

Noble D. Larner

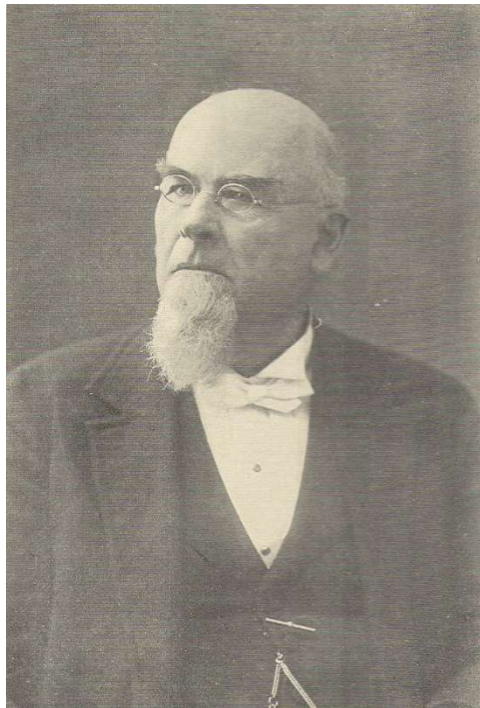
(9 Jan 1830 – 19 Mar 1903)

The Evening Star, November 10, 1886

Locals

Mr. Noble D. Larner of this city, grand high priest of the General Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons visited yesterday the council of High Priests of the Grand Chapter of R.A.M. of Maryland, held in Baltimore.

(In his youth a student at Rittenhouse Academy)



The Evening Star, January 5, 1888

Locals

Mr. Noble D. Larner celebrated the 22d anniversary of installation as worshipful master of Lafayette Lodge, No. 19, F.A.A.M. last evening with a reception at his house, which was attended by a large number of members of the order.

Larner. Suddenly on the evening of Thursday, March 19, 1903 at 8:45 o'clock. Noble D. Larner in the 74th year of his age. Funeral services at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at 2 p.m., Monday, March 23.

The Evening Star, March 20, 1903

Stricken in Church

Noble D. Larner Died Suddenly Last Night

Had Read His Report in New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

His Long and Active Career in Every Phase of Civic Life -- His

Masonic History

Just as he had concluded reading his annual report as treasurer of the board of trustees of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, last night, Noble D. Larner sank into his seat and died without a word or a sign of pain. Mr. Larner was seventy-three years old and heart failure was the cause of his death. He had been accompanied to the meeting, which was held in the Sunday school rooms of the church, by Mrs. Larner and his two grandchildren, Nellie Larner and Noble D., jr. The young people had been the guests of their grandparents at dinner in the afternoon, and the day had been one of unusual happiness.

Just before leaving for the church Mr. Larner complained somewhat of fatigue, but in accordance with his accustomed regard for duty, decided to go for the purpose of making his report in person.

His Sudden End

The meeting was presided over by Mr. Justice Harlan, who had asked a question of two regarding the business of the church after Mr. Larner had concluded. These had been answered by Mr. Larner without any indication of physical distress, and in his usual quiet and substantial manner. As he resumed his seat his head sank forward on his breast, his hold relaxed on his cane and his life had ended in an instant. Mrs. Larner had grasped the hand of her husband, and Dr. Charles H. Richardson, Dr. W.D.

Hughes, Gen. Joseph C. Breckenridge and Mr. Brice Moses, who were seated near, all came to the assistance of the stricken man. The physicians in their hasty examination ascertained that there was no pulse and that the breathing had ceased. While the audience remained quietly seated Mr. Larner's body was removed and placed in one of the adjoining rooms from where it was shortly taken to the family residence, 937 I street northwest. Mrs. Larner was gently cared for by her many friends and accompanied to her home.

Throughout his long life Mr. Larner had been prominently connected with every phase of civic citizenship in Washington. His name was a synonym for honesty and reliability in the business world, for sincerity and consistency in religious work and for felicity and comradeship in fraternal circles. Mr. Larner's strong mentality and vigorous physique made him an indefatigable worker. In each of the fields to which he turned his attention he gave the same thoroughness and enthusiasm, and in each he achieved the same degree of eminent success.

Essentially a Washingtonian

He was essentially and above all a Washingtonian. His father, Michael Larner, was born in this city May 18, 1803, near the site of the city hall. Mr. Larner was born January 9 1830, in a house which stood on F street near the corner of 7th. His mother was a daughter of Jacob Gideon, who was at the time one of the wealthiest men in Washington, a publisher, and well known throughout the country as the printer of the Congressional Record.

Young Larner apprenticed himself to learn the printers trade to his grandfather. He soon evinced a decided liking for politics and took an active part in the local administration. He was elected a member of the board of common council and served one term, from 1862-63. During this time his father represented the fourth ward in the council, while young Larner served in the third. During this time Mr. Larner lived in a little frame house on the site of the present family residence on I street. At the expiration of his term in the council he took a clerkship in the general land office. While there he became lieutenant in the old National Rifles and during the war he enlisted in the "three months" volunteer service for the protection of the city. He served at Fort Stevens on the Potomac and in Virginia.

During his service in the council he was made a member of the draft committee for his ward, and in this capacity Mr. Larner secured a substitute for President Lincoln, at the latter's request, as the executive declared he desired to set the proper example. This substitute was uniformed and equipped and then taken to the White House by Mr. Larner for the President's inspection. President Lincoln expressed his approval of his substitute and presented the latter a check for his services.

After the war Mr. Larner associated himself with Charles Knapp, the well-known Pennsylvania gun founder, and George Riggs for the purpose of forming the National Union Fire Insurance Company. Mr. Larner became secretary of this company immediately, and continued in that position to the time of his death. The National Union at once became a popular concern. It has since been said that the selection of the name of that particular time had much to do with its success. However that may be, its business was prosperous from the first.

His Masonic History

Early in the sixties Mr. Larner became interested in Masonry. He became a member of the B.B. French Lodge. Later he left that organization to become a charter member of Lafayette Lodge, where he has retained his membership since. He went through the official chairs of the lodge and served as its master for two terms, during which time he had the distinction of raising 140 men in Masonry, the largest number to that time in the history of the local lodges. He became a member of Lafayette Chapter, and was made a high priest. He was connected with one of the foot commanderies, but left that organization to join in the formation of the De Molay Mounted Commandery, No. 4, of which he

was made eminent commander. In 1896, when the Grand Commandery of the District of Columbia was organized, Mr. Larner became its first grand commander. In this position he signed the charters of all of the commanderies of the District, all having to take out new charters under the new organization. This honor was one which was very gratifying to Mr. Larner.

Another Masonic honor conferred on Mr. Larner was that of making him grand high priest of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the United States, the highest gift in the bestowal of the order, and a position which Mr. Larner held for three years.

Mr. Larner was also president of the Washington Masonic Veterans Association, an organization composed of men who were made Masons in Washington, and who have been members of local lodges for twenty-one years. He was president for two terms of the Sons of the American Revolution. His last term expired in February of last year, and Mr. Larner's administration of the affairs of the order proved the most prosperous period in the history of the organization.

At the Time of His Death

Mr. Larner was always an active and energetic worker in every branch of Masonry, and one of the most highly respected members of the fraternity in the capital. He was at the time of his death chairman of the Grand Lodge committee on jurisprudence and the Grand Commandery committee on Templar jurisprudence. He was the senior past thrice illustrious master of Washington Council, No. 1, Royal and Select Masters. He was also president of the Washington Masonic Veteran Association, which but three weeks ago celebrated its anniversary with an annual dinner, at which he presided. It is a coincidence that within a few months both the Washington Masonic Veteran Association and the Masonic Veteran Association should suffer the loss of their venerable presidents, the late William Gibson, president of the latter organization, having but recently preceded President Larner to another world.

Mr. Larner had the pleasure of raising his two sons as Master Masons in Lafayette Lodge, and of exalting the same gentlemen as companions of Lafayette Chapter, R.A.M., an unusual privilege.

Long Church Membership

For forty years Mr. Larner had been a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, in which edifice his life came to an end last night. For many years he had been treasurer of the board of trustees.

In this business life Mr. Larner had been eminently successful. He was the organizer of many enterprises not one of which was a failure from any point of view. Besides his prominent connection with the National Union Fire Insurance Company, he was also secretary of the Home Plate Glass Insurance Company. He was an active member of the Washington Board of Trade, a member of the Columbia Historical Society, and other organizations.

Mr. Larner leaves a widow and two sons -- Phillip F. Larner, who is assistant secretary of the National Union Fire Insurance Company, and John B. Larner, a prominent member of the Washington Bar.

The arrangements for the funeral have not yet been definitely completed. The funeral will doubtless take place Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Mr. Larner will be buried in Congressional cemetery with Masonic honors. Whether the services will be held in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church or at the residence will depend upon the condition of Mrs. Larner, and will be announced later.

The Evening Star, March 21, 1903, p. 6

by Grand Master of Masons George H. Walker.

Lafayette Lodge, No. 19, F.A.A.M., of which the deceased was the principal founder and worshipful master, will be in immediate charge of the arrangements, under the direction of the grand officers. Mr.

Larner was a past general grand high priest, past grand commander and past grand master, and each of the grand bodies of York Masonry will participate officially in the last honors to his memory.

Funeral services will be held over the remains Monday at 2 o'clock p.m. at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

At a special meeting of the board of fire underwriters of the District of Columbia, called this morning to take appropriate action on the death of Mr. Larner, who was for twenty eight years secretary of the National Union Insurance Company of this city, a committee consisting of Capt. R.W. Tyler, Simon Wolf and Samuel Cross were appointed and subsequently reported resolutions which were adopted expressing heartfelt sympathy.

We recognize him," the resolution continues, "at all times as a public spirited, high minded American citizen, a man of sincere and pure purposes, devoted to his country, to his native city, to his church, to his family and to his friends; energetic as a man of affairs, ever frank and outspoken, the oldest underwriter of our city, he was one of the founders and for seven years the president of our association; genial, hearty and sincere, he won and retained the friendship and esteem of his fellow men. His example is an inspiration, his memory a legacy."

The following were appointed a committee to represent the association at the funeral; Capt. R.W. Tyler, Sam Cross, W.C. Duvall, Meyer Cohen, Henry Wells, Lem Towers, jr., E.N. Waters and H.L. Rust.

Source ?

Funeral of Noble D. Larner

Ceremonies to Be Under Direction of the Masonic Fraternity

The funeral of the late Noble D. Larner will be in charge of the Grand Lodge of Masons. The ritualistic work at the grave will b

The Evening Star, Monday, March 23, 1903, p. 7

Last Rites Over Dead

Tribute to Memory of Noble D. Larner

Services at the Home and Later at Church--Masonic Honors at Grave

The honor and esteem in which the late Noble D. Larner was held by the people of Washington, where he was born and spent his life of usefulness, was attested by the character and standing of the large number of citizens who gathered at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church this afternoon to pay a final tribute to his memory. The Supreme Court of the United States, the army and navy, the District government, the different branches of the administration, business, fraternal and patriotic organizations were represented at the bier of this man whose death the national capital mourns.

A short service was held at the residence, 937 I street northwest, at 1:30 o'clock. It consisted of prayer and a few words by Mr. Larner's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Wallace Radcliffe. Only relatives and a few near friends of the family were present.

The Honorary Pallbearers.

At 2 o'clock the body was taken to the church. The honorary pallbearers consisted of representatives from the Grand Lodge, F.A.A.M., two representatives of the Grand Chapter, R.A.M.; two from the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar; Justice John M. Harlan, representing the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church; Mr. Henry Orth, representing the National Union Insurance Company; Mr. F. Miller, representing the Home Plate Glass Insurance Company; Dr. J.W. Bayne, representing the Sons of the American Revolution; Mr. W.J. Acker, representing the Masonic Hall Association; Mr. S. Thomas Brown, representing the Oldest Inhabitants Association; Mr. G.Y. Atlee, representing the Washington

Veterans' Association and the National Rifles of 1861; Mr. C.W. Howard, representing the fire underwriters of the District of Columbia, and Mr. Joseph A. Deeble.

The active pallbearers were chosen from Lafayette Chapter, No. 5; Lafayette Lodge, No. 19, and DeMolay Mounted Commandery, No. 4. The ushers at the church were William H. Pierce, John Doyle Carmody, Henry W. Samson, Sidney Besselevire, John P. Randolph, J.P. Ernest and Philip Walker, all members of Washington Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

The National Union Fire Insurance Company of which Mr. Larner had been secretary from its inception, was represented by Capt. R.W. Tyler, Samuel Cross, W.C. Duvall, Meyer Cohen, Henry Wells, Lemuel Towers, jr., E.N Waters and H.L. Rust.

Simple Services at Church

The service at the church were simple. They consisted of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and "Lead, Kindly Light," sung by a quartet of brother Masons, prayer and a brief sermon by Dr. Radcliffe, who spoke feelingly of Mr. Larner's life work for the betterment of mankind and his untiring interest in everything good. He said that the church had lost one of its firmest supporters and the city one of its noblest men.

The floral offerings were many and beautiful. Chief among them were large designs of roses and lilies from the Sons of the American Revolution and the Association of Underwriters respectively, Mr. Larner having been the first president of the latter organization. Other offerings were from Almas Temple, Mystic Shrine, Royal Arch Chapter, Lafayette Lodge, F.A.A.M., and the Union Fire Insurance Company.

At the grave the ceremonies were conducted by the Masonic fraternity under the charge of Mr. George H. Walker, grand master.

The Evening Star, March 30, 1903, p. 2

Will of Noble D. Larner

Jewel From King Bequeathed to Masonic Grand Lodge of England

The will of Noble Danforth Larner, dated March 14, 1901, was filed for probate in the register of wills' office today. By the terms of the will the testator bequeathed the greater part of his estate to his wife, Ann Margaret Larner. A portion is left in trust for his grandson, Noble B Larner. Upon the death of the wife the property is to descend to the testator's sons.

The jewel which Mr. Larner received as a gift from the King of England, Edward VII, as the grand representative of the Grand Lodge of F.A.A.M. of England to the Grand Lodge of the District, it is directed, shall be returned to the Grand Lodge of England.

The executors named are Philip F. Larner and John B. Larner, sons of the deceased.

A History of the City of Washington

Noble D. Larner

Occupying an exalted position in local matters, insurance and Masonic circles, Noble D. Larner, a Washingtonian by birth and residence, spent a life fraught with usefulness and distinction. The son of Michael and Christiana Larner, he was born on January 9 1830. He was one of the organizers of the National Union Fire Insurance Company in 1865, and was elected its first secretary, which position he held continuously to the time of his death, on March 19, 1903. As a Mason Mr. Larner held every important position within the gift of the subordinate and grand lodges, and at the time of his death was past grand mater, past grand high priest and past grand commander of the District of Columbia, and past general grand high priest of the United States.

His early education was received at the District private schools, after which he entered the printing establishment of his grandfather, Jacob Gideon, and there learned the "art preservative of arts." In April 1861, Mr. Larner answered President Lincoln's first call for troops for ninety days' service and served until the expiration of this term of enlistment. Sometime after Mr. Larner had been discharged from the army he was drafted to serve for three years under a call by the President. Sometime after this, he, in connection with others formed what was known as the Third Ward Draft Club, its object being to secure money to purchase substitutes for those citizens of the third ward that might be drafted. In this effort the club was so successful as to procure substitutes enough to relieve all that were drafted in that ward except the last two who were sent to the army. Sometime afterwards President Lincoln decided that he would place in the army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia, and communicated his desire to the provost marshal general of the District, with the request that he select the gentleman who should fulfill his wishes. The provost marshal general sent for Mr. Larner, stated to him the President's wishes and placed the matter in his hands. After considerable trouble, substitutes being scarce, he succeeded in getting one. He was sworn in, dressed in uniform, taken to the White House and introduced to the President, who spoke very pleasantly to him as to the duties of a soldier. President Lincoln subsequently sent Mr. Larner a check on Riggs Bank in this city in payment of the price he had paid for the substitute. At another period during the year 1864 or 1865 the city council of Washington received notice that a delegation of the Baltimore, Maryland, city council intended to make a visit to Washington. The council of Washington appointed a committee of which Mr. Larner was chairman, to receive and escort them to the places of interest in the city. After visiting various places they expressed the desire to visit the President. After entering the President's office and being introduced to him, he was informed that the visitors desired to sing him a song or two. The President said he would be glad to hear them. They then formed a circle around him and sang several patriotic songs, much to the pleasure of the President. During the singing they used a fine American flag which they waved around his head. That flag is still in the possession of Mr. Larner's family and very highly prized by them.

In December, 1860, he received an appointment to a clerkship in the Interior Department, where he remained until 1865, resigning to accept the secretaryship of the National Union Fire Insurance Company, of Washington, which position he held till death. Mr. Larner was equally prominent in the District's public affairs, and as a member of its city council he left a most enviable record. He became a member of the council in June, 1863, serving until June, 1865, and was chairman of the committee on improvements throughout his incumbency and was vice-president of that body for one year. While a member of the council Mr. Larner introduced many important measures, among them the bill to arch the old canal; to sewer the old Slash Run, on L street, northwest, and to arch the sewer which ran from what is now Florida avenue down Eighth street, northwest. The measures were defeated at the time because of the great cost involved, but were subsequently introduced and adopted by the Board of Public Works. Mr. Larner took an active part in the passage of the act establishing a paid fire department in the District. He also introduced and had passed the bill in both branches of the council for the establishment of the paid firm alarm telegraph system. Another important bill introduced at his instance was that providing for the removal of ashes from residences. This bill was not passed, because of lack of funds, but the District government has since adopted the regulation. Mr. Larner always took an active interest in politics, and was Democratic in his sympathies.

On the 19th of October, 1863, Mr. Larner became a Master Mason of B.B. French Lodge; the following December a charter member of Lafayette Lodge, No. 19, and on the 31st of December he was elected secretary; in 1864 senior warden, and worshipful master in December, 1865 and 1866, serving as such two years. November 6, 1866, he was elected grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, and served for five years, and was grand master in 1881 and 1882. He became a member of Mount Vernon Royal Arch Chapter No. 20, then under the registry of Maryland and District of Columbia Grand Chapter. In 1867 he united with others in the formation of the Grand Chapter of the

District of Columbia. On June 1, 1867 he became high priest of the new chapter, Lafayette No. 5, and served as such two and a half years. He became grand secretary at the time of the organization of the Grand Chapter, serving until November, 1872, when he was elected deputy grand high priest, and served one year. He was also chairman of the committee on correspondence of the Grand Chapter for many years. In November, 1873, Mr. Larner was elected grand high priest. At Nashville, Tennessee, in 1874, he was elected general grand captain of the Host of the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the United States, and general grand scribe of the same order at Buffalo, August 24, 1877; general grand king at Detroit, Michigan, in 1880; deputy general grand high priest at Denver, Colorado, in 1883, and general grand high priest in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1886. He first attended a convocation of the General Grand Chapter held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1868, and has been present at every convocation held by that body since that time. He received the order of knighthood in Columbia Commandery, No. 2, of Washington, D.C., in May, 1866, and affiliated with DeMolay Mounted Commandery, No. 4, February 16, 1872, and was elected eminent commander from the floor, December, 1877. Upon the organization of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar in this city, Mr. Larner was elected its first grand commander, which office he held for one term, during which the duty of organizing and placing the Grand Commandery in proper working order devolved upon him, which duty was performed to the entire satisfaction of the members of the Grand Commandery. In cryptic masonry he united in the movement made in Washington in organizing a council of Royal and Select Masons, in 1870. In the following year (1871) he was elected thrice puissant grand master and in 1878 he received the degrees of the Ancient Scottish Rite up to and including the thirty-second degree. On January 31, 1887, Mr. Larner assisted in the formation of the Washington Masonic Veteran Association, and refused to accept the office of president at that time. Subsequently, on February 22, 1893, he was elected president of the association and has continued to hold that office. On February 22, 1901, he was elected president of the District of Columbia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, and on February 22, 1902, he was re-elected. During his incumbency it was more successful in the number of new members enrolled than at any previous time, and in 1902 Mr. Larner was elected vice-president of the National Congress of the Sons of American Revolution.

On November 25, 1851, Mr. Larner married Miss Ann Margaret Keller, of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Of this union four sons were born -- Philip F. Larner, now secretary of the National Union Fire Insurance Company of Washington, and John B. Larner, a member of the Washington bar; Harry Day Larner, who died in infancy, and Charles N. Larner, who died on October 30, 1895, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, at that time being assistant secretary of the National Union Fire Insurance Company of Washington City.

Mr. Larner died suddenly on the 19th day of March, 1903, at a meeting in the lecture room of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, after presenting his report as treasurer of the board of trustees of that church, having been a trustee of the church for nearly twenty years. He was buried with high Masonic honors from the church on March 23, 1903, and his remains were interred at the Congressional Cemetery in Washington.

Kenton N. Harper, History of the Grand Lodge, 1911

p. 366-367: Grand Master, 1881-82

Born in Washington, D.C., January 9, 1830, he received his education in private schools, and learned the "art preservative of all arts" in the printing office of his grandfather, Jacob Gideon. In April 1861 he answered President Lincoln's first call for ninety-day men and served until expiration of term of enlistment. In the same year he was appointed to a clerkship in the Interior Department. In 1863 he was elected a member of the City Council, and served for three years. In 1865 he was elected Secretary of the National Union Fire Insurance Company, which position he retained until his death. In 1867 he organized and carried to a successful conclusion the project for the erection of the old Masonic Temple,

and from that time until his death was Secretary of the Masonic Hall Association. He was also for many years Secretary of the Home Plate Glass Insurance Company, and prominently identified with many other business enterprises.

While a member of the City Council, Bro. Larner introduced many important measures, among them the bill to arch the old canal, to sewer the old Slash Run on L Street, and to arch the sewer which ran from what is now Florida Avenue, down to Eighth Street, N.W. Defeated then they were later adopted by the Board of Public Works. He was also active in the passage of the act to get a paid fire department and the establishment of a fire-alarm telegraph system.

Bro. Larner was made a Master Mason in Benjamin B. French Lodge, No. 15, October 19, 1863. On December 28 of the same year he became a charter member of the LaFayette Lodge, No. 19, and served the lodge as Secretary in 1864, Senior Warden in 1865, and Worshipful Master in 1866 and 1867.

In the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia he was elected Senior Grand Deacon for the year 1866, Grand Secretary for five years from 1867 to 1871, and Grand Master for the years 1881 and 1882.

He was exalted in Mount Vernon R.A. Chapter, No. 3, December 25, 1865. May 24, 1867, he became a charter member and the first High Priest of LaFayette R.A. Chapter, No. 5, and presided over that body in 1867, 1868 and 1869.

He took a prominent part in the organization of the Royal Arch Chapter of the District of Columbia, and served that body as Grand Secretary from 1867 to 1871, Deputy Grand High Priest in 1873, and Grand High Priest in 1874 and 1875.

He was present at every convocation of the General Grand Chapter from 1868 to 1900, and was elected General Grand Captain of the Host in 1874, General Grand Scribe in 1877, General Grand King in 1880, Deputy General Grand High Priest in 1883, and General Grand High Priest in 1886, serving three years in each office.

He assisted in forming LaFayette Council, R. and S.M., now extinct, in 1870, and was the presiding officer of that body in 1871. March 19, 1894, he affiliated with Washington Council, No. 1.

He was knighted in Columbia Commandery, No. 2, K.T., May 4, 1866; became a charter member of DeMolay Mounted Commandery, No. 4, February 16, 1872, and was Eminent Commander in 1878.

On the organization of the Grand Commandery of the District of Columbia, January 14, 1896, he was elected the first Grand Commander, and served in that office for the initial term ending at the First Annual Conclave, May 11, 1896.

He received the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, from fourth to thirty-second, from Grand Commander Albert Pike, in 1878.

Bro. Larner was for nearly half a century a potential force in the business, social, and religious life of Washington. He was abundantly endowed with the qualities that make for success—great moral and physical courage, sound judgment, indomitable energy, and unswerving integrity—and it was said of him that no enterprise with which he was connected was ever known to fail. He was for forty years a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, and it was within its sacred walls, March 19, 1903, that the great change came to him, when “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” he painlessly sank to rest.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”