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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

EDMUND M. VITTUM: PASTOR



ANNIE GRISWOLD VITNUM.

ANNIE GRISWOLD was born in Guilford, Conn., October 5, 1856. Her family name has been well known in New England especially in southern Connecticut since the earliest colonial days. Her father was captain in the Twenty-ninth Connecticut Volunteers, and since the close of the war, has been prominent in the political and financial affairs of his native town and state. Her mother was also a Griswold, her parents being distantly related.

In 1886, she graduated from the Guilford High School, teaching a little, and, for a time, assisting her father in the bank of which he was then treasurer. During her school-days, she studied music with teachers of New Haven and New York, and spent one year in the New England Conservatory of Music of Boston, Mass., where her singing attracted special attention. At that time, her voice was of remarkable sweetness and power; but she always lacked the muscular vitality which is essential for achieving the greatest results in vocal music. A professional musician who knew her well, once remarked that her "voice would have been one of the great voices of the country, if she had had the physical strength to support it." To those that knew her in the early days, this will not seem a very extravagant estimate. The last time she sang in public, was in the Oratorio given by our Choir as the Christmas Praise Service of 1901.

In May, 1889, she was married to Edmund M. Vitnum, the pastor who had previously baptized her and received her into the church of which her father was treasurer. She began her married life in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where her husband had been settled several months as pastor of the First Congregational Church.

In November, 1891, Mr. and Mrs. Vitnum came to the pastorate of this church, and here they have since resided. In 1896, Mrs. Vitnum, desiring a broader culture, entered Iowa College as a freshman, and graduated with the class of 1900. She was a daughter of the American Revolution, and has served as President of the Woman's Home Missionary Union of Iowa. She was natural y of a nervous, somewhat restless temperament, and if, at times, she seemed unwise in attempting things beyond her strength, it should be remembered that the nervous strain of confinement and inactivity was often more wearing than the exhaustion from over-work.

From earliest childhood she has suffered from chronic heart trouble. Acute attacks, due to this cause, have increased in severity and frequency, especially during the last three years, and she has passed through illnesses when for months her recovery was doubtful. In the late spring, her strength failed rapidly; but she was able to accompany Mr. Vitnum to New Hampshire, soon after Commencement. July 15, he

left her with her parents in Connecticut, and returned to Grinnell. During the next two weeks she improved rapidly, and wrote glowing letters declaring she had not felt so well for years. July 31, she wrote a long letter full of hope and cheer to her husband, and had planned a ride to the seashore for the afternoon. At 3 p. m., the hour fixed for starting, she suffered an attack of heart trouble, but not a severe one. It passed away in two hours, leaving her weak and faint, though not worse than usual under similar circumstances. But she soon became drowsy, and by three o'clock the next morning, her sleep had become the slumber which knows no earthly waking.

To the many friends who have helped us during these troubles—and especially to those that have expressed sympathy by word or letter—Mr. Vitnum wishes to return assurance of appreciation and gratitude. We have often felt that we owed Mrs. Vitnum's prolonged life to the faithful skill of our Grinnell physicians. In one of her last letters she said, "How I wish I could see the dear doctor!" Had she remained near him, it is not improbable that her stay on earth might have been a few months longer; but under circumstances of great uncertainty, we have done what seemed best. She has gone to the land where the Good are always Strong.

ANNIE GRISWOLD VITNUM held a place in the hearts of her friends and in the life of the community, whose largeness and preciousness were scarcely realized until now that it is empty. Her manner and presence were so quiet and unassuming that even those who loved her best hardly did justice to her in their thoughts. As the power and sweetness of her voice in singing were far beyond what we would have thought possible from her frail and delicate form, the power of her personality far transcended its apparent importance. Her husband has lost a strong right hand. A most sweet and helpful companionship has been taken from her friends. The social activities from which the progress of her malady has gradually removed her, and to which she shall not now return, will be sorely missed in church and community. To one who watched her in her college course it seemed a type of her character and life. With quiet, unassuming dignity, she took her place among the students, a strong example, a guiding influence for the best things, a ready, cheerful and always helpful companion. So, now that we look upon her earthly life as a complete whole, we may thank God gladly for what she did and more for what she was; we may be happy with her that her time of weakness and suffering is past; we may rejoice with joy unspeakable that she has joined "the choir invisible"; and while we with sore hearts miss her sweet presence from our lives, we may with new courage, cheered by her victory, press toward the mark that she has attained for the prize that she has won.

CHARLES NOBLE.

IN MEMORIAM.

Annie Griswold Vittum.

DIED AUGUST 1ST, 1903.

"There is no death;
What seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian
Whose portal we call Death."

Into this larger life our dear friend entered on Saturday morning, August 1st, after thirty-six beautiful years of life on earth; beautiful years, notwithstanding the fact that the last were passed under the shadow of suffering and weakness; for to her friends it has seemed that pain and weariness have strengthened the natural sweetness of her character and given a growing tenderness of expression to her shining eyes. Her life has been beautiful, too, in her rare capacity for giving and receiving happiness, and so favorable have been the conditions for the exercise and development of this capacity that we can scarcely help thinking of her as, like "the blessed damozel," looking wistfully back from the portals of heaven upon the love and companionship she has left behind.

Eleven years Mrs. Vittum has lived among us as the wife of the pastor, of the Congregational Church and as far as failing health would permit, has used the opportunities of her position with such rare tact and wise discretion as to strengthen the work of the church and make loyal friends with all who knew her. Her trained and cultivated voice she freely and gladly used in the service of the church and community, in comforting the sorrowing and in giving pleasure to her friends. It always seemed to the writer that the most characteristic quality of her singing was, that she sang with her soul. The voice was but the outward audible expression of an inward melody in the heart.

For many years she was in charge of the infant class in the Sunday school, a position for which she was peculiarly fitted by her attractive personality, gentleness and patience.

She undertook and carried through the work in the college course with a perseverance that compelled the admiration of her friends who understood how seriously she was handicapped by impaired health.

There was an unusual combination of sweetness and strength, modesty and dignity, self distrust and efficiency in her character. She was connected with the work of the Woman's Home Missionary Union for several years, first as Secretary of Children's Work and afterward as President. In each position she showed such a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the work, such wisdom in planning and faithfulness in carrying out the plans that would have ensured success if she had been able to continue in the office.

We shall long miss her gentle presence but there is solace in thinking of her sweet sincerity, her many womanly traits which make it possible to say truthfully:

"None knew her but to love her,
None named her but to praise."

*

The following resolutions in regard to the death of Mrs. Vittum were drawn up by a committee from the Congregational church, adopted by the church last Sunday morning and telegraphed to Mr. Vittum.

"Resolved, That we assure our pastor of our tenderest sympathy and of our profound sense of our loss, as well as of yours, in the coronation of Mrs. Vittum. Also that we request the trustees to tender to you a vacation of such length as you may desire."