

[Gaines, Emma Clara Hurd]

Death of Mrs. Dr. Gaines

On Sunday morning, Dec. 18, at half past five o'clock, Emma Clara, wife of President [Absalom Graves] Gaines of the University, passed peacefully to her rest. Her health, always delicate, had shown some signs of decline during the Fall; but her natural buoyancy and the activity she showed in carrying out certain cherished plans of work, disguised the fact somewhat from her family and friends. It was not until late in November that she yielded to the persistent attacks of a fatal malady and took to her bed. The few weeks during which she was denied her customary freedom were, happily, not a season of severe suffering; and her interest in her friends, her work, the world, was scarcely for a moment relaxed. She who during a life of great usefulness had been occupied with thoughts and plans and service for others, could find no time even in her last and mortal illness to think of herself.

Mrs. Gaines was born in Royalton, N.Y., June 22, 1830. Her father, the late Davis Hurd, was a man of education and repute in the community, who looked well to the intellectual nurture of his children; and her mother was a woman of rare traits of mind and heart. Mrs. Gaines learned in her father's house the fine art of conducting a home; and at the same time and in the same atmosphere she acquired those crystalline conceptions of God, Duty, Immortality, which kept her life unclouded. She had nearly completed a course of study at the Clinton Liberal Institute when, in 1853, failing health forced her to relinquish her purpose of graduating. On the 28th of Dec. 1853, she was married to Mr. Gaines, who had been a teacher in the Male Department of the Clinton Liberal Institute for several years and was now the Principal. She resided after her marriage successively in Kentuck[y], in Bethel and Mechanic Falls, Me., and in Canton. On son, her only child, Prof. C. K. [Charles Kelsey] Gaines, was born in the old homestead in Royalton. During her residence in Bethel, in the Summer of 1861, Mrs. Gaines was chosen by the ladies of the town (who had procured a silk flag for the Company of the Maine Fifth Vols. recruited in Bethel), to go to Portland, where the Regiment was quartered, and present the gift. The service was performed by her in a brief and felicitous address.

Something more than half of Mrs. Gaines' married life has been passed in this village, to which she removed with her husband in January, 1870. Though never possessed of robust health, she has usually been able to bear her full part of all the activities of the community, so far as they had any claim on her. Her good judgment, her intelligence, her knowledge of business methods, and her utter unselfishness, qualified her to be what she was, a most useful woman. The testimony, spontaneously borne by all who

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knew her, to her simplicity, sincerity and goodness, is supported by the unanimous feeling of the community that her departure is an irreparable public loss.

She was a Christian woman. It never occurred to her to parade her religion; but faith, hope and love were her native air. She loved her church, and her last labors were consecrated to its welfare. A truer wife, a better mother, a choicer spirit cannot be named. Alas, that we must surrender up to heaven one so much needed on earth!

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