

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN HENRY MUIRHEAD, M.A., LL.D., F.B.A.

JOHN HENRY MUIRHEAD died on the 24th of May last at the age of 85. I remember at the Oxford Congress of Philosophy after the war an occasion when Muirhead intervened in a discussion with the words: "I think I am the last of the idealist old gang and I have always been a peacemaker." A good description of himself. He began his philosophy under Edward Caird in Glasgow in the early seventies, and came as Snell Exhibitioner to Balliol in 1875. There he became a devoted pupil of Nettleship. Balliol legend said he was the famous Scot who to one of Nettleship's characteristic answers "Oh, I don't know," replied, "But you're paid to know," though Muirhead always denied the story. Like his distinguished tutor he got a first in classical Mods. and a second in Greats. His first teaching posts were classical. Then he taught both Classics and Philosophy at the Royal Holloway College; then Philosophy at Bedford College and then found his life-work when he became Professor of Philosophy in Birmingham in 1897. He became Emeritus Professor in 1920, but his philosophical activity and interests kept astonishingly alive up to the last. He did belong to "the idealist old gang." He had the broad interests typical of them. That can be seen by his writings on politics, on morals, and on poetry. He had their active interest in social reform and practical affairs. He was a great citizen of Birmingham. He had also their catholicity of mind. This is where his "peace making" came in. He had a very great power of understanding what philosophers were after even when he didn't agree with them. Witness his early work on Aristotle's *Ethics* and his last work appreciating Pritchard and Ross and Joseph. That catholicity and sympathy of mind served him well in his remarkable work as Editor of the *Library of Philosophy*. Only Muirhead could have seen the worth and importance of such diverse authors as he then collected.

He had also in a prominent degree, and as though they were part and parcel of his philosophy, wisdom and sweetness, and these combined gave him all his long life the gift of perpetual youth.

A. D. L.