820. On his decease, the leading newspapers spoke

of him as an “undeviating patriot,” and “universally esteemed for his intelligence and unbending integrity.” Other members of the family and their connections by marriage, were among the most respected and useful citizens of Hardwick. Of this number were Brig.-Gen. Timothy Ruggles, and Maj.-Gen. Jonathan Warner.

The American ancestry of Mr. Paige includes, in the paternal line, Elder William Brewster and Governor Thomas Prence of the Plymouth Colony; in the maternal line, Governor Thomas Dudley of the Massachusetts Colony. Many of his ancestors attained remarkable longevity.

Mr. Paige was educated in the common schools of Hardwick, and at Hopkins Academy in Hadley, Mass. Having determined, after much reflection, to enter the ministry of the Universalist denomination, he placed himself in 1823 under the direction and instruction of the Reverend Hosea Ballou of Boston. His first sermon was preached in Charlestown, June 1, 1823. His first pastorate was in Springfield, Mass. There his arduous labors, both by voice and pen, resulted in a marked increase of his denomination in that town and its vicinity. His second pastorate was in that part of Gloucester now known as Rockport. In 1832, Mr. Paige was called to the Church in Cambridge, and there also he gained a high reputation as an able preacher and zealous pastor. Through failure of health in 1839, he was compelled to relinquish this pastoral charge, with the warning that he had but a short time to live. He preached occasionally, however, during the next ensuing thirty years.

In the early years of his ministry, Mr. Paige was a frequent contributor to the religious press. In 1830 he reprinted from the *Religious Enquirer*, of Hartford, Conn., his polemical paper entitled “Universalism Defended.” Soon afterwards he published his “Selections from Eminent

Commentators" (Boston, 1833). This work passed through several editions, and was favorably received beyond the pale of his own denomination. In 1835 he began in the *Trumpet*, of which for some time he was an assistant editor, a series of "Notes on the Scriptures," and these contributions were continued for several years.

Mr. Paige held the office of town clerk of Cambridge from March, 1839, to January, 1840, and again from March, 1843, to May, 1846. From May, 1846, to October, 1855, he was the city clerk, and from 1842 to 1847, one of the assessors of taxes. He helped to organize the Cambridgeport Savings Bank, was its Treasurer from 1855 to 1871, and at his death was its Vice-President and one of its Directors. Of the Cambridgeport Bank (now a National Bank), he was the Cashier for about seven years, its President three years, and one of its Directors from 1857 until his decease.

In addition to these secular labors, Mr. Paige devoted his evenings to the preparation of his "Commentary on the New Testament." The first of the six volumes was published in 1844; the last, in 1870. This work has been the standard Commentary in his denomination, and is still in demand.

In the year 1850, in recognition of Mr. Paige's acquirements and literary labors, Harvard College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts.

Amidst his many engagements and studies, he found time also to prosecute historical and genealogical investigations. In 1838 he delivered the historical discourse at the centennial commemoration of the incorporation of Hardwick. He had then begun a systematic collection of materials for a history of that town, but this work was not completed until after the lapse of forty years. While holding the office of clerk of Cambridge, Mr. Paige became

deeply interested in the history of that ancient town ; and at the suggestion of a member of this Society, the late Governor Emory Washburn, he made a careful exploration of the records in his custody, supplementing this research by a thorough examination of the records of the old parishes, the records and files of the Courts, and the State archives in Boston. The "History of Cambridge" was published in 1877, and the "History of Hardwick" in 1883. Besides the historical narrative, each of these volumes contains a very full and carefully compiled "Genealogical Register" of the early settlers and their descendants. These volumes are, in the most essential respects, models of what a town history should be. They contain the most important information obtainable from the sources then open to the author, and this is presented in a clear and concise narrative. By his habit of careful research, his perfect honesty and freedom from prejudice, Mr. Paige was well fitted for this task. In the estimation of those most competent to pass judgment, these volumes are authorities. But they are something more than authorities. They not only instruct ; they inspire. Their educational value was happily set forth by President Eliot of Harvard University in his recent address to the assembled school-children of Cambridge. "I trust," he said, "that all of you study faithfully Paige's History of Cambridge. Nobody deserves the privilege of growing up in this city who does not make himself familiar with that book. It is an epitome of the history, not only of this town, but of a good many other Puritan towns. It fills this place with memories of by-gone scenes and deeds which were precious to the people of those times, and are precious still to us, their descendants or successors."

Mr. Paige was prominently connected with the Masonic fraternity. He became a mason in 1824, and was Master

of Lodges in Hardwick and Cambridge, successively. In 1826, he was elected an Eminent Commander of Knights Templars. In the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, he held the office of Grand Steward in 1849-50, of Grand Deacon in 1851, and of Deputy Grand Master in 1852, 1853 and 1854. This last appointment made him a member *ad vitam* of the Grand Body,—a relation which he cherished with much pleasure. In 1861, he became a member of the Supreme Council; was its Secretary two years, and Secretary of State three years. He had for many years been the representative of the Supreme Council of Belgium in the Supreme Council 33° of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. At his decease, he was the oldest Past Commander of Knights Templars in the jurisdiction of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and the oldest member of the Grand Lodge.

Mr. Paige was one of the Representatives of Cambridge in the General Court in 1878 and 1879.

He became a member of the Board of Trustees of Tufts College in 1860, and was its Secretary from 1862 to 1876. Previous to becoming a Trustee, he served on committees for laying the foundations of this institution and arranging its curriculum of studies. At the time of his death, he was the senior Trustee, not only in years, but in length of service. He received from this College in 1861 the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, and the dormitory of its Divinity School is named in his honor—"Paige Hall." His gifts to the College during his life amounted to five thousand dollars. He bequeathed to it two thousand dollars, to establish a scholarship. He also bequeathed to the town of Hardwick his library and the sum of ten thousand dollars towards the foundation of a Public Library, on certain conditions—failing which, his library is bequeathed to the "Ladies' Free Library Association" of Hardwick, and

the ten thousand dollars is to become the property of the Trustees of Tufts College.

Dr. Paige was elected a member of this Society, October 21, 1878. He became a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1844, of the New-England Historic Genealogical Society—being its first elected member—in 1845, an honorary member of the Worcester Society of Antiquity in 1876, and of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1877. He was, also, a corresponding member of other historical societies.

He was married four times. His first wife was Clarinda, daughter of Ezekiel Richardson of Brookfield. She died in 1833. His second wife, Abby R., daughter of Joseph Whittemore of Charlestown, died in 1843. Lucy, his third wife, was a daughter of Barnabas Comins of Charlton, and widow of Solomon Richardson of Brookfield. She died in 1864. He had five children, all of whom have deceased. His fourth wife, who survives him at the age of ninety, was the widow of the Hon. David T. Brigham of Keokuk, Iowa, daughter of Robert M. Peck, and granddaughter of the Hon. Joseph Allen of Worcester. She is also a grandniece of Samuel Adams, the Revolutionary leader and patriot.

The later years of Dr. Paige's life were passed in comparative retirement; but he was never idle. He continued to be actively interested in the several fraternal societies of which he was a member, and in the religious and educational institutions of his denomination. Respected and trusted by his fellow-citizens of every religious body and of all political parties, his counsel and coöperation were sought in the efforts made, happily with a large degree of success, to promote the good government and general welfare of Cambridge. For many years he was regular in his attendance at the meetings of the historical societies.

For the last four or five years his attendance was necessarily less frequent. His communications whenever present, and his letters when he was compelled to be absent, gave, even to the last, no indication of decay in his mental powers. His large correspondence, his reading of historical and kindred books, and unfailing interest in public events, furnished ample employment for his mind. He knew what was transpiring in foreign lands and in the world about him, and he also knew the chief contents of the monthlies and quarterlies. Surrounded by his carefully selected library, and by pieces of furniture and other relics that had descended to him from his ancestors, he read—read without glasses—and made copious notes, to the end of life.

Those who knew Dr. Paige only as a citizen, with his quiet, dignified and refined manners and gentle spirit, were in a large measure strangers to his reserved force, his capacity for concentrated thought, and the deep and strong currents of his emotional nature. To those who were honored with his intimate friendship in his own home, when the doors were shut and the curtains drawn, he disclosed his abounding humor, the warmth and generosity of his heart, the sweetness, purity, and elevation of his nature. He also gave evidence, in his unpretentious way, of the fulness and accuracy of his knowledge of history, both ancient and modern, and his extraordinary memory. He seemed to have forgotten nothing that he had read or witnessed. His conversation was enlivened by a great fund of illustrative reminiscences; but he was always a gentleman and dealt kindly with the reputations of his contemporaries and of the dead. He abhorred that habit which reveals itself in the repetition of scandal, and in efforts to excite mirth over the weaknesses and eccentricities of other men. Of such "reminiscences" Dr. Paige could not be

the author or the disseminator. Nor was this reserve the dictate of mere prudence. We might rather apply to him the remark made by Paul de Rémusat concerning M. Thiers, and say that this reserve was not an "incident of his life," but "was a trait of his character."

Born and bred among a people who were separated from the Puritan epoch more by a long interval of years than by any substantial difference in spirit or in principles, Dr. Paige inherited their quick and clear apprehension of truth and justice, their unswerving loyalty to whatever they regarded as the imperative demand of duty. But his Puritanism was ameliorated by warm sympathies for his fellow-men, a tolerant disposition, and a serene faith in the infinite love of his Divine Master.

He was conservative in respect to established principles in the sphere of politics and government, and in the sphere of ethics and conduct. At the same time, he was unaffectedly hospitable to every real advance in science and Christian philosophy, as he was, likewise, to every rational effort for reform in civil and in social life.

Looking back over his long life, he took delight in noting the upward progress of the race. He believed in the "Brotherhood of Man," and saw with joy every step gained towards the conciliation of the nations.

In his nearer view, he looked for the best results from the average man. He saw how, under the coöperating influences of wise laws and good government, of peaceful and useful industries, of the culture that comes from the schools and the wide diffusion of the products of the printing-press, and more than all, under the benign influence of religious institutions and inculcations,—the average man is advancing to a plane higher than that occupied by his predecessors. And this advance, although it might be interrupted and delayed by periods of reaction, he believed

would continue. Hence he was never disturbed by sudden gusts of folly and fanaticism, of social and political passion. Hence he could not be a "prophet of evil," nor, like Carlyle, a hero-worshiper. He approved the saying of the late Sir John Seeley, that hero-worship is the natural issue of "despair of society." It seemed to him "a sign of pessimism," as another writer has said, "just as pessimism in turn is a sign either of epicureanism, or of impatience." His hopefulness saved him from impatience; his Christian faith furnished a firm basis for his recognition of "a vast providential law of secular progress," and so saved him from despair.

To Dr. Paige was granted an ideal old age, which was passed in a community where everybody was his friend, eager to show him tokens of reverent regard, and during all which he was ministered to by a loyal and devoted wife—a playmate and schoolmate of his boyhood days, the companion of the last thirty years of his life. The end came after only a few days of serious illness—his vision undimmed, his mind unclouded, his Faith unshaken, his resignation perfect.

ALBERT H. HOYT.

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