



Gratia A. Countryman and Family Papers.

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A THANKSGIVING APPRECIATION

As another Thanksgiving draws near, one thinks instinctively of the many things that one must thank the kind Father for.

One of the things that makes me most grateful is memory. George Sand tells us that one day, when up in the hills, she picked the wild sage and coming back to her home the delicious perfume lingered on her hands and reminded her of the lingering sweetness of beautiful memories. Nothing is more grateful to us, as we grow older, than the gracious memories of past years, past experiences, and the contacts with great souls.

Out of my college days comes the memory of a gracious personality, my dear Professor Hutchinson. We loved the sterling stuff he was made of: We loved his beautiful philosophy: We loved the deep religious springs of his life, and we loved his sincere talks in the class room on the conduct of life and the rich values of life.

My dear old friend, nothing that I learned from books, nothing that belonged to purely class-room work, stays with me as clearly as your personal talks to us. I have brought them all the way down through my life as one of the constant influences to high thinking and earnest living.

It must mean something to a man to think of the long line of students whose lives have been influenced and I hope it gives you satisfaction these days, when you sit behind a drawn curtain, to reflect upon the lives made better by association with you.

My dear Miss Countryman:

A few weeks ago I received a very cordial reply from you in regards to my project of appreciation for Prof. Hutchinson. I realize how difficult a task it is to get at, even when the urge to do it is strong; and how little time a librarian has: still if you could write a letter by Thursday, it would be so appreciated that I cannot refrain from urging you. Thanksgiving seems to be the most appropriate time for such a presentation.

In case you can get it ~~off~~ off for Thursday, please send it to me at 3806 Blaisdell Ave. Or if later, just send it to him, and he will appreciate it none the less.

I thank you most sincerely,

Walter H. Hodgson

My dear Walter,

I am sending you a letter appreciation to put into your other for Thanksgiving. You did not say whether you wanted the letter on uniform paper or not - so I am using my (own)

own letter head. If later you want to carry
out your plan of a reminiscence - biographical article
such as you asked me for in your first letter
I will try to do more. ~~So~~ For the present I have
just written a little appreciation letter

November 26, 1929

My dear Walter,

I am sending you a little appreciation to put with your others for Thanksgiving. You did not say whether you wanted the letters on uniform paper or not, so I am using my own letter head. If later, you want to carry out your plan of a reminiscent biographical article such as you asked me for in your first letter, I will try to do more. For the present, I have just written a little appreciative letter.

Very truly yours,

Librarian

Mr. Walter Hodgson
3806 Blaisdell Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Enclosure
GAC MP

740 Cherokee Ave
St Paul, Minn
Oct. 27, 1929

Miss Gratia Countryman
Minneapolis Public Library
Minneapolis, Minn.

My dear Miss Countryman:

Thank you for your interest in this project of mine, which starting out so hopefully and has come so nearly to a standstill. I suppose the fault is mine for not remaining on the track of those who were so willing to contribute, but as you say, life seems more than usually strenuous this autumn.

I have about ten letters or chapters of this proposed collection at hand, about twenty more letters promising them at some date indefinitely in the future. Not having found time to get these people reminded of our plan, I can scarcely wonder that they come in so slowly. But I hope to have them all in typed, and bound before Christmas.

I would appreciate a letter or descriptive-reminiscent article from you a great deal, because I realize that my grandfather would value it highly. It would be to contribute an act of very real kindness.

Sincerely,

Walter H. Hodgson

Walter H. Hodgson

September 5, 1929.

Miss Gratia Countryman:

It is twelve years since Prof. Hutchinson, now in his 81st year, retired from active teaching service. Of these twelve years, the last five have been spent in complete darkness. The effect of this blindness in isolating him from his friends, from his old world of books and the challenge of new ideas, from that institution, the University of Minnesota, which he served so long and faithfully, can scarcely be realized by those of his friends who are not in daily personal contact with him. The increasing speed of life which makes it almost impossible for his old friends to call upon him, or write him; the staggering recent growth of the U of Minnesota with its corresponding increase and change in the personnel of the faculty, which leads him to believe that both himself and his influence are a forgotten chapter in the history of the institution; his inability to read, to travel, to find his way about through his old beloved environment, so different from that which he remembers; these and a score of other reasons have made him despondent and unbelievably unhappy. Though he must know otherwise, the trend of the times would seem to convince him that the whole of his life-work and influence, all his insistence upon the subtler values of life has seemingly evaporated before the glare of modern speed and practicality. And yet the value of his influence on two generations of students cannot be even estimated, and grows year after year.

For several years I have considered the feasibility of a biography of this man whose life and work I believe to be great enough and historically interesting enough to warrant a study. Still the objective elements of his life have been so meager - he has done so little in the way of outward and showy activity - that such a biography as one could fashion would be largely a tracing of his influence on the lives of his students and on the growth and development of the U of Minnesota. And I think this could best be done by his friends, students, and faculty colleagues.

Upon the advice of several of his intimate friends, I am writing to a number of his old friends, students and colleagues, asking them if they would consent to write what, for lack of a better name, I call an article, (testimonial sounds too funereal, letter implies too little thought) that will describe my grandfather, his work, influence, etc., be anecdotal, personal, etc; be biographical in as large a sense as possible; and act as a testimonial to the old man himself that his influence is still a real and vital thing in his students' lives and his colleagues' memories. These letters or articles would be bound together and presented to him at some opportune time in the near future, (for his tenure on life is not strong) and would serve two large and worthy ends. As a message from his friends, they would pour new blood into his veins, would reassure him in his world of darkness that he was still one of them: growing, not diminishing in the power of his good works. And as a semi-historical, semi-biographical source book they would ultimately be turned over to the University Library, should their worth, literary or historical, warrant it. In case the collection should prove outstandingly successful, I see no reason why the whole group, or the most valuable of the group might not be printed or mimeographed to the extent of a few scores. On the other hand, all letters shall be treated confidentially and shall be made public only after permission has been given.

Would you, as an old friend of John Corrin Hutchinson, undertake to write such an article, say before the end of September? You would honor a fine man, and considerably lighten some of his remaining days.

Sincerely,

Walter H. Hodgson
740 Cherokee Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Walter H. Hodgson

1875

Assessment