President Bruce Ryburn Payne—In Memoriam
Addresses Delivered on the Occasion of the Memorial Services, May 27, 1937

THE EMBODIMENT OF A DREAM
CHARLES E. LITTLE

AT TIMES my words may seem too little on the man who dreamed great things and too much on the material college which he dreamed. It must be remembered, however, that the man and the dream were one.

Dr. Payne was elected president of Peabody on January 17, 1911. Soon after that he asked the new board of trustees to take me into the important venture of Greater Peabody, which was done officially on May 3. We began our daily association in late July after he had finished his summer school at the University of Virginia.

Some men absorb and interpret the world's wisdom slowly and by willingness to work make careers as leaders. Others look about them sharply and discern fundamental needs quickly and become pioneers by their creative leadership. To this latter class belonged the native and exuberant initiative of Dr. Payne. And the call for such leadership was loud in his ears when he first found himself actually face to face with the new and difficult situation which the Peabody of 1911 presented after a decade of struggles for and against its fuller development.

Peabody, perhaps more than any institution of the same length of years, has had to run more hazards and meet more crises than is the usual lot. During the years 1907 to 1910 the shocks incident to endowing and reorganizing Peabody Normal College after its thirty-five years of varied existence were enormous and almost enough to wreck any enterprise. During those thirty-five years it had endured the strain of divided control and support under three boards simultaneously, but the unity of its purpose—the education of teachers—had never been altered. As early as 1900 Mr. Winthrop, as chairman of the Peabody Education Fund, had proposed that the trustees endow "our great normal college at Nashville." In the ten years from 1901 the steps leading to this end were often confused and baffling, but the guiding principles were constant and clear.

At their meeting on January 24, 1905, a resolution by Mr. Morgan was adopted naming George Peabody College for Teachers to be established at Nashville as the objective memorial to George Peabody; and at the same meeting another by Judge Fenner was adopted naming it "as the successor of the Peabody Normal College already established by this board at Nashville and for the purpose of continuing on broader and higher lines the great work which has been done by said Normal College for the cause of Southern education." These clear statements were reiterated by these trustees during the next five years and they declared in November, 1909, with equal emphasis its organic independence. Both these principles were accepted and reaffirmed by the college trustees from that year and date. And thanks to these founders of 1905 to 1910, working in the spirit of George Peabody, our great founder, its independence and its mission were forever secured by the charter principles declared to exist in the process of transforming Peabody Normal College into George Peabody College for Teachers, which was finally consummated during 1909 and 1910.

Despite these clear principles clearly stated, there were unfortunate storms of conflicting views and crosscurrents of opposing aims during the process. But the results were quite in conformity with these two, really three, principles: consistent mission, legal continuity, organic independence. Dr. Payne came and saw and understood. When he surveyed the scene, he perceived the steady stream flowing in its old direction and took up the task of steering the course on "broader and higher lines." And just as clearly he conceived immediately the pressing needs of the moment. The trustees had already decided that Peabody was to be moved to a site which they had selected for a new campus and looking to that end had decreed by resolution on January 17, the day they elected Dr. Payne as president, to close the college doors on the old campus after Commencement June 7, 1911.

For the creation and operating of this new plant Peabody then owned about one million seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The million dollars to be kept as endowment merely capitalized what had already been received by annual grants. The seven hundred and fifty thousand, when invested in land and buildings, would hardly do more than equip the institution as before. So Dr. Payne immediately plunged us into another crisis: he declared our resources must be doubled. And he began immediately on that strenuous task which by a series of almost miraculous events met success two years later by adding one million five hundred thousand dollars to the resources of Peabody and an enormous access of new hope.

Two incidents in his creative efforts during these early years must suffice to picture only one aspect of this many-sided man and his achievements for the stirring quarter of a century he was at work among us. One scene was at the very close of the first campaign for more endowment. The trustees of the Peabody Education Fund had promised on November 1, 1911, to give five hundred thousand if Dr. Payne and his trustees would raise a million additional by November 1, 1913. Mr. Morgan, in the spring of 1912, while voyaging by dahabieh on the Nile, had written offering a hundred thousand. The General Education Board soon afterward offered two hundred and fifty thousand, while others brought the total on the million up to $377,000 by July of 1912, and a score of other gifts by February, 1913, swelled the amount to $438,000. Mr. Rockefeller gave a new impetus by adding $300,000 late in May, and by July many others had given $67,000 more. The total mounted now to $805,000 as Dr. Payne's hopes mounted too. But as late as September 17, the same deficit, nearly $200,000, threatened failure just six weeks later.

An effort had been made to revive an offer of an additional hundred and fifty thousand from Mr. Morgan, based on a report that he had had more than once mentioned his willingness to give finally two hundred and fifty thousand. Mr. Morgan's death in March of 1913 had removed all possibility of a personal appeal. Dr. Payne went, as his last forlorn hope, to the executors of the Morgan estate and on October 17 laid his claim before Mr. L. Cass Leiyard and Mr. Herbert L. Satterlee, the son-in-law. Mr.
Ledyard emphatically denied the validity of the claim, but expressed interest in the cause.

Dr. Payne told me the story again and again, and once at least in a public address he told students and faculty of those tense and gloomy hours. In a final interview with Mr. Satterlee, in the late dusk of evening, Wednesday, October 22, an awful silence fell when Mr. Satterlee still refused to acknowledge any proof that Mr. Morgan had made such a promise. A moment before admission to the office, Dr. Payne had bowed devoutly in an earnest prayer for success and he felt moved now to utter a plea for his cause—the higher education of teachers and the Southern child, to whom those teachers would bring light. As he turned to leave the office, limp in gait and with suffocation in his throat, the dim flicker of the street lamps outside reflected his own deep sense of defeat, Mr. Satterlee spoke. He requested Dr. Payne not to leave New York until some communication should come from him. Here was a tiny ray of hope. The faith which had sustained Dr. Payne's courage through these two years, 1911 to 1913, was almost strained to the breaking point through that night and the next day and the next night, till on the second morning the telephone rang, and Mr. Satterlee announced that he and Mr. Morgan, Jr., by cable from England, had agreed to make the gift. Dr. Payne opened his Bible and read a passage that echoed the sincere thankfulness of his heart: “Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

The other scene was only a few days later when I was privileged to share in the transactions. Dr. Payne sent the glad news to Nashville, and the Executive Committee on October 25 delegated me as official special messenger to take all evidences of gifts to the General Education Board, 61 Broadway, for the final proof of success or failure. On October 27 I went with Dr. Payne and Mr. J. W. Thomas, Jr., then president of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway, to present the documents to Dr. WallaceButtrick for careful examination. After a short while the treasurer Mr. Bleriely and Dr. Buttrick announced promptly and satisfactory evidence that the million and a half had been raised. I saw Dr. Payne go white, then flush with joy. Success had rewarded his hard work, his swift scurrying from place to place, his speed at critical times from Nashville to New York or to Chicago or elsewhere, his courage under stress and difficulties, his faith in the goodness of his cause and in the goodness of God.

These incidents from a multitude must serve to illustrate Dr. Payne's creative energy in building the visible Peabody, in bringing into existence these more stately mansions, in clothing these grounds with the beauty of flower and tree and grass. To his eternal credit must the account stand for shaping the bodily form of Peabody, into which he and the students and the faculty have entered to make the spirit of Peabody live. One student of the thousands who have lived on this campus and enjoyed the boon of its beauty has expressed in song, what those other thousands have felt, her appreciation of the embodiment of Dr. Payne's dream. Her heart leaps up as when she beholds the pillars of Peabody as part of that grace and charm which resulted from his consecration to the dream.

I never expected during my lifetime to see this new Peabody campus so fully developed in twenty-six short years. I rejoice that he lived to see the work of his hand and this fulfillment of his dream. "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice" ("If you are searching for his monument, look around you"). When we think of these things and how long he wrought among us and how suddenly his good works ceased, the feeling of loss surges into our hearts. At such times it can cause no surprise that our eyes grow dim and our voices falter.

WITH VISION THE PEOPLE LIVE
S. C. Garrison

President Payne came to Peabody as a young man. Many of us saw him reach the point on life's highway where the shadows begin to fall toward the East; yet he kept his vision clear, and for him, even on the day of his death, the golden days lay ahead.

To many of us President Payne frequently seemed visionary. Many times he has heard him state that "unless the leaders have vision the people perish." Visionary as he may have seemed to some of us at times, his motives were high, and his dreams were of greater opportunity for a healthier, happier childhood. Through the thousands of teachers who attended Peabody, his vision is being realized in almost countless schools throughout the nation.

Because of his influence in the life of the college. More and more he was forced to devote his energies to the financial affairs of the institution. Despite this fact, his interest turned constantly to the work of the classroom and the plans for the future. Many times he expressed the desire that the later years of his life might be spent in curriculum revision and in teaching in the classroom. In fact, it seemed that during the last months of his life, he was turning again to his former interest, after years of financial duties, turning over to some of the rest of us administrative affairs. He was always interested in teachers and in teaching.

Of all the teachers he knew, I believe he admired Dr. Charles A. McMurry most; and the trait which he admired most in Dr. McMurry was his perpetual youth. He believed that the teachers should be the best educated in the college and more and more he was forced to prove his energies to the financial affairs of the institution. Despite this fact, his interest turned constantly to the work of the classroom and the plans for the future. Many times he expressed the desire that the later years of his life might be spent in curriculum revision and in teaching in the classroom. In fact, it seemed that during the last months of his life, he was turning again to his former interest after years of financial duties, turning over to some of the rest of us administrative affairs. He was always interested in teachers and in teaching.

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The traits of many men can be listed in a single category. No so with President Payne. He was a many-sided personality. Scholarly, dynamic, energetic, he touched many phases of life's activities. Those of us who knew President Payne almost from the time he came to the Peabody campus saw him in action under many different circumstances. My own contacts with him from the very beginning were most pleasant. The first day I was on the campus during registration he sat down by my side and helped plan my course for the quarter. He believed that the teacher should be the best educated and most cultured person in the community; that he should be a leader in every sense of the word. With this idea of the teacher in mind, he was constantly searching for young men and women who saw the possibilities of service and a fuller life in teaching. Such individuals he sought to inspire to nobler visions and greater endeavor.

President Payne visualized Peabody as standing squarely for thorough scholarship and service. These two—scholarship and service—constituted the bedrock, the framework, on which he based the educational program at Peabody.

He was ever ready to consider any new point of view or any new service or need which might arise. He actively engaged in any effort that gave him the eye a good glimpse of the health of his children, to realize their need and service. He was ever ready to consider any new point of view or any new service or need which might arise. He actively engaged in any effort that gave him the eye a good glimpse of the health of his children, to realize their need and service.