
OBITUARY

By the death at Baltimore on the ninth of November, 1910, of A. Marshall Elliott, professor of the Romance languages in the Johns Hopkins University, there has been stricken from the roll of active service the most conspicuous name in the contemporary annals of Modern Language instruction in America. Associated by family ties with the circle of Friends in the city of Baltimore, Mr. Elliott, from the earliest announcement of the Johns Hopkins endowment, was prominently mentioned in connection with a professorship in the new institution,—tho it is known that his own predilection was at that time toward the prosecution of Oriental rather than Romance investigation. At the opening of the University in 1876, Elliott was only thirty-two years of age, but his reputation was already re-enforced by academic degrees from Haverford and Harvard Colleges and by prolonged travel and study in Europe and the Orient.

It is no derogation from the fair fame of American scholarship to point out that, in the seventies, the teaching of the Modern languages in American institutions—as indeed in most institutions elsewhere—stood in strenuous need of overhauling and reorganization. Above all, it cried out to be set firmly on the true and only foundation of adequately trained, independent-minded and “first-hand” scholarship. For the younger generation of teachers it is difficult to conceive of a state of affairs in which there were no recurrent meetings of the Modern Language Association for friendly intercourse and mutual inspiration, no channels of special or periodical publication of any kind whatever. To cope with so discouraging a situation was a task peculiarly congenial to the energetic organizing power, the physical vigor and the indomitable exuberance of spirit so characteristic of Elliott's career thruout the period of his early youth and maturer manhood. To his prompt and hopeful initiative was not only due the launching of the Modern Language Association, which was successfully effected at Columbia University in the Christmas recess of 1883, but—what was crucial and far more significant—the continued existence of the large adventure was almost solely conditioned on his unflagging industry and infinitely patient attention to detail during the long years of his secretaryship and editorial supervision. Much the same encomium may be made of his establishment and early management of the monthly journal, *Modern Language Notes*, which constituted from the outset and still continues an important concomitant to the Association's work and mission; while from his efficient conduct of the department of Romance languages at the Johns Hopkins University there has gone forth a goodly fellowship of doctors of philosophy who are ever ready to bear testimony, by word and deed, to the master's experienced and unfailing guidance, his genial and warm-hearted kindness, his unstinted service and devotion. May the gratitude of his many students and of the unnumbered teachers and scholars who have been less directly reached by his work and influence, lend a benediction to his memory and honor to his name.

H. A. T.

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MAR 10 1911