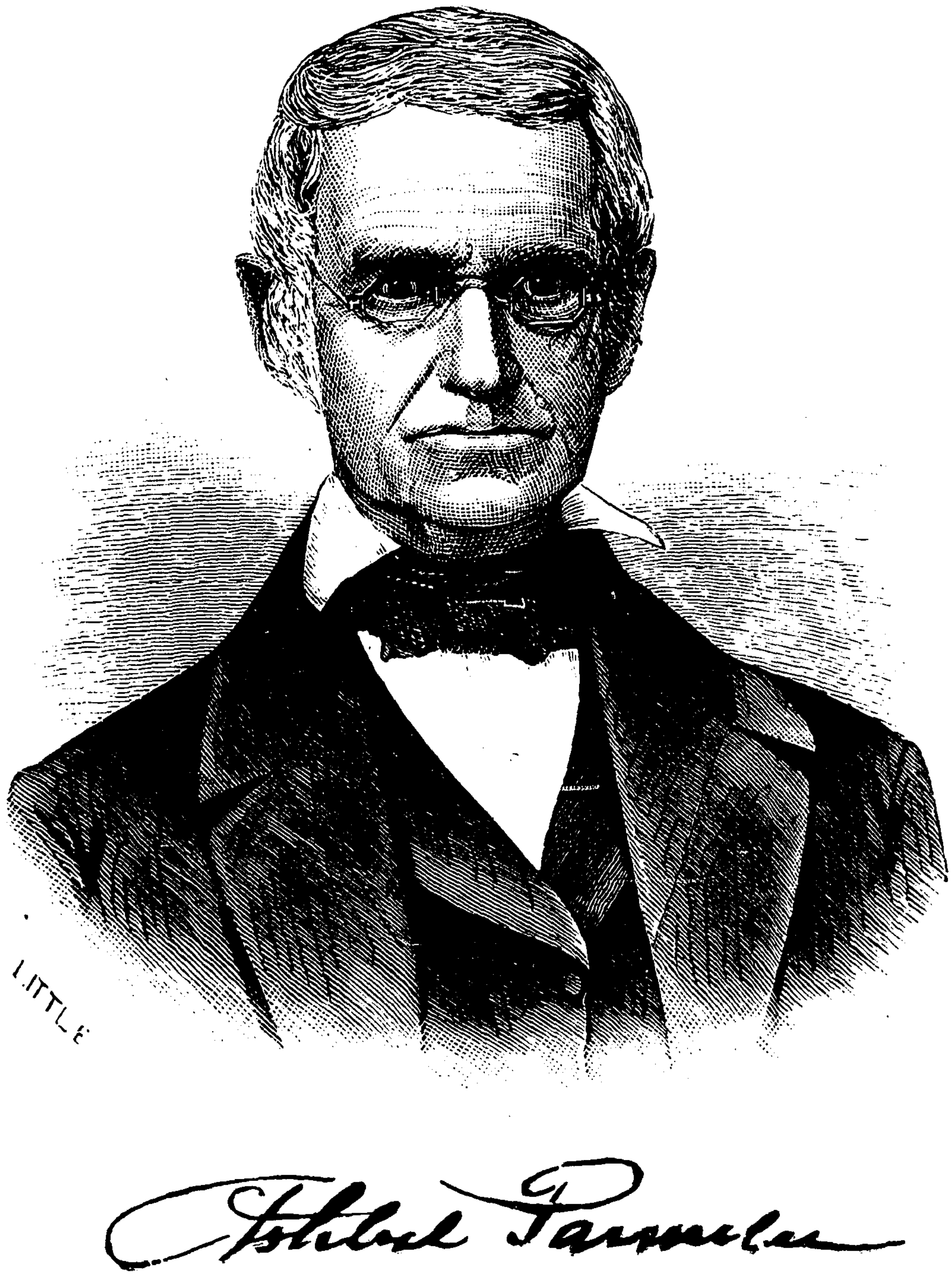
BIOGRAPHY

OF

REV. ASHBEL PARMELEE, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. W. LEWIS & CO.
1880.


LITTLE

REV. ASHBEL PARMELEE, D.D.

THE traditions of the Parmelee family carry the name back to a common ancestor, Maurice de Parmeliè, of Belgium. He lived near the city of Liege. His coat of arms had this motto, "*Beatus qui patitur.*"

While Belgium was under Philip II., of Spain, Maurice —being a prominent reformer of the Church of Rome— emigrated in 1567 to that part of Holland then held by the Stadtholder, William of Orange, to escape the persecutions of the Duke of Alva and his "Bloody Council," established for the purpose of enforcing the edicts of the Spanish Inquisition. Maurice settled at Helvoetsluys. While the Dutch held New York, one of his descendants, Johanes Van Parmeleè, received a grant of land fronting upon the Hudson, and extending back into Connecticut. It does not appear that he ever enjoyed this grant. A son of Johanes moved to England; a son of his came to America in 1635.

The descent is traced down to Hezekiah Parmelee, who married a Miss Hall, and lived in Durham, Conn.

SIMEON PARMELEE, the son of Hezekiah, and the father of Ashbel, was born in Durham, Conn., in 1740. In 1757, when seventeen years of age, he enlisted in the colonial army, and served under the British flag in the war between

England and France till its close. He was at Fort Stanwix (Rome), at Oswego, and at the capture of Fort Niagara, July 24, 1759, by Sir William Johnson. Some years later he married Jemimah, the daughter of Nehemiah Hopkins.

In 1775, when the British colonies of America were advancing to that step taken July 4, 1776, at Philadelphia, he enlisted as a private, and was soon made an orderly sergeant in the Continental army. Leaving his wife and two children, he accompanied that army in its invasion of Canada. He was at the capture of St. John's, in September, and of Montreal, Nov. 13, 1775.

After this he came back with that part of our army which returned by the way of the Sorel River to Crown Point. Here he was taken down with the smallpox, then prevailing in the ranks. Other diseases set in, from which he never fully recovered, although living to the age of eighty. He died at Westford, Vt., in 1820.

ASHBEL PARMELEE, the third son of Simeon and Jemimah Parmelee, was born Oct. 18, 1784, at Stockbridge, Mass. The parents were both active members of the Congregational Church.

When Ashbel was three years old the family moved to Pittsford, Vt., and engaged in agriculture. For the first ten years they lived in a log hut. After that a substantial house was erected. At this time there were four sons and two daughters. Of these sons the oldest lived and died a farmer. The other three afterwards became Congregational ministers. When ten years of age, Ashbel came near losing his life, while coasting during a school recess. He was carried home unconscious, and so remained for some weeks. With this exception, up to his eighteenth year, he seems to have enjoyed good health, and did his full share in the duties imposed by his father's calling as a farmer.

He was about medium height, with a frank, open coun-

tenance that spoke intelligence and truth, a bright blue eye that twinkled with fun and mischief, a tongue that could hold its own in argument, a Roman nose, a high forehead, light hair, a slight but extremely athletic frame. His early comrades say that in youthful sports, playing ball, wrestling, lifting, fleetness of foot, and endurance at hard labor he excelled. His good nature, sprightly ways, fondness for a joke, quickness at repartee, and unyielding firmness for the right, attracted his associates to him.

In the autumn of 1802, and when eighteen years old, Mr. Parmelee was converted, and united with the Congregational Church. It was a marked and happy event in his life. His thoughts now turned to the Christian ministry, and his resolution was soon taken. He felt the necessity of a thorough education, as preparatory, and was determined to have it. For the two years following his time was apportioned between study and teaching. His health failing, he started in the spring for the Newfoundland fisheries. He went to Troy, from there by schooner to New York, from there on a packet to New Haven. The vessel came near shipwreck, but escaped.

After a few days' visit with his uncle, Dan Parmelee, in Durham, Conn., he engaged service with the captain of a Stonington fishing-boat for the summer. The vessel did not sail, and the trip was abandoned. The summer was spent at his uncle's, teaching school by day and studying the Latin grammar at night. He returned to Westford in the fall. One Caleb Burge had a school at Benson—at which his brother Simeon and his cousin, Josiah Hopkins (both afterwards distinguished D.D.'s), were already attendants—where the Latin and Greek languages were taught. Ashbel joined the school.

For the next two years his eyesight became so defective that, while he made some progress in his studies, it was mainly by retaining what his fellow-students read aloud to

him. During this time he taught school one term at Mayfield, N. Y., and another at Whiting, Vt. Then he entered a store as clerk at Pittsford.

At his twenty-second year, his want of proper education, his destitution of pecuniary means for college training, even if his health could stand the strain, caused him to seriously reconsider the resolution made four years before. It seemed as if the Creator had hedged up his path. He had some tempting offers to enter other pursuits. At this critical juncture his clerical friends, who appear to have discovered some merit in the young man for the ministry, clustered around him, and besought him at once, with the education which he had, to commence and pursue the study of theology, bearing, as well as he could, the surrounding embarrassments. The advice was accepted, and he never faltered afterwards.

He spent a year with Rev. Lemuel Haynes, at West Rutland, studying theological works and devoting some time to the classics. The next year was spent in the same way with Rev. H. Weeks, of Pittsford, having four or five fellow-students, as at Rutland, and gathering most of his knowledge through their kindness in reading aloud to him in rotation. His memory thus became very retentive.

Sept. 29, 1808, the Rutland Congregational Association held its session at Granville, N. Y. Mr. Parmelee here was licensed, and here his active life of fifty-four years as a minister commenced. His health began to improve. On his return from Granville he was invited to preach at Cambridge, Vt. He remained there about six months, and had a call to be settled, which he declined. During his stay some twenty were added to that church. In the mean time he had made a visit to Malone, N. Y., and married Lucy Winchester, Feb. 10, 1809, to whom he had been engaged in Vermont. She is said to have been a beautiful woman, above the common height, with black hair and eyes, a sweet

singer, well educated, lovely in disposition, and devoutly pious.

This visit to Malone subsequently opened the way to a more extended acquaintance. He then preached six months in Hinesburgh. While there twenty-five new members joined his church. That church gave him a call, which was also declined. An invitation came from Malone, where a Congregational Church had been organized in 1807. Hiram Horton, Sr., one of its pioneers, made Mr. Parmelee a visit to secure his services. They had known each other well in Vermont. At first the invitation was not received with favor, and a sleepless night was spent in overcoming objections. Mr. Horton would not leave until he had the assurance that Mr. Parmelee would come and at least spend a few weeks.

Mr. Parmelee reached Malone the second time in October, 1809. The village was then in its infancy. The old academy, half completed, and arranged with apartments for school, court-house, and jail, and a few dwellings made up the settlement. On the 20th of December, 1809, a call from this church to take the pastoral charge, signed by Hiram Horton and five others, committee, etc., was extended to Mr. Parmelee. It was accepted.

The original call and acceptance are before us as we write, and also the note for four hundred dollars, given Feb. 8, 1810, payable one-third in money and two-thirds in grain, for his first year's salary, and signed by Hiram Horton, Abijah Abbott, and Silas Johnson, trustees. Also some original verses, set to original music, in "*Malone particular metre*," volunteered by a Vermont friend to be sung at the ordination. We copy part of one verse:

"May Ashbel Parmelee
A lasting blessing prove,
And faithful servant be,
To lead our saints in love."

*

An ecclesiastical council met in Malone, Feb. 7, 1810, and ordained Mr. Parmelee, and the next day, after the usual form, installed him as pastor. Rev. Lemuel Haynes was the moderator, Rev. Chauncey Cooke the scribe. The scribe made the introductory prayer, the moderator preached the sermon. Rev. Simeon Parmelee, an elder brother, and still living at Oswego, at the age of ninety-eight, gave the charge. All of these persons came from Vermont for this service. Rev. Martin Powell, of Mooers, made the concluding prayer. The nearest clerical neighbor then was at Montreal on the north, at Mooers on the east, at Saratoga south, and Watertown west.

Mr. Parmelee was now embarked on a sea where he acted as pilot for thirty-six years, and over which his boat floated for fifty-two years till his death, in 1862. In the brief space allotted here, how can we, with any justice to his memory, cover that period?

It will be impossible to enter into details of ministerial efforts, of hard struggles, which inevitably accompany the profession, of spiritual battles and worldly battles, of warm friends and bitter enemies, of want, sicknesses, disappointments, deaths, and final triumphs. We can but trace the skeleton outlines of his busy life.

His eyesight was soon wholly restored. His health improved rapidly. His constitution became strong and vigorous. It seemed to defy fatigue. He went at his work with a will, and with the zeal of a young crusader starting for Palestine. Two sermons on Sunday; in the evening, conference. Thursday evening he usually gave a lecture in some outside neighborhood, often two lectures in a week. Saturday evening was devoted to prayer-meeting. And substantially this continued during his whole pastoral life at Malone. Other duties, fully realized only by one in the same position, kept him constantly employed. There was little repose to body or mind. And he enjoyed this very activity.

In 1811—excused for a while from his church—he spent three months in missionary work between Malone and Watertown; the next year another three months in Clinton and Essex Counties. The travels then, and for years afterwards, except in winter, were mainly on horseback, and he carried a pair of saddle-bags,—a change of clothing in one side, sermons and papers in the other. What reminiscences are buried in those old saddle-bags!

During these two years his church gradually increased. He lived in a house that stood on the site now occupied by Dr. Gay on Elm Street. In the fall of 1812, after himself felling the trees, he erected the central part of the house on Webster Street, which remained his home till death. The building was afterwards enlarged.

The war of 1812 came on. For three years things were in a bad shape, spiritually and otherwise. When the declaration of war first became public, Mr. Parmelee was in Connecticut. He started home immediately by the way of Westford, Vt., where he and his brother Simeon got a team, and came to Malone to take the family out of the reach of danger. The citizens earnestly solicited him to remain, and he did so. The team returned empty. The village was so near the Canada border that great consternation existed from fear of invasion and pillage.

After the unfortunate battle at Chrysler's Farm, Nov. 11, 1813, the sick and wounded American soldiers were first brought to French Mills (Fort Covington), then to Malone, which became a hospital. The headquarters of Gen. Wilkinson's army were at the old Harrison House, opposite Mr. Parmelee's residence. Maj. McPherson and Lieut. Bell boarded three months at his table. Soldiers were dying almost daily. Mr. Parmelee, without pay, acted as chaplain, attending on the sick, and performing the funeral rites for the dead. Most of these officers were Southern men,—some quite civil and others quite the

reverse. Both rank and file were sore under the recent defeat across the St. Lawrence. All the evils that attend war were here.

Gen. Wilkinson sent his negro servant one day across the street to Mr. Parmelee's for a few eggs. Mr. Parmelee told the servant to present his compliments to the general, and say "that he exceedingly regretted his inability to supply him; that he had an abundance of eggs until the general's soldiers encamped near him, but that since that time not an egg had been seen or a hen to lay them." The message was carried, and in a few minutes Mr. Parmelee was in receipt of some coffee, sugar, and other necessaries, with the return compliments of the general.

On the 14th of February, 1814, Mrs. Parmelee, then being the mother of two daughters, died at Westford, Vt., while there on a visit in the hope of recovering her health, that had been ruined by excessive exposure in attending upon the sick. Mr. Parmelee had accompanied her. On his way back to Malone, he met crossing Lake Champlain on the ice a part of Wilkinson's army on its retreat to Burlington. The fugitives bore the intelligence that the British forces with one thousand Indians were on the march to burn French Mills and Malone. His anxiety became intense for the safety of his children and their grandparents (Winchester), who had been left at his house, and he hastened to their rescue. On returning, he found that the American troops had all left, and that Malone was in fact in the hands of the British. Leaving his horse at Timothy Palmer's, he took a foot-path to the village. A guard was posted at the point on Main Street where the Congregational brick church now stands, another around his house, and another still at his own door. Through the courtesy of the British officer in command (Col. Scott) he got through the lines, and reached his home, finding all the loved ones safe.

The British made a short stay. Picking up what public plunder they could, they returned to Canada.

June 12, 1814, at Hopkinton, Mr. Parmelee was married the second time, to Fanny Brush. Her parents had recently moved from Vergennes, Vt., where she was born May 7, 1790. She had been well educated. She had a graceful figure, gray eyes, dark hair, a joyous face beaming with love and good-will, a resolute spirit, and a heart full of Christian virtues.

The débris of "grim-visaged war" gradually cleared away. Malone improved in industry, in population, in morals, and in religion. The church became strong. Its influence and that of its pastor were felt at home and abroad. From year to year new members came in. Large accessions were made in 1816 from many of the business men and heads of families.

In 1817 the church, although Congregational, connected itself with the Champlain Presbytery, and from that day to this has been in full fellowship with Presbyterian councils. Mr. Parmelee was a Presbyterian, and his name is found, for nearly half a century, among the annals of the Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies of that order. It would be difficult to enumerate the different ecclesiastical meetings in which he took part.

On the 30th day of May, 1826, the corner-stone of the stone church, sixty by eighty (demolished in 1851 for a new brick structure), was laid after the Masonic order, Mr. Parmelee delivering the address. At the close of 1827 it was completed, and dedicated Feb. 7, 1828. The congregation hailed the event with joy. For the first time it had a place of worship of its own. Mr. Parmelee's first sermon in the house was from the text, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

Mrs. Parmelee, after a painful illness of years, died at Malone, April 24, 1827.

Mr. Parmelee was married the third time at Plattsburgh, Sept. 3, 1827, to Widow Betsey Wood, who survived him two years. She was a woman of great worth, devoted to her husband, and a fit partner in all his domestic and Christian labors. She brought him some pecuniary aid, which was timely. She never had any children, but the large circle of her husband's, whom she adopted while still in their juvenile years, cherish her memory with the kindest and warmest regard.

The Anti-Masonic crusade, growing out of the alleged kidnapping and murder of Morgan in 1826, shook not only political but religious circles. In 1829 it reached the Malone church. Mr. Parmelee had joined the lodge soon after coming here. We have before us a traveling card given him by "Northern Constellation Lodge," Oct. 10, 1812 (5812), signed by Samuel Peck, Master; Noah Moody, S. Warden; and Cone Andrus, J. Warden. A few of Mr. Parmelee's leading members were also Masons. He and they were assailed with great bitterness. For the sake of peace, they were willing to retire from the order, which they did do; but no threats or pressure could induce them to denounce it.

The majority finally acquiesced in such an arrangement, and the storm blew over. A few, however, could not be reconciled, and their connection with the body was severed, some voluntarily, and some otherwise. They went away carrying with them strong personal animosity to Mr. Parmelee, whose voice and influence had been potential in the adjustment. Mutual explanations in after-years made them all friends again.

In 1836 another matter stirred the church to its centre. A Frenchman, calling himself Anthony Belmar, together with his reputed wife, came from Canada. He united with this church in 1826, and she afterwards. It subsequently turned out that the name was an assumed one: that the

woman was his stepmother, whose proper husband (his father) was still living, and that they had fled from Canada, carrying away whatever property they could lay their hands on.

Belmar's religious zeal and remarkable gifts in prayer and exhortation gave him great influence. In 1830 reports as to the peculiar relations of the parties got afloat. They were quieted for a while by denial and the production of a marriage certificate,—which afterwards proved to be forged,—but again the story was revived. In the winter of 1836 fresh rumors sprang up. In the mean time five or six children, as the fruits of the alliance, came on to the stage. Mr. Parmelee favored an investigation; the church did not, so strongly did it believe in the innocence of the persons implicated. The matter came up at church meeting. A commission to be sent to Canada for inquiry was proposed and favored by the pastor. The discussion became warm.

The few persons alive who were present on that occasion will probably never forget the looks and words, the energy and fire, and determination elicited in closing the debate on the part of the pastor.

He stepped one side from the Moderator's chair, and said:

"My Brethren,—This matter must be cleared up. Until it is done, you will be standing on the brink of a volcano, in constant peril of its eruptions. This charge has gone abroad in the community, and its truth or falsity must be determined. If this accusation is false, this church cannot permit itself and its injured brother and sister to remain under such a cloud; if it be true, we cannot longer nurse vipers in our bosom. I will myself go to Canada and learn how the truth may be. This meeting is closed. Let us pray!"

And to Canada he went. Taking an interpreter, he started on his self-appointed mission. The result was, that incontestable proof was produced of the truth of the charges. On his return and confronting the Belmars with the docu-

ments, they confessed the whole. At first consenting but afterwards refusing to abandon their mode of life, they were cut off, and soon after left the country.

In the spring of 1840 the call for new measures, and for the aid of Evangelists, brought that eccentric divine, Rev. Jedediah Burchard, to Malone.

Mr. Parmelee did not admire him. His peculiar way of preaching, conducting meetings, and telling ludicrous anecdotes, were quite distasteful. But, after some reluctance, the request for his coming was granted, on condition that the pastor should have control of the meetings. Mr. Parmelee would not consent to be a subaltern in a pulpit where "he was to the manor born." Mr. Parmelee personally at Plattsburgh tendered the invitation. The condition was assented to, but its enforcement was not easy. For the six weeks that Mr. Burchard stayed, he and the pastor got along pretty well together. But the natural effect here, as elsewhere, where extraordinary instead of regular means are relied upon, was soon visible. The influence of the pastor was weakened. The Evangelist carried off the honors. His visit sowed the seeds which bore fruit five years later.

A few facts in passing.

On the death of Governor De Witt Clinton, in 1828, on invitation from a public meeting of the citizens, Mr. Parmelee preached a sermon, taking for the text, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" and another sermon from the same text on the death of President Harrison, in April, 1841.

His sermon on "The Death of Susan Winchester" was printed in 1815; his "History of the Trial of Truman Dixon" in 1822; sermon on "The Olive-Tree" in 1825; "Origin and Destruction of Popery" in 1839.

He had some forensic debates, and several newspaper discussions, with both clergymen and laymen, on matters of

difference, religious and secular. His private and public correspondence was extensive.

For the twenty-three years following April 13, 1810, the entire church records are in his handwriting.

During his pastorate at Malone his highest salary in any one year was six hundred and fifty dollars. Some generous contributions were added at the annual January gatherings at his house.

These gatherings of all classes were a marked event—looked for ahead—remembered afterwards. The apartments of the house from top to bottom were usually filled; the youth above, the old people below. From the pastor, deacons, and "Mothers in Israel," down to the most giddy—everybody unbent for the occasion. Mirth and a happy time went on without much restraint.

Middlebury College at an early day conferred upon Mr. Parmelee the degree of A.M., and in 1853 that of D.D.

In politics Mr. Parmelee was a Whig and then a Republican. He never alluded to political questions in the pulpit, but did not hesitate to express his opinions outside of it; and he was prompt at the polls to exercise,—as an American citizen,—the right and the duty to vote.

He was a warm Abolitionist, but never forsook the Colonization Society. The denunciations of it by Mr. Garrison and his followers did not meet his approval.

We resume our narrative.

Mr. Parmelee toiled on with his flock. As to the last five years of his work as their spiritual guide, we quote his own words:

"From 1840 to 1845 my labors were continued, preaching twice on the Sabbath, and attending conference for the third service; giving generally two lectures during the week in some sections of the parish; visiting the sick, presiding at church meetings, and frequently devoting a portion

of the regular hours for sleep and rest to prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preparing messages for the pulpit."

The Congregational Church of Malone had reached a power and strength before unattained. It had over three hundred and fifty members. Mr. Parmelee was past sixty years old, but his mental and bodily powers were still in full vigor. Almost from its infancy he had been the spiritual teacher of that church. Youth and manhood had been spent in its service. He had seen it rise from a feeble and scattered band to become the most powerful religious body in the county. He had fought her battles against all foes from within and without. Her families were endeared to him by strong ties. Next to his Maker he loved that church.

But the hour for parting had come.

In April, 1845, he resigned his charge, and the Presbytery of Champlain, at his and the church's request, met and ratified the action.

There is neither space nor need here to go into the causes that resulted in this important change. They run back through several years. Nearly all the prominent actors on the occasion are dead, and any animosities incident to it have passed away. It is enough to say that the church records and those of the Presbytery as to the matter are preserved; and they are full and satisfactory in their endorsement of Mr. Parmelee. Better parting credentials could not have been asked.

The society paid up the arrears due for his homestead. And it should be added here that in after-years, when the shadows lengthened, that church showed, in repeated acts of generosity, that she loved him as a devoted child loves a father. If a mistake was made in 1845, it was fully atoned for afterwards.

He preached his farewell sermon from the text, "How I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," etc.,

and, on request of the society, occupied the pulpit for a few weeks till a substitute could be found.

Mr. Parmelee then preached for nearly three years in Bangor, an adjoining town.

In April, 1848, he was appointed chaplain of Clinton prison, Dannemora. To this place he removed. He held the position till July 7, 1851, when he resigned and returned to his old home. While chaplain he kept a diary from day to day, which is full of interest as to prison-life, inspectors, wardens, guards, and convicts. There is no room for a word of it here.

His old parishioners and neighbors, of all creeds, greeted his return with demonstrations of good-will. The Malone Congregational Church put upon its records, and sent to him, a resolution of which the following is a copy:

"*Resolved*, That this Church regard with feelings of pleasure and with gratitude to God the return of our beloved and long-respected former pastor, Rev. A. Parmelee, to spend his declining years with us; and that at all times it will give us pleasure to see him in the desk, and, so far as consistent with his ability and engagements, to assist in the exercises and counsels of the church."

He afterwards preached on temporary engagements at Constable, Champlain, Belmont, and other towns, and often in his old pulpit. He bought new scientific and theological works, wrote sermons for the mere pleasure of the thing, and when at home attended and took part in the meetings of the church. His sermon of 1858, "Fifty Years in the Christian Ministry," was delivered by request to many audiences.

When the news flashed over the wires, in April, 1861, of the rebel attack upon Fort Sumter by Gen. Beauregard, Mr. Parmelee was in the midst of a circle of friends, and seemed much agitated. He broke out, "My father fought in the French and Revolutionary wars. His services in the latter were paid in worthless Continental money. His pri-

vations and exposure made him an invalid for life. But when his boys were around him, he used to narrate the incidents of his campaign at Niagara, Montreal, etc., and say, 'My sons! I do not regret my toil and loss and suffering. They were a humble part in securing to you and your children the blessings of liberty and the Constitution of the United States.'

"Now, when I remember my father's words, and the heroic deeds of the Revolution, and see these Southern rascals trying to break up this Union and stamp under foot the flag of the Stars and Stripes, and tear down this edifice that our fathers reared, under the guide of Providence, I feel like shouldering a musket and going myself to Charleston to mingle in this fight."

Mr. Parmelee was at this time quite feeble, his face pale and haggard. But when he spoke his eye flashed fire, his form was straight as an arrow, and every energy and nerve of his physical and mental system stirred with new and youthful vitality.

He prepared, by appointment, the opening address for the Synod of Albany for the spring session of 1862, but was unable from ill health to attend. The meeting was at Troy. His health had become very much shattered; his naturally strong constitution had succumbed to the exposures to which it had been subjected. But he was happy, and kept at work. April 3, 1862, a few weeks before his death, he wrote out in full a new sermon, from Hosea vi. 4, which he preached to his old church. To the last he was the same indefatigable student, the same untiring worker, the same warm-hearted and energetic man. Activity was his element, religion his life. His mental faculties held out bright and clear. He often expressed the hope that when he died the event might come without warning. His wish was gratified.

The end was at hand. His death, at near seventy-eight

years, came suddenly, in the afternoon of May 24, 1862, at his own house. He had been quite smart for several days, and, with his coat off, was at work in his garden, of which he was very fond, training some rose-bushes. A neighbor (Mr. Moore) called to get a few ears of some favorite seed-corn. He walked into the garden, and there propounded to Mr. Parmelee some questions about the Abrahamic covenant, which were answered. Still talking and discussing the subject, they passed into the rear part of the house. Mr. Parmelee, with an elastic step, sprang into a chair, and was reaching up for the braided corn, when he faltered and fell back into the arms of Mr. Moore, DEAD. Not a sigh or groan escaped him. The eyes closed of themselves.

He was buried, May 29th, in the old cemetery near his house. The church was full to overflowing, the stores were closed, and the village draped in mourning. For the hour "the hum of industry" ceased, while the old and beloved Christian warrior was borne to his tomb.

In the space given it is difficult to properly analyze such a character. But some of Mr. Parmelee's leading traits may be noticed.

1. He was a good Bible student; he made the book his daily study. He knew its contents from beginning to end. It was difficult to spring upon him any passage which he had not examined. He knew where it was, the connection, and whether correctly quoted. This acquaintance sometimes gave him advantage with men otherwise better educated than himself.

2. He was posted as to all the cardinal doctrines of his religious tenets. He had studied them, and the arguments for their support, till they were household words. If you touched him on his theology, the challenge was always accepted. The ecclesiastical bodies of Northern New York are full of records of the debates in which he engaged.

Called upon repeatedly to help adjust difficulties in these tribunals, he was never himself arraigned on any charge. He always settled his own difficulties.

3. He was a man of more than ordinary mental power; his perceptions were quick; his intellect strong; his manner of preaching did not differ materially from others of his class. Part of his sermons were written, and a part unwritten. It was sometimes difficult to determine which were the abler. Those without notes seemed the more impressive. His eye appeared to take in every auditor within its reach. His voice was strong and clear; his enunciation distinct; his gestures easy and natural. He never hesitated; he was seldom dull. He sometimes startled his audiences with his vigorous denunciations. At times he was eloquent. When the argument was begun it was adhered to; the text was never forgotten. Unblest with a classical education, he seldom blundered in either pronunciation or use of our Anglo-Saxon language. It was just the language needed to express his ideas.

4. His prayers were exceptional for their fervency and adaptiveness to the occasion. They were the pathos of the heart. No two of them were ever alike. And when offering them he appeared to be in direct communication with his Maker. You could not hear him pray without believing that he expected an answer.

5. He had a high regard for duty, and firmness in its discharge. Whatever religious principle indicated, natural courage performed. He was fearless of consequences. He feared his Maker; he feared nothing else. Whenever he discovered a schism or heresy arising in his church, or an evil gaining root in the community, he put his foot boldly upon it. And he never took it up until the viper was crushed. It was a hard foot to get out of the way.

6. He had strong will and self-reliance. He had the faculty of putting the stamp of his own mind upon others.

Consulted by everybody as to their affairs, he seldom asked advice as to his own. His self-reliant and iron nature sometimes led him into mistakes; but, when seen, these were frankly acknowledged.

7. He was a keen observer of human nature. Very rarely was he deceived in his judgment of a man after short acquaintance. Conclusions which were come to on sight were generally vindicated afterwards.

8. He had strong common sense. And this tempered movements that otherwise might have been hasty and fruitless. He was not indifferent to weighing the expediency and practicability of a measure when right and duty were not at stake. In dress he sought conformity with the fashions of the time. As to matters in the community where principle was not involved he seldom interfered, leaving things or customs to work out their own success or failure. He had few peculiarities of his own; those of other people were easily tolerated.

9. He was prompt at meeting his engagements. If an appointment was given out, he met it. Sunshine or storm, it made no difference. A lecture, a funeral, a wedding, a sick brother, a family in any affliction,—if he agreed to go, nothing but the act of God prevented compliance. Few of us at this day know what traveling was formerly in this county.

10. His Sabbath (he preferred this word to *Sunday*) was from sundown of Saturday to sundown of the next day. He brought this custom from Vermont, but never complained of others starting the day at midnight. His observance of the day was strict. It annoyed him to see it disregarded.

During the war, carpenters, of a Sunday morning, commenced work on a building near his house. He could not brook the sound of the hammers. He went out and reproved them till they stopped. He invited them to come

and hear him preach. The same day, on his way to worship, he saw a squad of soldiers, off duty, in the field, firing at a target. He went straight to them, asked them to stop and come to his service. All of the carpenters and a part of the soldiers came.

11. He was proverbial for making *pointed remarks.* Sometimes they were very severe, unnecessarily so, in the pulpit and out of it. It was a weakness that he could never overcome, and naturally it awoke animosities. Sometimes in the midst of his meetings sharp rebukes came out. At other times, when reproving a man for some wrong with a burning glance of his small blue eye, a characteristic nod of his head, and a point of his finger, his language sent the iron to the soul.

And yet in these things Mr. Parmelee never appeared to have a particle of malice. It was his way, and, when well known, was forgiven. The generous nature that underlaid it all, and its ready outburst and readiness to extract the arrow, generally healed the wound. He never himself could cherish, for a moment, ill-will to any one.

12. His mind was active. It never seemed to have or need repose. Between sundown of Saturday and daylight of Sunday, when other duties prevented earlier preparation, he often prepared his two sermons. On some of these occasions, when long watching at the bedside of a sick wife or child had apparently worn him out, the moment he entered the pulpit his strength and lungs seemed adequate to any effort.

While riding out in the country nothing escaped his observation. The giant elm, the beautiful shade-tree, the evergreen, the sparkling brook, the sky, the cattle in the field, the little girl passing to school with her dinner-basket, the woodman with his axe, the farmer with sickle, a fine lawn, a shabby fence,—everything within range awoke observation and remark. There was no tameness or indif-

ference; it was either approval or condemnation. His conversational powers were remarkable. His body corresponded with his mind. His step was quick and elastic.

13. His liberality and hospitality were unbounded. The last loaf would be divided, if necessary, to allay the wants of another. He had no fortune, either by inheritance, demise, or acquisition. His means—always cramped—made a limit to his wishes. But what he had went freely. It made no difference whether the recipient belonged to his church, or to another, or to none.

Before railroads were opened, his house was the constant resort, not only of the clergy, but of all the agents for Bible and tract societies, associations for the Jews, educational and missionary societies. Temperance lecturers, abolition speakers, book-pedlars, agents collecting funds for academies and colleges and for distant churches, music teachers, men in search of schools, and traveling adventurers of almost every kind sought the minister's hotel for the double purpose of securing his influence for their particular hobby, and his bed and board free of expense. These men generally traveled with a horse and carriage, and both quadrupeds and bipeds must be fed. Added to these were hundreds, annually, of indifferent persons who shared his hospitality. But Mr. Parmelee never complained. The door was always open; the guest was always welcome.

How he contrived to live on his small salary, with a large family, with years of sickness among its members, and with the constant drafts upon his purse, is a mystery. But the Great Shepherd above took care of him and his.

Much of his success as a pastor was attributable to his regard for the poor. He was rigidly impartial towards all his flock; condition of life made no difference.

14. He had strong attachment for out-door sports; he loved to hunt and fish; he was at home in the woods. The lonely dell, the towering cliffs, the forest-enclosed lake,

as its evening monotones broke upon the beach, were his admiration. In these scenes, where "the groves were God's first temples," he loved to contemplate nature and its Creator. When the clerical garb was thrown off, and the conventionalities of life could be relaxed around the camp-fire of the hunter, he was one of the most agreeable of companions.

15. His natural flow of spirits was great. Fond of fun, within prescribed limits, enjoying a good joke, inclined to look at the bright side of things, buoyant and hopeful, he kept up under trials that would have crushed men of different mood. When the occasion called for it there was sobriety, but never gloom.

16. He had great fondness for children, and wonderful tact in winning them to his embrace. Boys that feared him, when once within his reach lost apprehension and restraint. It was singular with what distrust they awaited his chidings, and yet with what confidence they rushed into his arms. He addressed them so kindly, and was so frolicsome with them that they could not help it.

17. Professionally a clergyman, he never forgot that he was also a citizen, with corresponding duties. In the schools and the academies, in the public measures that came up for action at town meeting, in the industrial and other pursuits of his village and town, he felt and exercised a lively interest.

18. He was very sensitive, sometimes too much so, about his personal reputation. A man of his make-up, bold and fearless, and swinging his clerical sword right and left for years, naturally made some enemies. But if a false report was started in the community to his prejudice, the avenger was quickly on its track. It was followed up with a perseverance that never flagged until retraction was made, or the falsity of the charge exposed. When the originator admitted the error, the condonement was easy; when other-

wise, the exposure was certain and overwhelming. He believed in punishing slander in this world.

19. Above and beyond all, he loved his own peculiar work. It may be said that he was proud of being a Christian minister. He gloried in it and in its duties. Its very hardships and trials were attractions.

In memoranda that he has left, he speaks of his desire to preach on his conversion, in 1802: "To commend the excellencies of the gospel, and urge the claims of its wonderful Author; to be permitted to go forth into the world and invite sinners, in His glorious name, to ~~rule~~ His kingdom; and to encourage all his people in their high and holy calling, were objects of my most ardent desire."

His eye never lost sight of the picture that opened to his view at that time. Religion in the morning, at noon, and at night. And he went down to his grave with its mantle wrapped around him.