

[Hartzell, Jonas Hazard]

HAZARD HARTZELL DEAD

For Fourteen Years a Leading Man in Buffalo
Poet, Preacher and Philosopher—A Career That Began
at the Plow and Ended in Wide and Enduring Fame

WAVERLY, June 10.—Rev. J. Hazard Hartzell, formerly of Buffalo, the brilliant orator and scholar, died at Grace Church here yesterday.

Rev. J. Hazard Hartzell, S.T.D., was the youngest member of the family of Jonas Hartwell, Esq., and was born in Washington county, Pa., April 6, 1830. His father was a wealthy and influential citizen, a magistrate of Washington county. He lost all his property and died when Hazard Hartzell was 4 years old. His widow soon followed him and Hazard Hartzell was left penniless. He crossed over into Ohio and found work on the farm of an older brother.

At this time a tumor grew beneath his chin and was so formidable that an operation was necessary, being performed with 13 physicians present. On account of the diseased condition of the lower maxillary, a large part of the bone had to be removed with the teeth. To accomplish this it was necessary to cut the strings of the tongue back to its base. The operation was performed upon this lonely and sensitive lad without the aid of an anaesthetic. The part removed was replaced by gold, and nature, who rebuilds as she destroys, placed within the golden mouth of this orphan lad a silver tongue that was destined to pour one of the purest streams of eloquence that ever sprung [sic] from an American bosom. He had to regain the power of pronunciation, the vocal organs being injured by the operation. It was gained slowly and painfully and took years. Speaking of this distressful period of his life Dr. Hartzell once said: "I was but a lad without father and mother and shouldered with an affliction that had the great weight of crushing misfortune. The morning of my life was filled with black clouds. The dead leaves of loneliness and sorrow went up from my path in mysterious currents. Hope kept her lamp trimmed and burning in my young breast. I worked in the fields with vigor and ambition, and I soon went from Ohio back to Pennsylvania, and walked the distance with my entire wardrobe in a cotton handkerchief."

Dr. Hartzell made his way to Pittsburg and there became indentured to a saddler. He learned the trade, serving as an apprentice four years, and then proceeded to Marietta, O., where he found employment with Mr. William H. Taylor, a gentleman who proved a warm friend and benefactor. During those years of labor his hours of rest had been devoted to study, and now with a great ambition for an education he entered the Liberal Institute, studying with unflagging hope and wonderful progress, working at his bench after school hours and on holidays. In after years Dr. Hartzell related that

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his saddles which he made during those years received several prizes at the county fair.

He graduated from this institution of learning with highest honors, and we find the humble saddler not only chosen for the Latin salutatory and the Greek oration but the admiration of all the students of the college for the brilliancy of his address. During this time he wrote several (dramas?) that were presented in Marietta with (?). After his graduation he intended to prepare for and enter the legal profession, but he was attracted to and entered the ministry in the spring of 1854. He entered the Universalist Church and preached his first sermon in St. Louis in the pulpit of Rev. George S. Weaver, D.D., and took his first parish at Quincy, Ill. He was married to Miss Achsah Elizabeth Weaver before removing to Quincy.

He was subsequently located in Cincinnati, Buffalo and Albany. During all these years he pursued his studies into all fields with great vigor and in 1868 received his Master's degree from Lombard University, where he delivered the Baccalaureate sermon, and in 1869 the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology from St. Lawrence University, where he delivered the oration at the laying of the corner-stone of the library building.

Dr. Hartzell delivered the centennial address of the Universalist denomination at Boston in 1870 and the oration of the centenary of American Independence at Alstead, N.H., July 4, 1876. He was located 14 years in Buffalo as pastor of the Church of the Messiah, which he built. No man of any vocation or calling in Buffalo received more generally the esteem and admiration of the people. He will be remembered as among the most prominent and active of the patriots and orators of Western New York in serving the cause of the Union at the time of the rebellion. With his passionate and sweeping eloquence he aroused the people to the highest pitch of patriotism and duty. He preached in Buffalo a sermon upon the assassination of President Lincoln, which was afterward published in a volume entitled "Lincoln-ons," containing the discourses and eulogies of the leading orators of Europe and America upon the martyred President. His services have been in demand before literary associations, college commencements and religious conventions all over the country. He delivered the annual oration before the Homeopathic Medical College in Buffalo in 1880, and the annual address before the Allopathic Medical College in Detroit in 1882.

Dr. Hartzell was the orator on the occasion of the unveiling of the Wadsworth monument at Springfield in 1879, erected in honor of Captain John Wadsworth, noted in the colonial history of Connecticut for the part he took to preserve the Charter. A few years before, Dr. Hartzell delivered an oration before the assembled Commanderies of Louisiana at New Orleans, which was published and highly regarded in England as well as America, and

he was also chosen to deliver the oration to commemorate the American victory at the battle of New Orleans on the site of the battlefield. The Southern press claimed that such masterly oratory as his "could only have been nurtured by a Southern sun."

Dr. Hartzell united with the Episcopal church in 1881. He received orders from Bishop Huntington of Syracuse and delivered the occasional sermon before the Episcopal convocation in Trinity Church in 1882. He was rector of Grace Church, Waverly, N.Y., at the time of his death. His published writings consist of discourses, addresses, lectures, orations and articles, and a volume of poetry entitled "Wanderings on Parnassus."

As a writer Dr. Hartzell was graphic, poetic and startling, showing great power of analysis, and that he was a student of nature as well as philosophy. He had a subtle magnetic spirituality and touching pathos peculiarly his own. His diction was elegant, sparkling with classic gems and brilliant climaxes.

As a thinker he entertained advanced liberal views. He was no dogmatist, and his rich, scholarly culture was limited by no petty lines, and with a scorn for everything artificial and mean, his great soul ignoring the paltry trappings of pretense, ecclesiastical or secular, his heart throbbed in sympathy with all humanity. His genius was above any sect or people. No denomination can claim him alone, more than it can Beecher or Chapin, or the silver-tongued Starr King, whose friend he was, as he was Chapin's, too.

He combined the highest qualities of the orator. He was electrical and impassioned, his utterance growing into a perfect torrent of flashing inspiration. He united to the purest rhetoric the most solid logic, and with his warm soul, electric powers, brilliant fancy and powerful intellect, his thoughts glowed with white heat, and his eloquence was thrilling and irresistible.

When the lecture platform exercised a legitimate function in this country, and commanded the best thought and talent of America, Hazard Hartzell stood with great applause upon many platforms in the land, and by his scholarship and brilliancy won a position that placed him beside Wendell Phillips, the father of the system.

As a student of nature, in her highest teachings, and at all times a lover of humanity, Hazard Hartzell will be regarded as having voiced in his poetry the noblest aspirations of the heart with poetic genius. And as time goes on we will see many of those flowers he has plucked from Parnassus striking their roots deeper into the soil in the garden of American literature, growing in beauty and in fragrance, and enriching the world. A revised edition of his poems, revised and enlarged, was soon to be issued.

As a conversationalist Dr. Hartzell was brilliant and fascinating, drawing from his vast store of attainment the whole lighted and shaded here and there with flashes of humor and touches of pathos. He has been described

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as being as genial as Lamb and dramatic as Garrick. His tall figure, crowned with a nobly-formed head with features classic and striking, and long locks of raven black hair falling carelessly back from his broad forehead, is well known and remembered in Buffalo. He truly has been characterized as "a cultured scholar, a brilliant genius, an elegant orator and a warm-hearted Christian gentleman."

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Transcribed on 5 Sep 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY