

**AN ADDRESS COMMEMORATIVE OF  
RICHARD HENRY MATHER, PROFESSOR  
OF GREEK IN AMHERST  
COLLEGE. DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND FRIENDS OF  
THE COLLEGE, JUNE 15TH, 1890**

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An address commemorative of Richard Henry Mather, professor of Greek in Amherst College. Delivered before the faculty, students, and friends of the college, June 15th, 1890 by Henry Allyn Frink

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**HENRY ALLYN FRINK**

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*R. H. Martin*

AN ADDRESS

COMMEMORATIVE OF

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RICHARD HENRY MATHER,

Professor of Greek in Amherst College.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND  
FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE,

June 15th, 1890,

BY PROFESSOR HENRY ALLYN FRINK.

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AMHERST MASS, 1890.

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THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF AMHERST COLLEGE

ARE PROVIDED WITH THIS ADDRESS BY

THE HON. WILLIAM WHITING, A. M.,

A LONG-TIME FRIEND OF PROFESSOR MATHER.

A LIFE many-sided, rich in endowment, and of large usefulness has gone from us. Devoted to Amherst College with rare consecration, for more than thirty years, no one voice can tell of the reach of its influence. So in what will be heard to-day, many voices will mingle. Would that their words could be repeated in full. But since this cannot be, the words that are spoken will aim to echo the spirit of the many who have gratefully testified of Professor Mather's earnest life and work.

Our first thought of Professor Mather is that his was a singularly favored life. Its end was pathetic, almost tragic. But until its closing months, a kind fortune, as we ordinarily count fortune, waited upon it generously and constantly. This fortune began with an honored lineage. Piety, patriotism, learning, power of mind and gift of leadership, as marked as this country has known, distinguish his ancestry.

His name he traced to Richard Mather of Lancashire, England, who in 1635 came to



America, and settled as a preacher at Dorchester, Mass. From his second son Timothy, Professor Mather was descended. This Timothy was the brother of Increase Mather, sixth president of Harvard College, whose degree of Doctor of Divinity was the first granted in this country; and the uncle of Cotton Mather, even more illustrious than his father, Increase, as author, patriot, and divine. Richard, a son of Timothy, settled at Lyme, Connecticut; and Henry, his descendant of the fourth generation, was father of Professor Mather. On the maternal side a not distant ancestor was Jonathan Edwards, the theologian and metaphysician,—“One of the three original minds that America has produced.” Through his mother’s father, he was also descended from the Rev. John Whiting, a colleague of the Rev. Mr. Stone an early pastor of the First Church in Hartford, Connecticut; and from Captain John Mason, the successful commander in the Pequot War, major of the colonial forces for many years, and from 1660 to 1670 Deputy Governor of Connecticut.

When a young man the father of Professor Mather, following an elder brother, Richard, emigrated, as it would then be said, from Lyme, Connecticut, to Binghamton, New York. Here, later, Henry Mather married Frances Whiting, a

great-granddaughter of Jonathan Edwards; and here, February 12, 1834, was born Richard Henry Mather.

If New England was not his birth-place, its spirit was embodied in the home of his boyhood. To know what was the influence of that home upon the child is to recall what was most ennobling in the man. At fourteen Richard Mather came to Amherst to be under the intellectual guidance of his uncle, Professor William S. Tyler. For this guardian of his youth and companion of his early and later manhood, Professor Mather had, as his mother writes, "the admiration of a pupil combined with the love of a son and the sympathy of a life-long friend.

A little later, he was for a term at the Hopkins Academy, Hadley, Mass., then having for its Principal the present Lecturer on Natural Philosophy in Amherst College, Dr. Marshall Henshaw. From here, to complete his preparation for college, he went to Williston Seminary, Easthampton. "He was then," as a classmate, President Northrup of the University of Minnesota, tells us, "what he has always been, a genial, hearty, and friendly man; an earnest and excellent scholar; an eloquent speaker." Especially was President Northrup impressed with his classmate's proficiency in Greek, "as he had then the

habit of leaving his room and coming out into the hall of the dormitory, and there rolling off the smooth-flowing lines of Homer with almost lightning rapidity. I have since heard him preach in English, and very few men could surpass him in preaching; but no English preaching could ever impress me as did his *appropriation*,—I may call it, rather than mastery, of the Greek tongue." To President Northrup's early impressions of this student of Greek is to be added Professor Tyler's statement, "that in all the classes that he has taught, Professor Mather had no equal in facility and felicity of translation." Nor can the silence of his "silver tongue" to-day make us forget the charm and power with which he was wont to reproduce the stately march and magnificent sweep and swell of Greek verse, in his public and private readings from the tragic poets.

Graduated from Williston Seminary in 1852 with the honor of Salutatory oration, he entered Amherst College with the class of 1856. In this class he was prominent as a scholar and writer; and Sophomore year, as a Kellogg Prize speaker. Junior year he left the class of 1856 for foreign travel. With Professor Tyler, Mr. Edward A. Strong, now of the Board of Trustees of Amherst College, and Mr. George Washburn, for many years President of Robert College, Constantino-