

[Morrell, Herbert Philbrook]

REV. H. P. MORRELL, THE GOOD FRIEND

Minister-Teacher for the Past Forty-Six Years

Death Follows Brief Illness—Member of Theological School Faculty

The great loss which the people of Canton felt in the death of Reverend Philbrook Morrell was immediately apparent when word was received early Wednesday morning of his sudden passing at the Potsdam hospital the previous night. On every hand expressions of deep sorrow were heard, and at two-thirty Friday afternoon the people of Canton in unusual number attended the funeral services at the Universalist church, and by their presence paid an unspoken but eloquent tribute.

Professor Morrell's death followed an acute and comparatively brief illness. While preparing to attend church two weeks ago Sunday he was taken suddenly with excruciating abdominal pains. The condition continued and two days later he was moved to the Potsdam Hospital where an operation was performed. In addition to other complications the operation revealed a partial paralysis of the intestines. An apparent improvement in his condition the following Monday led his close friends and family to hope the trouble was abating, but on Tuesday renewed concern was felt, but without apprehension that the end was so near.

For twenty-five years Professor Morrell and his family have been resident in Canton. As Richardson Professor of Ethics and Sociology in the Theological School and as a member of the University faculty he made a worthy contribution to the education of youth. The influence of his life had reached students, townspeople and many others. He came of rugged New England people, liberal in thought, who inhabited the state of Maine a generation ago, the state which gave to Canton such men as Dr. Absalom Graves Gaines, the Gunnisons and Dr. James M. Payson. It was at Calais, Me. he was born, March 9, 1869, the son of Stephen D. and Almacia Doten Morrell. Nineteen years later, in the fall of 1888, the late Dr. I. M. Atwood, President of the Theological School, noted in his diary the presence among the class of entering students of "H. P. Morrell of Maine." Three years later, in 1891, the student graduated and the following year received his Bachelor of Divinity degree. Before the young minister lay an honored career, one in which he was to acquit himself with marked distinction and great service.

For forty-six years his life was devoted by word and deed to service in the Christian church and to his fellow men. He began humbly and completed that service in like manner. His first pastorates were at the little churches in Henderson, Ellisburgh and Cohocton. Then he undertook, single-handed, a task which many another man would have avoided. Calling together a small group of people of his faith and interest in the City of Buffalo the society of Grace Universalist of that city was organized. During his sixteen years there

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he saw a fine church edifice constructed and the society became strong and useful.

In 1913 death took from the Theological School faculty that eminent scholar and teacher Dr. Henry Prentice Forbes. Reverend Morrell received the call to succeed Dr. Forbes, accepted, and fulfilled the duties with an ability which only those associated with him and who studied under him adequately appreciated. It was the case where a scholar succeeded a scholar. Professor Morrell's knowledge of Biblical literature, Hebrew history, the history of religion, economics, sociology and kindred subjects was profound. In the lecture room he was as vigorous as on the speaking platform or in the pulpit.

To the people of Canton his memory will endure, not so much for his scholarly attainments, but because of his good citizenship, his sympathy and his good deeds. The door of the Morrell home has always been open to any person from the highest to the most humble. No matter the time of day or night, if some person was in need or sorrow and Professor Morrell knew of it, he went with words of encouragement and sympathy, a hand that was extended in fellowship and help. No demand ever made upon him for a Christian cause ever went unanswered.

He was the friend of those who needed friendship the most. Though outspoken, more ultra-liberal than liberal, ready to stand by his convictions through thick and thin, he never questioned another man's right of independent thought or personal position. There was a modesty of character which too frequently prompted self-effacement and for this reason his many acts of kindness were known only to those who benefited from such kindness. It was characteristic of the man and his beliefs that when St. Lawrence University desired to confer the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him he declined the honor, saying he had not earned it.

When the church at North Russell was without a pastor he offered his services and for some long period had been preaching to that community. He frequently supplied as minister for the Winthrop Universalist church. Any good cause which was before the people of Canton gained his support.

Throughout his years in the ministry and as teacher he had as his constant helpmate his wife, who as Miss Charlotte Cheney he married in Buffalo in January, 1891. She and their two children, a son Nathan Morrell, who is a graduate of St. Lawrence and is now with the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, and a daughter Miss Charlotte Morrell, survive.

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