

FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE

OBITUARY RECORD

No. 5

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JUNE, 1901

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THE FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE
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1838.

Rev. George Washington WILLIARD, D. D., LL. D., son of John and Marie (Shafer) Williard, both members of the Reformed Church, was born near Burkittsville, Frederick county, Md., June 10, 1818. He spent his boyhood in hard work on his father's farm, receiving little education beyond the three fundamentals, but thorough training in the essentials of right living. To this hard but wholesome outdoor labor in early life he attributed his unusual good health.

At the age of sixteen, after his father's death and the abandonment of the farm, he entered the High School at York, Pa., where he continued to study until the school was moved to Mercersburg, Pa., in 1835. From there he entered Marshall College and was graduated in 1838. He was a member of the Goethean Literary Society. After spending two years more at Mercersburg studying theology, he was licensed to preach by the Eastern Synod at Greencastle, Pa., October, 1840, and ordained shortly afterwards at Jefferson, Md., by a committee of the Maryland classis.

From this time, until his death sixty years later, he was almost continuously absorbed in religious work of some kind. He held first the Jefferson charge, consisting of the Jefferson, Manor, and Lovettsville congregations, over which he officiated for four years. For six months thereafter he supplied the Funkstown congregation, and then accepted the Huntingdon charge in Pennsylvania, composed of the Huntingdon and McConnellstown congregations. During the two years that he held this charge he also

taught in the Huntingdon Academy. His wife's precarious health at this time made him seek a home in a milder climate, and he, therefore, accepted a charge at Winchester, Va., where he cared for the two congregations, Winchester and Smithville. He remained here three years, until 1850. From 1850 to 1855 he had charge of the Reformed congregation at Columbus, Ohio. At the end of this time he received a call to the First Church, Dayton, Ohio, which he accepted. This charge consisted of two congregations and involved heavy work, so heavy, in fact, that he had the charge divided, and accepted as his part the Bethel charge, made up of Bethel and Mt. Carmel congregations.

In September, 1866, Dr. Williard began his work as president of Heidelberg College, at Tiffin, Ohio, to which position he had been elected shortly before. He found the college in need of financial and other help, and set himself to the task of putting it on a firm foundation. While he held the office of president he was instrumental in building the president's house, a ladies' boarding hall, and a new college building, the last costing \$60,000. In 1890, when he resigned the presidency, the college was free from debt and had an interest-bearing fund of over \$100,000, and the number of students had increased to 346.

Dr. Williard left Heidelberg College to accept the professorship of Ethics and Apologetics in Ursinus College and Theological Seminary. He held this position until June, 1893, when he retired and moved to Lancaster, Pa. He left Lancaster in 1895 on an invitation to start the Fifth Reformed church at Dayton. The building and founding of this Memorial church (in honor of his second wife) was his last important church work. He began with a Sunday School in an abandoned street car shed, and in five years built up a congregation of over three hundred and fifty members with a church property worth nearly \$20,000. He died at Dayton, September 17, 1900.

During his long and useful life Dr. Williard, in spite of his arduous duties, found time for much literary work. For

thirteen years, from 1853 to 1866, he edited the *Western Missionary* (now the *Christian World*), the organ of the Reformed Church in the West. He contributed also to many magazines. One of his contributions, in 1896, was an autobiographical sketch. His published works are: "Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism, translated from the Latin into English," 1851; "Western Liturgy of the Reformed Church of the West," 1871; "History of Heidelberg College, with the thirteen addresses and sermons delivered before the graduating classes," 1879; "A Treasury of Family Reading," 1883; "Life Work and Character of Henry Leonard," 1890; and "The Comparative Study of the Dominant Religions of the World, 1893." This last work the author thought was his "best and most important."

Dr. Williard received the degree of D. D. from Franklin and Marshall College in 1866, and that of LL. D. from Monmouth (Ill.) College in 1888.

Dr. Williard was married three times. His first wife, and the mother of all his children, was Miss Louisa C. Little, daughter of Dr. P. W. Little of Mercersburg, to whom he was married April 21, 1841. She died in Dayton, September 10, 1863. His second wife was Miss Emily J. Hiveling, daughter of Col. J. Hiveling of Xenia, Ohio, with whom he lived happily for nearly twenty-six years. On October 27, 1892, he was married to his third wife, Miss Mary E. Gormley of Lancaster, who survives him. He had five children. The only daughter, Mary Louisa, died in Dayton when six months old. The first two sons, Cephas L. and J. Newton, also died, the former at Dayton, aged 26 years, and the latter in Tiffin, aged 45 years. The third and fourth sons, Dr. G. Parker Williard, a practising physician in Tiffin, and Rev. Edwin Rush Williard (Heidelberg College, 1872; Heidelberg Theological Seminary, 1874), of Canal Fulton, Ohio, are still living.

[The *Christian World*, Sept. 22, 1900 (Portrait); Mrs. G. W. Williard; Rev. E. R. Williard.]