

[Gaines, Absalom Graves]

Absalom Graves Gaines, D.D.

On Thursday afternoon at two o'clock, at the Universalist church in Canton, was held the funeral of Dr. A. G. Gaines. The church was filled with the students, faculty and alumni of St. Lawrence, and citizens of Canton and friends from far away. Dr. J. M. Payson read the Scriptures and was followed by Dr. G. S. Weaver in prayer. The sermon was delivered by President Almon Gunnison, who paid a high tribute to one whose memory will always be held dear to the hearts of hundreds. Eight of the old students and loyal friends of Dr. Gaines bore his body with loving and reverent hands to the final resting place in Evergreen cemetery. They were the final honors paid to a worthy and consistent life. There were those in that audience who could have testified to kind words and kind deeds freely and quietly given by the departed. Many a man there is today making his way successfully in the world who owes his all to the aid of that wise and quiet man, who by encouragement and assistance made it possible for them to acquire an education and obtain their start in life. Those who acted as bearers were Prin. W. B. Gunnison, F. L. Backus, N. L. Robinson, Percy I. Bugby, II, H. F. Gunnison, G. B. He[?], J. W. Rafferty and L. P. Hale.

Dr. Gaines was the third president of St. Lawrence. He was born in Boone county, Ky., in March 27, 1827, his family being of English extraction. He was educated in the private schools of his native county and completed his preparation for college at Morgan academy. He entered the University of Virginia in 1849 and graduated from the course in moral philosophy, economics, chemistry, and physiology. He then taught in the common schools of his county for some time, to later become instructor in natural science in Clinton Liberal Institute for three years. During all this time he had been preparing for the Universalist ministry, and his uncompromising opposition to slavery induced him in 1856 to leave the south, where he had gone from Clinton, and for twelve years he was pastor of the Universalist churches at Bethel, Augusta and Mechanics Falls, Me. He came to the Universalist Church in Canton in 1869, having a large regard to the educational advantages of St. Lawrence. When President Fisk resigned in 1872 Dr. Gaines was induced to accept the presidency. At this time the college had reached a crisis, owing to the resignation or illness of some members of the faculty and from some other causes. Dr. Gaines took hold of affairs with the hand of a leader. He reorganized the faculty, raised funds and labored with all his strong might for the university. He did two men's labor; took money from his own pocket to buy necessary things, and by the devotion of himself and his income worked wonders. It is due to his labors at that time that the University is what it now is. His many duties, his many classes, and the small number of students enabled him to come into personal contact with all in the college. He assisted the poor with money and labored earnestly for the improvement of all. In 1888 he saw that a younger man was required at the head of the institution and resigned, but continued his labors unremittingly, almost to the last. In spite of his many duties he found time to write and was the author "The Divine Nature and Procedure," [and] "Sound Money," which appeared in the columns of the Plaindealer, and other works. He received the degree of from Tufts in 1874 and L.L. D. from Lombard in 1891. He was married in 1853 to Emma Clare, daughter of Davis Hurd, of Royalton, N.Y., who was a woman of rare endowments. She died in December, 1887, leaving one son, Prof. Charles Kelsey Gaines, who survives his father.

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