



The University of Pittsburgh

THE University of Pittsburgh (since the University of Nashville has discontinued its charter recently) is the oldest in the United States, west of the Alleghenies.

The early pioneers, who crossed the mountains and settled at the forks of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers, brought with them the same ideals which were fixed in the minds of the Plymouth settlers. Believing that the education of youth ought to be a primary object with every government, a school was started as early as 1770, which was to be known a few years later as the Pittsburgh Academy.

In 1786 Hugh Henry Brackenridge, a classmate of President James Madison at Princeton, secured the enactment of a law incorporating the Pittsburgh Academy as a seat of learning. The incorporators were men of affairs and prominence at that time and their activity in founding the school was just one of the many examples of their public spirit especially along educational lines. All of these men whose names appear as incorporators were graduates of Princeton and pioneers in the cause of education, through whose labors subsequently the Washington & Jefferson College came into being.

Such was the prosperity of the academy at the close of the second decade of the last century that the manifest necessity for the establishment in this community of an institution of higher learning gave

Rev. John Thompson Plunket, D.D., M.D.

Tennessee Mu, 1879

By *Charles P. Wood*

New York Alpha

THE sudden death of Dr. J. T. Plunket at his home in Birmingham on Sunday, November tenth, 1912, caused a feeling of keen personal loss among thousands of friends and admirers throughout the South, and mourning almost national in scope due to his wide reputation and influence as one of the most beloved as well as one of the most gifted and eloquent preachers of his day.

Doctor Plunket was born at Franklin, Tennessee, in 1849. After his preliminary schooling, his early youth was devoted to business, in which he was unusually successful. Subsequently, he graduated from the University of Nashville where he was initiated by Tennessee Nu of Σ A E and from Southern Presbyterian University. In 1880 he completed his course at the Theological Seminary, Columbia, S. C., and was immediately licensed to preach the Gospel. One of his earliest charges was the historic old Steel Creek Church, near Charlotte, N. C.; while there, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Mecklenburg. Several years later he was called to Covington, Kentucky, and in 1887 to Jefferson Avenue Church, Detroit. In 1889, he went to the First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, where he served for twenty-one years, leaving in 1910 to accept a call from the South Highlands Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. He was moderator of the Synod of Georgia in 1895; was commissioner to the general assembly in 1883, 1895 and 1903, and was commissioner to the Pan-Presbyterian Council which convened in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1896, and again in 1904 when it met in Liverpool, England. For several successive terms he was national chaplain of the Travelers' Protective Association. He received the degree of D.D. from Central University, Kentucky, in 1886, and the honorary degree of M.D. from the University of Georgia in 1904. In 1879, he married Miss Sallie G. Kennedy, of Clarksville, Tennessee. He is survived by his widow, one daughter and four sons. Two sons, Henry C. Plunket, Georgia Phi, and Paul W. Plunket, Georgia Beta, are members of Σ A E; another son, Thomas S. Plunket, is a member of Beta Theta Pi.

As a broad-minded, sympathetic and thoroughly consecrated man, hailed as friend and brother and respected as a tower of strength in every righteous cause, Doctor Plunket lived a life of usefulness and unselfishness—and he died gloriously in the full fruition of his labors. The esteem in which he was held among those who knew him best is well expressed in the following editorial from the *Augusta Chronicle*:

Seldom has a city been more profoundly stirred than on Sunday, when the sad news reached Augusta that Dr. J. T. Plunket was dead.

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It is not within our province nor, indeed, does it enter within our desire, to make any comment upon this beloved minister as a theologian, preacher or doctrinaire; in fact, we do not know, nor do we care, whether he belonged to the conservative or the modern school of religious thought. Of his attainments as a preacher and theologian, there are others better qualified to speak.

We had not the privilege of being one of his parishioners, nor were we advantaged by his personal spiritual ministrations; doubtless we would have been enriched by both. But we did know him as a man. We do know something of the power and impress of his splendid personality upon this community during his long term of service as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and in charge of the Reid Memorial Church on The Hill.

No man could be long in this city without knowing Doctor Plunket was here. His ministry was of the conventional type, it is true, but it was more, and his exceptional personal gift found room for exercise beyond the limits of his particular denomination. There is scarcely a denomination in the city but in some way, at some time, received the benefit of his priestly or pastoral ministration. He endeared himself to men and women, regardless of their religious affiliations or social standing in life. His love for people and his sympathetic interest in their human affairs brought him into touch with all classes. The affairs of the community found a sympathetic response in his generous nature too. Never obtrusive, dictatorial or popularly sensational, for almost twenty-five years he helped to mould the sentiment and enlarge the vision of those among whom he dwelt.

He gave the best of his life; the best of life's energies, the best of his talents, the best of his years, to making of Augusta a better, a more wholesome, saner place in which to live. As, with quiet dignity, he moved in and out amongst us, contributing his part to the betterment of all, he seemed almost a bishop of the whole community, respected and beloved of all. His departure, about two years ago, was a distinct loss to the entire city. His work, however, still lived, and will live, in the hearts and lives of men. He died, as we venture to believe, as he, himself, would have wished to die could he have chosen—at the close of a church service, almost in the pulpit; stricken in the very midst of his labors. We measure him as a man among men, standing always for the best, the truest, the noblest in life and duty, and, as we mark his passing, we can but feel that truly a Prince in Israel hath fallen, and say: "Oh, that I may die the death of the righteous and my end may be like his."



REV. JOHN THOMPSON PLUNKET, D.D., M.D.
Tennessee Nu '79
Died at Birmingham, Alabama, November 10, 1912