

[Houghton, Sarah Ford]

Mrs. Sarah K. Houghton

The passing away of Mrs. Sarah K. Houghton at 4 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, at her home, 500 Monroe street, removes from our midst one of our oldest, possibly the oldest citizen, of our city. Mrs. Houghton was known to very many of our readers, by whom she was held in high esteem. In years she had nearly reached the century mark; had she lived until December 26th next, she would have been 96 years of age. She was a remarkably well preserved woman and none of her near relatives can recall when she has ever been confined to her bed until her last illness, which was of only a little more than three weeks' duration. In making an estimate of Mrs. Houghton's life we need to consider those facts and forces that lay back of the bare data of her individual history. Her nearly 96 years were filled with many interesting experiences, but she thought little of the glory of her years. Nothing would raise her resentment so quickly as to let a visitor, even with veiled condescension, intimate that he thought she was a frail old lady. She wanted it distinctly understood that she stood on her own feet. Hers was a genuine personality and a fine example of vigorous womanhood. In all her ways she was transparent and sincere. Whenever conversation led to an argument, she exhibited a native wit that made her adversary feel here was an opponent worthy of his finest steel. And yet she always spoke with a certain winsome irony that revealed the warmth of her heart. She believed in life and humanity and could read character with unerring precision. This world with all its deceit she looked frankly in the face and felt it was good. She was never oppressed with a melancholy "other-worldliness." To the very last she retained a keen interest in the affairs of the world.

It would be hard to think of Aunty Houghton, as she was familiarly known, apart from her interest and association with St. Paul's Universalist church. As teacher in the Sunday school and elsewhere she was a devoted worker. An ardent champion of her faith, she knew what she believed and why; but she was no arbitrary theorizer. Her whole life was a literal embodiment of the courage and hope and love of her religious principles.

Mrs. Houghton was the daughter of David and Abigail Ford, and was born in Middleville December 26, 1817. She was one of a family of ten children, her brothers and sisters being well remembered by some of the older residents of Middleville and Newport, and whose names are: Albert H., William H., Lydia Ann, Alida D., Orrin A., Almira, Leonard, Albigen W., Mary E. All have now passed away except Albigen, now residing in Middleville, and Mary, now Mrs. Samuel Broughton of Syracuse, who is the mother of David F. Broughton of this city.

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The deceased was united in marriage to Stephen Keith, her first husband, October 12, 1837, who was a prosperous farmer of the town of Newport, where the couple resided until his death, May 8, 1860.

On May 20, 1868, deceased was united in marriage to William B. Houghton, a well remembered and respected manufacturer of this city, who died September 18, 1884, on his 76th birthday.

The funeral was held from the home Saturday morning at half past ten, Rev. R. R. Hadley, pastor of St. Paul's Universalist church, officiating. The body was taken to Newport where burial was made.

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