

[Sprague, Phoebe A.]

### An Appreciative Tribute

The following article on the life of the late Dr. Phoebe A. Sprague, of this village, is taken from the Daily Republican, of Springfield, Mass., in which city Dr. Sprague practiced her profession for 25 years:

The late Dr. Phoebe A. Sprague, whose funeral took place at her late home in Holley, N.Y., yesterday, was one who filled a large place in the life of the city, and will remain a living spirit in the memory of a great number of its people. Springfield has had not a few women physicians since the first came here, 35 years ago, in the person of Dr. Sarah Williams, who was city physician in 1873, when Dr. Sprague arrived; and it has now many useful and esteemed women of the profession. But it derogates nothing from these when it is said that Dr. Sprague was easily first among them all, and ranked so high that it was no doubt true that a dozen years ago she had the third largest practice in the city. She had the confidence and help at the beginning of Dr. David P. Smith, the celebrated physician and surgeon, who quickly discovered her large ability, and called her into counsel, as he would any man of the profession; and Dr. Marshall Calkins, the veteran doctor of this city, also readily recognized Dr. Sprague. These recognitions by brother practitioners were then of value to her, but it was not long before her strong character and her thorough mastery had made her universally accepted by the profession.

Phoebe Sprague entered Bucksport, (N.Y.,) collegiate institute when she was 18 years old. Her determination to study medicine was not confided to the towns-people of Albion, her birth-place, but presently she made it plain by entering the Chicago medical school. Her independence startled to good people of Albion, who did not reflect that the blood of the Ballous, that family of Huguenot descent and come-outer instincts, ran in her veins,—perhaps they did not know it. At all events, just as Phoebe Sprague was a good doctor, she was a good free-thoughted Universalist. Her father got from his mother, a Ballou, that independence which infiltrated his daughter's veins; to him she owed a training like a boy's. She lived out of doors in her youth; she rode horseback astride, as every woman ought to; and she based her studies and her practice on fine physical health. It is true that she overworked, and at the end succumbed to the great strain of so large a practice, and brought on the affection of the heart from which she died. But so do others, both men and women.

Dr. Sprague's life in this city was one of constant unremitting service, and she gave herself to the needs of her patients with the same great generosity which distinguishes worthy members of the profession always. While [a] member of the Hampden county medical society, she served on its board of

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censors; she was obstetrician at the Home for the Friendless Women, and for years she was [a] member of the board of the Union Relief Association. She was not only useful and faithful in her service on the board, but was at all times ready to give her medical advice and attention when it seemed necessary. It was regarded as a distinct loss when, a few years ago, Dr. Sprague was compelled by the failure of her health to resign, and then to leave the city. She lived a strong, a sweet and a noble life,—and is surely now going on as such a life deserves, wherever that fine soul may abide.

*Holley Standard*, Holley NY, Thu. 15 Dec 1904

Transcribed on 30 Jul 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY