

Stephen Haight (- 15 Jan 1841)

The National Intelligencer, Wednesday, January 20, 1841

Died, on Tuesday, the 12th instant, in this city, after a protracted and painful illness, aged 58 years, Stephen Haight, Esq., Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate of the United States.

Mr. Haight was a native of Vermont. He was reared upon a farm and enjoyed but very limited means of early intellectual culture. But, overcoming the obstacles of a defective education by the energy of superior intellect, he rose to important civil stations in that State--having been, for many years, a member of its Legislature, and successively a judge and sheriff of the county in which he resided.

In the Legislature he was distinguished for readiness and skill in debate; and, on the bench, by quickness of apprehension, justness of discrimination, and sound common sense. He possessed uncommon sagacity; was a careful and judicious observer of passing events, and an excellent judge of men. His official duties were discharged with promptness and energy--qualities which distinguished him, even under the pressure of the complicated diseases which terminated his life. Under an exterior seldom marked, during the later years of his life, by strong emotion, he possessed feelings of great susceptibility, alive to the wants and sufferings, and ever ready to minister to the relief of his fellow-men.

Though in early life inclined to skepticism, he had, for many years previous to his death, entertained a firm conviction of the truth of Christianity. To his intimate friends he often expressed his strong conviction of the reality and indispensable importance of vital, experimental religion--a conviction which was evidently much deepened by the discipline of frequent and severe sickness during the last few years of his life. It was during the painful discipline of his last sickness that the power of these convictions was strongly manifested--that the friends who watched the workings of his mind and the current of his feelings saw a marked change--heard from him decided expressions of humility, faith, and submission, and witnessed an unwonted calmness and serenity of spirit. The final change, of whose approach he was, for several days, perfectly conscious, and which he had been wont to denominate, in tones of deep anxiety, "the great and awful change," seemed to be stripped of its terrors as he approached the scene, when, folding his hands and looking up, he calmly and peacefully surrendered his spirit into the hands of Him who gave it.

He has left a wife and daughter in Vermont to mourn the loss of a kind husband and an affectionate father. In the earlier stages of his last sickness, he forbore to send for his wife, under a belief that he should recover so as to be able to reach Vermont, as well as from a regard to the delicacy of her health, which would have been much endangered by a journey, in midwinter, to this city. While the sorrows of the widowed heart are deepened by this separation from the object of its early and constant affection in the hour of his last extremity, it is grateful to the feelings of friends to know that she is not a stranger to the power of that religion which can sustain and comfort under the sharpest trials--in the exercise of which she has long learned the lesson of submission, and been disciplined to meet this, the severest and most agonizing of her bereavements.

On Friday, after appropriate religious services, the remains of the deceased were followed by the Vermont delegation in both Houses of Congress, and other friends of the bereaved family, to the public cemetery in this city, from whence they are to be removed to Vermont, under an appropriation made by the Senate for that purpose.