

SUNY College Cortland

Digital Commons @ Cortland

Francis J. Cheney (1891-1912) Documents

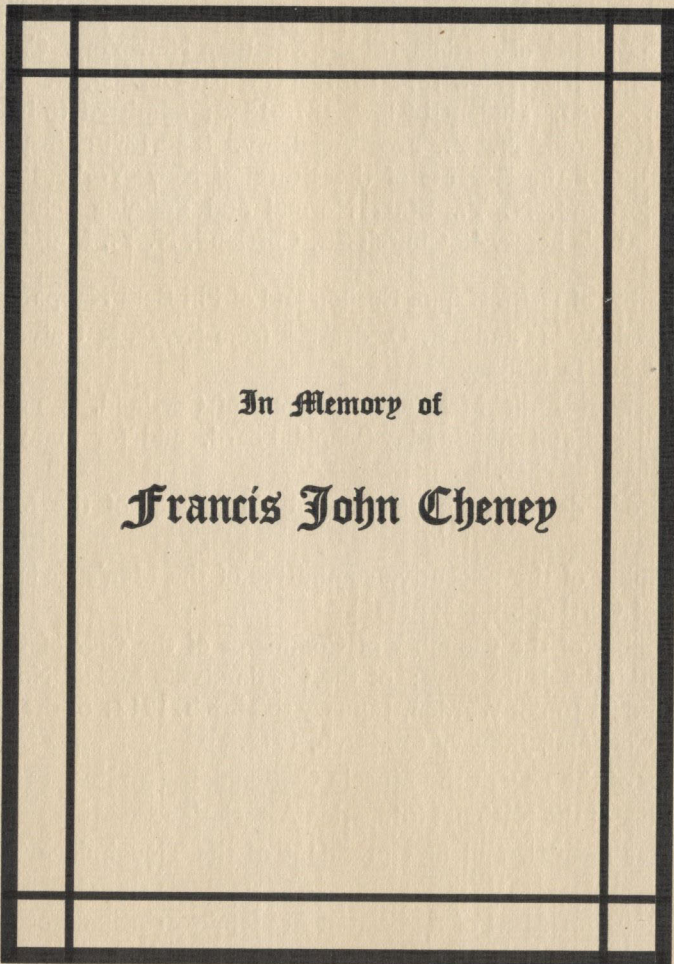
Francis J. Cheney (1891-1912)

1912

Memorial Program

State University of New York at Cortland

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/francischeney_documents



In Memory of

Francis John Cheney

Born in Warren, Pa., June 5, 1848, of Revolutionary ancestry; resided in Warren and in Delevan, Cattaraugus County, N. Y., until 1868; entered Genesee College in 1868; received the degree of A. B. with "Summa Cum Laude" in the first class graduated by Syracuse University 1872; professor of mathematics in Northern New York Conference Seminary, Antwerp, N. Y., 1872-1873; principal Dryden, N. Y., Union School, 1873-1880; student of law, 1878-1880; admitted to bar, 1880; principal Kingston, N. Y., Free Academy, 1880-1890; inspector of academies under the Regents of the State of New York, 1890-1891; principal Cortland, N. Y., State Normal and Training School, 1891-1912; died at his home, 45 Church St., Cortland, N. Y., March 9, 1912.

A member of Delta Kappa Epsilon and of Phi Beta Kappa.

Received A. M. and Ph. D. degrees from Syracuse University for advanced work in history.

Member of First Methodist Church of Cortland, a member of its official board and its Sunday-School board, and for many years a Sunday-School teacher.

In 1896 a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist church.

A member of the Executive committee of the Men's Federation of Churches of Cortland.

A member of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Cortland; of the Cortland Science Club; of the Cortlandville Lodge, No. 470, F. & A. M., and its Junior Warden, January to March, 1912; of the Board of Health of Cortland, January to March, 1912.

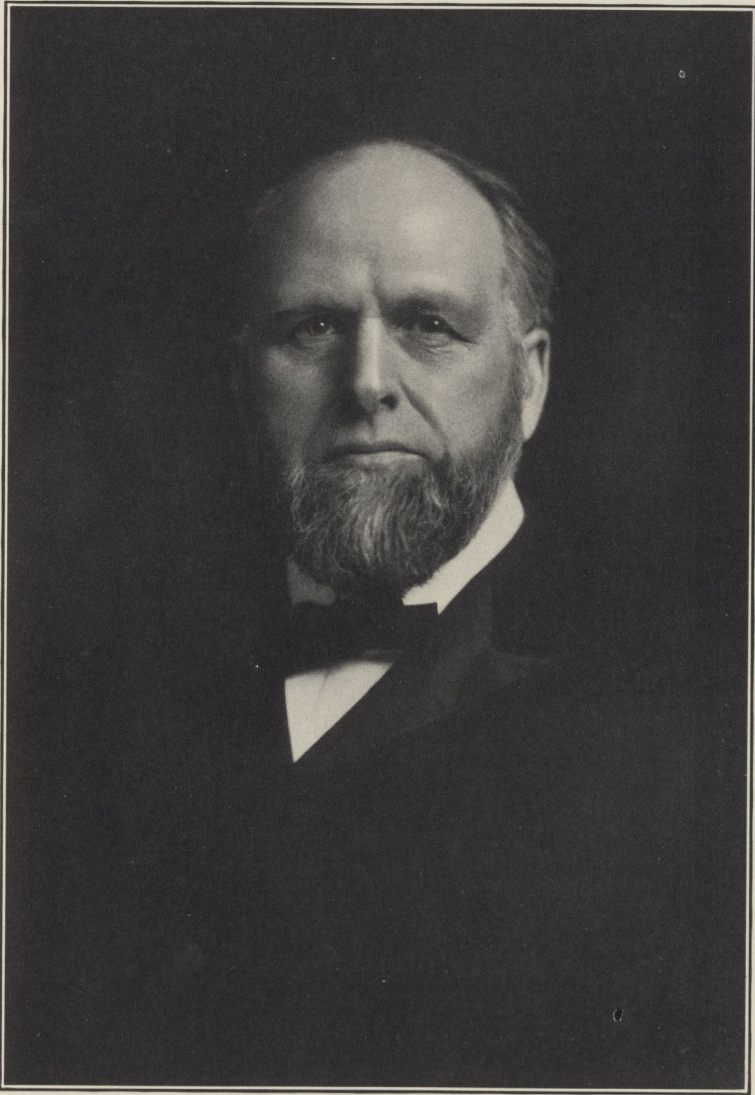
Orator of the Day at the Lincoln Centennial.

Member of the National Education Association.

Charter member and first president of the Tioughnioga Teachers' Council.

1890-1891 president of Associated Academic Principals of the State of New York.

An officer at various times of several educational organizations of the state.



FRANCIS JOHN CHENEY, A.M., Ph.D.

I like the man who faces what he must
 With steps triumphant and a heart of cheer;
 Who fights the daily battle without fear;
Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God; that somehow, true and just
 His plans work out for mortals.

—*Sarah K. Bolton.*

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

—*Robert Browning.*

WHAT greater evidence of the solid worth of a life well lived can be found than is found in the following confessions of indebtedness? The ultimate value of this little booklet is not that it pays suitable tribute to a noble man; but that it is a vivid, convincing testament to us of the surpassing value of living a life of noble manhood and efficient service.

The whole world has need of such a testament; and precious as will be the contents of these articles and letters to the hosts of Dr. Cheney's friends, it must be an inspiring assurance to every stranger wavering in doubt about the worthfulness of true-hearted, devoted, unselfish service.

If any man questions that "God's in His Heaven and all's right with the world," that bread cast upon the waters will return in due season, let him read the story of this life and then see its reflection as it comes back from the hearts of all these men and women. In these letters and articles we can easily detect the great variety of personalities, and yet we can quite as easily recognize the common source of all the thoughts and inspirations in the personality of Dr. Cheney. There is not a word or line but bears the stamp of spontaneity. We can not question that the same feelings pulsating in these expressions are potent in the conduct of those who write. They are abiding powers in the characters of individuals, and were developed by the consistent, forceful example and simple, clear precepts of Dr. Cheney.

And so the Normal News Board of Managers offer this issue first to the alumni of the school and friends of Dr. Cheney as a treasure volume of cherished memories, but secondly to everyone who may read it as an unanswerable proof that life is worth living when nobly lived.

In the midst of life is the beautiful;
In the midst of the beautiful is the good;
In the midst of the good is God,
The Eternal One.

Dr. Cheney, the Teacher

In the picture of Dr. Cheney that is most familiar to us he is at his office desk busy with one or another of the thousand cares of the school. The business of the school was well attended to. The correspondence was kept up to the minute. He knew exactly the condition of every part of the building and its needs. He kept in mind exactly the financial condition and knew instantly what the school could afford in the way of equipment and what it could not. He knew the students and where they lived and the conditions surrounding them and whom he needed to be concerned about. There was no procrastinating, no differentiating of duties as pleasant or disagreeable. When something to do appeared it was done and done at once. The day's work might be long or short. It was generally long and arduous. Relaxation came only when it was done. But he was never too busy to turn at once without a trace of irritation and listen patiently to the need of any student or teacher and respond cheerfully and with very effective help. Therein was the strength of the man. He was strong enough to do his own work well and strong enough to be patient and kind and helpful though interrupted in his work more times in a day than most men in a month.

We remember next, we who were his associates, his independence, his erect manliness. He leaned on no one. He bore his own burdens. He accepted full responsibility. He did not jump at his conclusions, he got all the light he could, he accepted advice and suggestion, but when he came to his decisions they were his own and he asked no one to bear or share the responsibility. And herein was one of the wonderful things about him, that he, so strong, so self-reliant, so efficient, so conscious of his ability to meet and master every situation, could at the same time be so patient and considerate and charitable, so willing and able to make allowance for shortcoming in others. Of course he valued efficiency. He knew and valued good work and results, but he valued, so it seemed to us, good intent and right spirit more.

One who was his pupil and afterwards his associate in the school has said of him: "He required nothing of others that he did not require of himself, and he kept the rules not only in school time and when others were at hand to see, but after school and during vacation and when there was none to see." We can all of us think of hundreds of instances. Away back in the seventies when he began to teach he gave up absolutely the use of tobacco and never used it again, because he would not allow himself an indulgence or a habit that would not be safe and right for any of his pupils. All teachers have occasion at times to ask pupils not to cut corners, not to tread on lawns, to keep to the walks. Night and day, winter and summer, school time and vacation he kept the walks, he refrained from cutting corners, he went up and he came down the prescribed stairs. Whether he was in a hurry or not made no difference.

Herein again appears the great heartedness of the man. He did not even in his own mind criticize other teachers who failed to impose on themselves an equally rigorous course of conduct.

He had no vanity. He was not self-centered. He was no egotist. We all remember his skill and force as a speaker. Whether his words were premeditated or spontaneous he so spoke as to make his views prevail. We have heard him speak a thousand times and almost always remarkably well, but of course not always uniformly well. But he never appeared to have the slightest curiosity as to how his words impressed others. He never by direct question or indirectly tried to find out what others thought of the performance. So far as that sort of thing was concerned he forgot the things that lay behind and looked forward. He forgot himself and looked out. His interest was all for the cause.

But if he was free from personal vanity he was proud enough of his school. He gave to his pupils and to his associates in large measure his interest and affection, his loyalty and pride. He spent himself unsparingly for them. He counted no effort in their interests too great. If ever he felt that he should give criticism or reproof he did not shrink from the duty. He delivered his message in entirely intelligible words though with no lack of kindness to the persons themselves who needed it. But behind their backs he stood up for them. He fought their battles. He was loyal. Time and again when everybody else on the faculty was ready to give up the fight in the case of some unsatisfactory student Dr. Cheney refused to give him up. He could not bear to have the word failure written across the record or the career of any student. And usually his faith was justified. His students had a large place in his heart and they always kept their place. He never forgot them. He followed them through life with his affection and interest, with sympathy for any sorrow or adversity that might come, with joy in their success and good work.

The forty years during which Dr. Cheney taught and especially the twenty years of his principalship in this school have been years of educational unrest. The old curriculum, old ideals and standards and methods have been challenged, new studies and aims and ideals have demanded their place.

Among educators some are all for the new, others all for the old. But Dr. Cheney was both conservative and liberal. He loved literature. He loved culture. He loved labor, too, and believed in its dignity, and he didn't take any stock in the idea that the kind of education that makes a man's mind more interesting and worth more to himself unfitted him for industrial pursuits. He believed that the old classical education trained the intelligence, developed the powers, made strong men. At the same time he was sympathetic and open-minded in his attitude to the new ideas. He believed in nature study for young and old and he was himself a close observer and a lover of nature. He believed in the enrichment of the curriculum and in hand training. He believed that the schools should be reorganized so as to train for efficiency in industrial pursuits. He did what he could to make the teachers graduating from this school go out prepared to do their part for the realization of these ends. At the same time he was insistent that well-tried standards and methods and studies should not be generally abandoned

until something equally well considered, something that had passed through the experimental stage, was ready to take its place.

All this and much more might be said of Dr. Cheney's educational creed, but, after all, that is not what Dr. Cheney stands for in our minds. That lover of youth and mirth, of fun and good fellowship, of truth and noble character, can not be described by explaining his attitude towards current educational problems.

We all recognize that he was a great teacher. There is one quality which is essential to a great teacher, which every great teacher that ever lived has had, without which no teacher is great. It is the quality of moral earnestness. We American teachers are prone to feel too lightly our obligation to train the characters of our pupils. A name very frequently mentioned as an example of a great teacher is that of Arnold of Rugby. He was great because of his own noble character, his own devotion to truth and duty, his own active interest in and part in the movements of his day, and especially because of his consuming desire that the boys of his school should go into life also equipped with noble character, with love of truth, with devotion to duty, with desire to do their part. He was great because he succeeded in communicating that moral earnestness to his boys.

It is in exactly that respect that Dr. Cheney was great as a teacher. He had intense moral earnestness. He loved noble character and truth and devotion to duty. We all know how willing he was to perform and how faithfully he performed every public service that it was possible for him to perform. He was anxious to do his part. And he was anxious above all things that that should be the attitude of his pupils towards life, that honestly, faithfully, willingly, in love of truth and right, they should do their part. The work, the character, the influence of the hundreds and thousands of his pupils who are now active in the work of the world, these constitute the test of his greatness as a teacher.

No account of Dr. Cheney can be considered at all complete that does not recognize his deep, sincere, religious faith. It was a large element in his life. His faith was the secret of his great faithfulness. He desired earnestly that his students might have that secret of power. Theological attitude, connection with a particular church, he cared nothing for; but the reality of a living faith seemed to him all important.

To the end he kept the faith.

W. A. Cornish.

Dr. Cheney in College

Francis J. Cheney was graduated from Syracuse University in June, 1872. The class roll consisted of eighteen men and one woman, and was the first to be graduated at Syracuse. It was almost equally divided between the classical and the science courses, the latter predominating by a majority of one. Six members of the class could apparently have completed their course in 1871, but evidently preferred to protract it a year longer and get their degree direct from the new university. In 1871 there was but a single graduate at the last commencement of Genesee College.

Nine of the nineteen members belonged to the Mystic Society, which was speedily merged into a chapter of the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity in the new environment. Among these was Mr. Cheney.

He was one of the most active and energetic members of the class. He entered Genesee College from Delevan, N. Y., in 1868; came with the institution on its removal to Syracuse, and was one of those who rejoiced at the larger service and finer outlook of the college which he had deliberately chosen to be his alma mater.

The class of 1872 was noted for the excellent quality of its membership. The men were in earnest to make the very most of their college course, and the years that have passed since they left the university halls to make their way in the world have witnessed the decided success that has attended its members. Not one of them has failed to do good and lasting work. To mention a few: Rev. Dr. Francis D. Blakeslee has been active and distinguished in educational work since he left the university; Rev. Dr. George H. Dryer is eminent as a historian; Rev. Dr. W. F. Steele is a great professor in a theological seminary; Prof. Roland K. Keyser and Prof. Warren Mann have had successful careers in educational work; Dr. John E. Weaver is no less successful in the practice of medicine. The other members have all brought honor to the institution that graduated them.

Such was Mr. Cheney's student environment in college. Doubtless others will speak of his own great life career and celebrate his success. But my purpose is merely to call attention to the fact of the constant stimulus to great endeavor by fellow students of such earnest purpose and such high ideals. Mr. Cheney rejoiced in his association with men of this high character.

The course of study lacked the variety of the present curriculum. The freshman and sophomore years offered no elective privileges, while about one-half the work of the junior and senior years was required. Dr. Cheney took the classical course in which there was required much work in Latin and Greek, than which there are no better educational instruments for cultural purposes. His devotion to these subjects ex-

plains his zeal for the classics in his entire career as teacher and administrator. They were probably more competently taught also in the schools than any other subject, except possibly mathematics.

In the freshman year were to be found also Ancient History, Physiology and Hygiene, Rhetoric and Mathematics. The last was also required throughout the sophomore year along with German, Physics and History. While in the Junior year French was the required modern language, and Astronomy, Logic, Psychology and Chemistry found place. In the upper years the required studies included English literature, Geology, History of Philosophy, Christian Evidences, etc., etc.

The faculty of the new university was small but select. Dr. Daniel Steele was the administrative officer—a man of excellent ability. He ended his connection with the college, at which he served as chancellor, with the graduation of the class of 1872. Dr. John R. French, later dean, was a great teacher of mathematics. Professor Coddington had won fame as a Greek scholar. Dr. Charles W. Barnett was a greatly beloved member of the faculty, holding the department of history and logic; Dr. J. J. Brown was in charge of the science work.

The writer entered college at Syracuse as a sophomore at the same time that Mr. Cheney entered as a senior. He can not recall personal relations with any other member of the class except Mr. Cheney. But the latter was a genial man who took much interest in underclassmen, and his attention to one sophomore at least brought to him one life-long admirer and friend. Mr. Cheney was an excellent student and fully earned the degree of A.B. that was conferred on him at graduation and the subsequent degrees of A.M. and Ph.D. These later degrees were earned in the department of history under Professor Charles J. Little.

Mr. Cheney was so well fitted for his life work that it must always seem a pity that his useful life could not have had a much longer time in which to reach and benefit the lives of others.

Frank Smalley, '74.

And though you be done to the death, what then?
If you battled the best you could,
If you played your part in the world of men,
Why, the Critic will call it good.
Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,
And whether he's slow or spry,
It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,
But only, how did you die?

—*Edmund Vance Cooke.*

Dr. Cheney and the Local Board of Managers

Relations between the head of an educational institution and its Board of Managers have never been more cordial and harmonious than those which existed between Dr. Cheney and the Local Board of the Cortland Normal School throughout the twenty-one years during which they worked together. He was elected to the principalship after the rupture which terminated the strained relations which had existed between the board and his predecessor, and at a time when his every word and act were closely watched, and when any deviation from an absolutely straight course would have brought criticism and friction. Yet from the very outset he commanded a confidence and respect which grew steadily till the day of his death, and he did this not by making it an object to be sought for, but by striving to do his duty in every particular as he saw it, and by being at all times frank, straightforward and manly.

I have never known a man more absolutely single-minded and truthful than Dr. Cheney. During his long career as principal I cannot recall an instance where he ever varied a hair's breadth from absolute verity. Guile, deceit, underhanded methods, scheming and plotting were foreign to his nature. When his opinion was asked, it was always freely and modestly given, even when he had reason to believe that it might not coincide with the opinion of a majority of the board. But he felt that when he was asked to say what he thought about any matter, his real convictions and not trimming and hedging were wanted. The board came to rely absolutely on what he told them, and to know that he was never openly saying one thing and secretly doing another. In short he was always true to himself, and he illustrated the truth of the well-known lines:

"This above all—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

It has been said that no man can be true who is not courageous. The liar is always the coward. Dr. Cheney had the courage of his convictions—not blatantly or offensively, but firmly and modestly—and he conceded to others at all times the same freedom of judgment which he claimed for himself.

Dr. Cheney had unusual administrative and executive ability, he was always abreast of his work, the financial records of the school were accurate to a cent, and he was able at any time to tell exactly how everything stood and what was probable in the way of necessary expenses up to the close of the school year. He was careful and economical, believing that the money of the state was not to be squandered, but that it constituted a trust to be honestly and faithfully administered.

He was never "bumpy" or opinionated. His chief desire was the welfare of the school, and any aid from any person in this direction he

always cheerfully welcomed. He sunk himself in his work, and the realization of this fact gave him the affectionate regard of everyone who came to know fully the man and his motives.

He was kind-hearted, liberal and deeply interested in the success and well-being of his students, and the record of what he did for many of them in the way of pecuniary assistance would be a most interesting one. He did nothing to be known of men, or to have credit from them, but acted always quietly and without observation; and when circumstances made any of his good deeds public, he was embarrassed by the publicity. The board with which he acted could not but feel kindly toward a principal whose interest in his students was so genuine and substantial.

Dr. Cheney also commanded the confidence of the local board because he was always loyal to his force of teachers. It was a delight to him to bear witness to their success and to commend their work, and any criticism which he felt compelled to make was made regretfully and as mildly as truth would permit. He was equally loyal to the board. In fact loyalty to every person and every cause to which he believed loyalty was due was a part of his nature.

He was never sour, never morose, never resentful or malicious or vindictive. His cheerfulness and cordiality and heartiness made intercourse with him always pleasant, and they were unstudied and spontaneous.

A loyal, cordial, faithful, frank and honorable co-worker, a true, kindly, thoughtful and considerate friend, a Christian gentleman, an honest and unselfish servant of the institution which he loved and of the state of which he was proud to be a citizen, the years of association with him will be a pleasant memory to every member of the Board of Managers which recommended his appointment and which never had cause to regret its action.

William H. Clark,
Chm'n Local Board of Managers.

He gladly greets the coming years;
They bring him added skill.
He feels no ruth for the loss of youth;
His goal is nearer still;
And only this he asks of fate:
That he may keep his dower
Of strength and will, and labor's skill
Unto his life's last hour.

— *Ninette M. Lowator.*

Dr. Cheney as a Citizen

No tribute to Dr. Cheney can be complete which fails to refer to the varied and useful service which he gave to the community in which he lived. It was not ordinary. It was conspicuous, and, better still, it was effective and lasting. His life work was that of the teacher and educator. He was at the head of a large institution whose many requirements and welfare demanded hard and unremitting work. How well his duty was performed here, how enduring his precept and example, is shown by the appreciations which have come from all places where his professional and educational work were known.

Here in Cortland, however, his influence was exerted in countless ways during the more than twenty years he was the principal of our school. In his life those years were the years of his maturity, of his rare vigor—of his fruit and flower. That which was within him—fine manhood, talent, acquirement, compelling ways, the ability to guide and lift—was not reserved for the school alone, but was freely and modestly given as well to the town at large. He was a many-sided man, and what he had, he gave, thereby adding to the sum of our progress. As the years went he became more and more a part of our city life in all that looked towards its welfare and improvement. As we reflect upon it we wonder how there could have been time—even though there was the inclination—for so much outside of his required work. This he never slighted, yet at all times (but more and more with the increasing years) Dr. Cheney was found engaged in various public activities. He was always alert and interested at the time of public need and he seldom declined to render any public service—never in fact if it was urgent and vital.

At our public gatherings, social or otherwise, he was always wanted and contributed to their success with cheerful and serious word. He constantly sought more knowledge—and on widely differing subjects outside of his daily work—and without show, he was ever willing to give to others of the learning he had acquired. In the instances where he was a member of any organization he was a working member, doing more than his share and mindful of the success of the organization itself. He was not content to do that which was assigned to him alone, but lent aid and encouragement to those with whom he was associated. From its organization to the time of his death he was a member of the Science Club. Members recall the fine papers he read there, but they remember as well his rare interest in the work of others and constant devotion to the progress and success of the Club itself.

His interest in good City government is well remembered, and he took a commanding part in bringing about many a desired reform. This, on occasions, drew him into what we call local politics, to some extent involved contention and strife; but while he spoke and acted fear-

lessly, he did not show narrow partisanship. He fought in a manner so fairly, that no lasting bitterness was aroused and in the end he won widespread respect. He was a citizen who worked for good public rule with a singleness of aim. He was attached to the moral and religious welfare of all who surrounded him and he participated in all good works. He was faithful to his own personal convictions, but deeply and sincerely respected those of others. He hated bigotry and nothing hurt him more than a charge of narrowness of belief or view. He loved justice and opposed oppression. He was touched by sentiment, and filled with patriotism. He was attached to our institutions—deeply so—and nothing ever shook his faith in their permanency.

In short he was in all essential things, of us and for us, interested in all our enterprises and endeavors, encouraging all proper efforts, friendly and helpful.

The remarkable thing about it all is that though his activities were varied and his work as a citizen oftentimes performed in the face of opposition when the public mind was stirred, yet throughout the many years he did not create personal animosities, or in any way so act as to lessen or destroy his usefulness. His influence and example did not wane, but steadily grew and was greatest when he died. The reason for it was that while firm, he was fair-minded, hopeful and filled with forward looking thoughts. There was no display of hostility or anything that left a sting. Such activity indicated a strong aggressive man, but there was no harsh side. When deeply stirred one could almost see the temperance and restraint of the man underlying it all. He struck not with passion, but with engrossing conviction, and out of any contention he merged with unaltered hope.

We have lost a citizen of the best and most useful type—lost him just when he had the most to give. The void so suddenly made and in so many places of usefulness to our whole people—is not easily measured. No single person can readily fill it. We must be content to think we have known such a man—and known him to our lasting benefit. He was one who made precious contributions to the matters of his day, and left the world the better because of his life.

Edwin Duffey.

I want to give to others hope and faith,
I want to do all that the Master saith;
I want to live aright from day to day;
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

—*Anonymous.*

Dr. Cheney and the Church

To the church of which he was a member, Francis John Cheney was unflinching and unwaveringly faithful from the day he stood at the altar of the church and took upon himself the vows of church membership to the day of his death, and to it, he devoted some of the best thought and best energies of an exceedingly active and vigorous manhood. He was as regular as a clock in his attendance upon the public services of the church, both morning and evening and in his place as a teacher in the Sunday-school, and almost as regular in his attendance at the Thursday evening prayer meeting.

But to say that he was faithful, does not half tell the story; he was more than that; he was tremendously effective. He was no ordinary church member. That was because of what he was and what he did; because of his ability and the way in which he used that ability. There was no department of church work which did not feel the force of his influence and was not stimulated by his touch. There were so many things that he could do and do them well. If you wanted a layman to offer prayer in public, you could call on Dr. Cheney. If you wanted a man to present the financial budget to the congregation, there was no man in the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Cortland quite equal to Dr. Cheney. If you wanted a man to deliver an address at a District Conference, a Brotherhood or Epworth League, or Sunday-School Convention, before an Electoral Conference, or in any gathering of the church, you naturally thought of Dr. Cheney. If you wanted a man to respond to a toast at a men's banquet with a combination of wit and wisdom, and good and well-told stories, Dr. Cheney was just the man.

As a member of the Official Board and the Sunday-School Board, he was alert, quick of decision, ready to speak and to act, resourceful, wise in his suggestions, and yet not dictatorial. He would contend for his position or his method, if necessary, but if the majority went against him, which, to be sure, seldom happened, he fell in line and did his part just the same.

In the Sunday-School, his extensive and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, his faculty for the interpretation of the Scriptures, his practical application of the truths of the Scriptures, and his fondness for and personal interest in the members of his class, made him an ideal teacher. If all of the Normal girls, who have been in his class, could be brought together and could be allowed to speak, I am sure they would say, "Truly that is so." And then as from time to time, the superintendent called upon him to review the lessons of a quarter, his speeches were models of fluency and force.

Into the meetings of the Official Board, the Sunday-School Board, and the other organizations within the church, with which he was connected, he carried his good cheer and sense of humor, and thereby often

enlivened what would otherwise have been a dull business session, and sometimes relieved a strained situation, and put everyone at his ease. Such situations do occasionally arise even in the church.

He was generous in his financial support of the church, but none of us measures him by his gifts, but rather think of the giver. He gave himself to the church, and a Christian man in the wealth of his manhood, is worth more than all the money locked in all the vaults of all the banks of this rich country, worth more than all the gold and silver and copper and coal stored in the mines of the world, worth more than all the diamonds already cut and polished plus those still resting on the diamond fields of South Africa. Having given himself to the church, he never withdrew the offering. He was loyal to the core. He championed and defended the church of his choice, its doctrines and its polity, sometimes jokingly rallying the representatives of other churches on the advantages of the appointment system over the calling system. He always had the best interests of the church at heart. He stood for co-operation and harmony. The pastor, the superintendent of the Sunday-School, and, indeed, all of the officers of the church found in him an unfailing friend; frank but not censorious, cordial but not critical, kind and helpful. He was a leader in the church. If anyone had wished it otherwise, it could not have been otherwise for he had all of the qualities of leadership of which no man could rob him. "Leaders are born, not made." But he did not assume or desire to be a church boss.

His love for his brethren in the laity and the ministry was strong. The laymen who have worked side by side with him through the years have learned to see back of his intellectual qualities, the warmth of his heart qualities. I can speak for the ministry. A little more than a year ago when he was speaking at a District Conference in behalf of the permanent fund for superannuated preachers in the Central New York Conference, I heard him utter such a glowing eulogy of the character and accomplishments and achievements of the ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as is seldom equalléd. That eulogy was born of love. He took us all into his heart. He would fight for his convictions with a positiveness and determination manifest in his manner, in every gesture, and in his voice; but there was no bitterness in his heart.

Although, as I have suggested, he was intensely loyal to the church of his choice, yet no man I have ever known, could more truly say with Bishop Simpson, "I live to make my own church a power in the land while I live to love every other church that exalts our Christ." Scarcely ever did he conclude his prayer in the mid-week prayer meeting without asking the blessing of God on his own church and then adding, "And bless all of the other churches of this goodly city." That was the sincere prayer of his heart. He desired the prosperity of every Christian church. He was always ready for a union service or a union evangelistic effort. From the beginning of the organization of the Men's Federation of Cortland, he was a member of the executive committee, and the Federation is the banding together of the men of the various churches for the good of the community and the promotion of righteousness. Loyal to the core, though he was, to the church in which he was born and reared, at whose altar he stood, and to which he gave time and money and energy, he was not bigoted, but catholic in his spirit and sympathies.

He was a splendid representative of the church as he mingled with those outside of the church. He was a man among men; said the things

which other men say so far as it was consistent for a Christian to say them; did the things which other men do so far as it was consistent for a Christian to do them; went to the places where other men go so far as it was consistent for a Christian to go to them; was "All things to all men," in the sense that Paul was "All things to all men," but he never sacrificed the character of a Christian or soiled the reputation of a Christian.

In the fall of 1895, the laymen of the Central New York Conference honored him by an election to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, the following May. At that time, the General Conference had not yet granted equal representation to the laymen with the ministers and the Central New York Conference was entitled to only two delegates. Now it is entitled to five. You can readily see that to be elected one out of two delegates meant more than it now means to be elected one out of five. This showed the esteem in which Dr. Cheney was held throughout the borders of the Central New York Conference. He honored the church, and the church honored him. Outside of his own family, there is no place where the loss sustained by his death is more keenly felt than in the church. If I could bare the hearts of the members of the church, to which he has belonged for a score of years, it would be an eulogy which no words could pronounce. Our only comfort is in the fact that having been "A faithful and useful member of the church militant, he has been called to the fellowship of the church triumphant which is without fault before the throne of God."

C. M. Eddy,

Pastor of the First Methodist Church of Cortland.

"His memory was the magazine and hoard,
Where claims and grievances, from year to year
And confidences and complaints were stored;
From dame and knight, from damsel, boor and peer
Loved by his friends and trusted by his Lord,
A generous courtier, secret and sincere,
Adviser-general to the whole community,
He served his friend, but watched his opportunity."

A Morning Thought

What if some morning, when the stars were paling,
And the dawn whitened, and the East was clear,
Strange peace and rest fell on me from the presence
Of a benignant Spirit standing near.

And I should tell him, as he stood beside me:
"This is our Earth—most friendly Earth, and fair;
Daily its sea and shore through sun and shadow
Faithful it turns, robed in its azure air.

"There is blest living here, loving and serving,
And quest of truth and serene friendships dear;
But stay not, Spirit! Earth has one destroyer—
His name is Death: Flee, lest he find thee here!"

And what if then, while the still morning brightened,
And freshened in the elm the Summer's breath,
Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel
And take my hand and say, "My name is Death?"

—*Edward Roland Sill.*

Dr. Cheney and the Students

[Delivered at the Memorial Exercises held in Normal Hall]

The topic which has been assigned me for this occasion is one which has so many phases—so many sides—that I speak now with a well-defined feeling of my inability to do it justice. It is a difficult thing to measure the influence which any good teacher exerts upon the people with whom he comes in contact, and it becomes particularly difficult when that teacher is Dr. Cheney.

The guiding and directing influences which are brought into our lives by teachers differ from many other influences, in that they are permanent. They become part of ourselves, follow us wherever we may go, and, strengthened by whatever practical good has come to us through them, they pass on to others. A pebble cast into a pool sets up waves which spread in circles from one point, ever widening, until they are lost to view. So Doctor's influence went out, spreading everywhere, and bringing a sense of uplift to everyone whom it reached.

It was characteristic of Doctor Cheney that from the day a student entered the Normal until he graduated at the end of his course, he had full claim to Doctor's personal interest. To stimulate that student to his best endeavor, to the attainment of better things than before, to a broader, more useful activity was his constant aim, and none know better than his former students the success that followed his attempt.

His interest went beyond that—following his students in their work in the professions chosen, proud of every achievement, encouraging by a word now and again, until they could but feel that he was a true friend. He had an ever-increasing pride in the successes of his students—individually or collectively—and this pride in them and in the reputation of the school inevitably begot a similar pride in their hearts.

Preeminently a scholar, nevertheless his interests were broad enough to take in all student activities with ready understanding. He sent athletic teams out against other teams with a spirit of "win if you can; but if not, lose like gentlemen." In his opinion, victory was never the highest aim of the contest. In sport, as in all else, he stood for honesty and fair play. The fraternities had in him an ally and a friend, and it is largely due to his active interest in their affairs that they have remained free from the many objectionable features of ordinary secondary school organizations of similar character. He saw every phase of a student's life, and his words of wise counsel were always readily given.

Doctor Cheney was a stern man in many ways, but his severity was always tempered by justice. I never knew him to give a hasty or irrational decision. His reproofs were not based upon impulse, but upon a thorough examination of facts. He never condemned unheard. His

aim was correction, not censure. I once heard it said of him that he was altruistic enough to look beyond the present and say not "What is easiest for me to do in this case?" but, "What is best for this student?" His attitude almost invariably sent the student from the office with a new point of view and a determination to pursue a new course.

But were I to sum up in one composite whole the qualities which led to Doctor Cheney's success, I should say that it was his true, sympathetic understanding of student life that made him so well loved by all in the school. No other quality or possession insures successful dealings with men and women as sympathetic contact. People follow a rich man for what they can get out of him; they follow the noted out of curiosity; the intellectual genius out of admiration. But these men can lead them only a certain distance, while a man like Dr. Cheney, who is their friend, can lead them to the ends of the earth. Why? Because they trust in his heart, in his motives. They know him to be unselfish. They know it because they have come in contact with his true self, the inherent manhood that captivates whomsoever it touches. Doctor knew the road over which the lives of his pupils passed. He knew its beginning and its ending, its rough and hard places, its pitfalls; and his knowledge was always used to make that road easier for all in his charge. He was constant, consistent, and we all felt drawn to him as flowers are drawn toward the sun. He was our friend, with a true, frank, manly, unselfish friendship. He himself has passed, but his influence shall live on and on, reflected again and again, forming garden spots in the desolate places of many lives:

"He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one with them;
His life was gentle and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world:

"This was a man."

Charles T. Lanigan, '13.

"The tomb is but the gateway to an eternity of opportunity."

—*Anonymous.*

Personal Reminiscences and Tributes

Former Pupils

"I loved Dr. Cheney very much and I always knew where I had a true friend. I was nothing but a child when I came to Cortland, and I realize now how much the noble things which Dr. Cheney said to me and to the student body, have helped to make me better than I would otherwise have been. I never should have remained there in the beginning had he not looked after me so closely those first few weeks.

"I remember hearing him say one evening in a meeting of the Christian Union that we should feel when we lost those for whom we cared here, that our eternity was so much the richer. I only hope that I may grow to have the strong faith which was revealed in his life among his students."

"My most esteemed friend and teacher at the Dryden School of 1876."

"Somehow he seemed so permanently a part of the life of Cortland and so thoroughly identified with everything that contributed to the public weal, that we are entirely unable to picture it all without him."

"I came to love Dr. Cheney as a man because of his big-hearted interest in all of us who came to be taught of him. I felt close to him personally because of his interest in me, his wise counsel to me, and his loyal support of me. Cortland will not be Cortland without the Doctor."

"I often think of the many kindly acts done by Dr. Cheney for me when I was a little girl in school."

"I am a better teacher and a finer woman because of him, and I am trying to point my pupils into the way he used to guide us. It has been a long time since I was graduated from Cortland, but I can see his kindly face and extended hand yet, as he reached through the crowd at an N. E. A. meeting in Boston."

“The doctor was very dear to me and I always felt he had a warm spot in his heart for me. I wasn’t the best boy in school by any means, but I used to tell him exactly what I had done and he always treated me so kindly—just like a father. I believe I went to see him every time I have been in Cortland since I graduated.”

“Our dear Dr. Cheney was like a father to me and only a month ago when I took baby to the Normal, Doctor called him his little grandson, for he said, ‘You know you are one of my daughters.’ He was always so kind, thoughtful and sincere to every one of us. We knew where we could always find a friend.”

“Dr. Cheney was the true, loyal friend of us all. I felt that just as much the last time I saw him, so shortly before he went away, as when I left school twelve years ago.”

“Everyone of the hundreds of alumni, who have, in the last twenty-one years, been graduated from the Cortland Normal, feels that one of our best and truest friends has gone from our midst; yet each life will be the better and the nobler because of dear Dr. Cheney’s influence.”

“I, too, have lost a tried and valued friend. His cheery greeting when we met at Syracuse this winter will remain in my memory.”

“Dr. Cheney’s life has been a long influence for good and so many will miss him even though we met him only at long intervals.”

“Dr. Cheney as my former principal and teacher was always most considerate and kind to me and I feel that in his death I have lost a good friend.”

“Among the large number who are now mourning the loss of a dear friend I believe I can say that to me he was one of a few men upon whom I felt always at liberty to call for aid, knowing it would be cheerfully and gladly given. Many feel a sense of sorrow which is due to the appreciation which we had for the man. He said to me nearly two years ago

that he hoped to go while still in the harness for he would dread a period of seeming uselessness. His career has indeed been one of action.”

“Mr. —— and I recall many of Dr. Cheney’s kindnesses. The beautiful, helpful letter which he wrote Dean Leonard regarding our son, when he entered Syracuse University, will always remain a sacred memory.”

“Though it is many years since I was a student under Dr. Cheney, it stands out as one of the pleasant and beneficial times of my life and I remember and feel his kindness, sympathy and wisdom as though it were yesterday. He was a man whom one was richer for having known.”

“For years, when I was in school and afterwards, the Doctor has stood to me for sterling integrity and upright manhood, and I feel a personal loss in a loyal friend and teacher.”

“Notwithstanding the fact that there were many other graduates of the Normal, he never seemed to forget me. One of my most valued treasures is a letter published in the Cortland Standard, which he wrote to the board of education of —— without my knowledge and which without a doubt secured for me the position I was seeking. When I went to thank him, his reply was so kindly and helpful that I shall never forget the incident. But that was only one of many instances of helpfulness. I had only to make known my wants to be sure of all the assistance he could render. His whole life, as one looks back upon it, is an inspiration. It seems to quicken one’s desire to make the most of himself and be of the greatest use to the community in which he lives and to the people with whom he comes in contact.”

“He was one who loved us much and whom we felt was always willing to help us over hard places. I have often thought how I entered the Normal with very little preparation and I am sure if it had not been for Dr. Cheney’s personal influence and encouragement I should never have finished. From the very first I felt that Dr. Cheney was a dear and true friend of mine, ever anxious for my success.”

“We all mourn, we of his Normal family, for he did guard us so kindly and lead us so wisely through our course. I am sure I shall never forget

his influence and the helpful talks he gave us—talks which I valued then and still prize more and more. He still lives and not in Heaven alone, if we, his students, do our duty; if we live up to the ideal set for us and the inspiration given us by our dear principal.”

“Dr. Cheney has been to this part of the state what a candle is in the darkness, and has ever done what the candle does—given his very self that he might give light, and it has not been in vain.”

“I may be childish, yet nowhere have I met men and women in after life who measure up to the standard of perfection as those staunch teachers of my early youth at the Cortland Normal. I have often thanked God for being led to that institution. And above all others, after fifteen years have passed into eternity, I see Doctor Cheney who encouraged me to stay in school when poor health suggested withdrawal.”

“Vacant indeed is the place that Dr. Cheney so ably and efficiently filled and the thoughts of Our Normal without Our Principal are unbearable to the students who had the honor to be in his school.

“As we look back on our two happy years of Normal life, we see Dr. Cheney in his office. Never too weary to listen to a complaining pupil, never too busy to give needed counsel, never too tired to help the needy, he met us all with his cordial smile. Rich and poor alike received justice, and we all had a share in his good will.

“We who left school with his parting advice ringing in our ears, now realize what the pupils who are to come, have missed in not knowing him.

“We have always had a deep affection for Dr. Cheney. Personally, among my teachers there is not one who has so exemplified all the high ideals toward which he guided us.

“We sincerely mourn the loss of a dear, kind friend, but rejoice that it was our privilege to have known him.”

“I think that I never appreciated nor admired him more than I did that evening at the New York banquet when, burying his own deep sorrow over the message that had just reached him, he bore himself with such marvelous self-control lest any touch of sadness might mar that joyous occasion. And yet he could but have felt an abiding satisfaction as he witnessed the fruits of his long years of labor in the achievements, as well as the loyalty of so many of those who had been his pupils.”

“Too much cannot be said in eulogy of Dr. Cheney, who was so thoroughly loved and appreciated by students and alumni as well as by

the public at large. His kindly Christian spirit, and the strong stand which he always took for truth and righteousness, will cause him to be long remembered by the community in which he lived.

"It is a great pleasure to think that I had the opportunity of speaking to Dr. Cheney at the Alumni banquet this winter. It would have been a source of grief to me, if I had been prevented from receiving the last kind word of greeting from him who always was so thoroughly interested in the after lives of his students.

"It seems that it was indeed to such men as Dr. Cheney to whom Pericles referred in the following terms: 'For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous and good men, not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in other lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not in stone, but in the hearts of men.'"

"He was strong and efficient as a principal, kind and sympathetic as a friend. I shall never forget how he once called me into his private office and offered to give me his overcoat. He had observed that I wore none. I feel that I have lost a friend of inestimable value."

"I was his pupil for several years at the Dryden High School, and I always loved and admired him. He was a strong influence in my life."

"I want to tell you how much I thought of Dr. Cheney and how much I appreciate all he did for me and for every Cortland Normal student.

"I feel that I have lost a true friend. In all the years since I left Cortland, Dr. Cheney never seemed to forget me in the least. And when I went back to Commencement last summer it was with him as if I had never been away. He remembered and cared for us all in the same way. Inevitably with most teachers the crowd of new students shoves the old ones into the background. But it wasn't so with the Doctor. He always had the same interest in us. Once his children, always his children. I only regret that I can't tell him how much I appreciate it, and how much good it did me.

"I shall never be thankful enough that I went back to Cortland last Commencement time. We little realized that it would be the last one for Dr. Cheney. I shall never care quite so much about going back again, but I can't tell how much I enjoyed that occasion."

"I feared at first that his condition had been serious for some time, but when I read of the manner in which Death came to him, I could not

restrain myself from thinking of the fitness of the call. Busy until the last moment. As I remember the day, it had been dark and dreary, but near 5 o'clock the sun broke through the clouds as if to light the homeward way of many who were anticipating a day of rest from the busy cares of the week. But how little did I think that at this time our dear friend, relaxed from the cares of life, answered the Heavenly call and drifted out toward the sunset land into the glory beyond. To me it is beautiful. Not that Doctor would have hesitated to accept the cross of suffering and sustain it as he has sustained other crosses which have come to him. For twenty long years he has labored unselfishly for both his teachers and his students; early and late when their duties were either laid aside or not yet shouldered he has toiled faithfully on, and to know that at last the tool with which he was working dropped from his hand, and he could rest from his labors—to me this is the Perfect Call. To be sure, the shock is great to the loved ones and friends and there are many things which we would have liked to say or do, if we might have known. For many the call would have been too sudden, but not for him. There is no need for words at a time like this; in our minds the memory of a Christian life remains. I only trust that I may make mine better because I knew him and because he was my friend. Cortland Normal will never be just the same to many of us, but for his sake our interests, I hope, may be keen and active in all that pertains to her welfare."

Former Members of the Faculty

"I saw Dr. Cheney last (I cannot yet realize that it is "last" in this world) at Albany, during the State Teachers' Association last November. We went about together and, as always, had a very pleasant visit. My last glimpse of him was in the audience at the close of an address of mine.

"We were often together at such gatherings and always tried to see as much of each other as possible. He was always so genial, companionable, and appreciatively generous toward his friends. He had much to say in Albany, as elsewhere, of the excellence of the various members of his faculty. It was a pleasure to hear him speak of them. He was greatly pleased also when I could tell him of the progress and success of Cortland graduates."

"Of the five and a half years during which I was associated with Dr. Cheney, every memory of him is a pleasant one. Even above the thought of his rare ability as executive and teacher comes the thought of his goodness. He was always so good to me. As he was to me, so was he to the thousands of others who came under his kindly care. That is why he will be so missed—because in the community, at school, and at home, he was a kind and good man."

"It seems only the other day—though it was four years ago—that I was wont to see Doctor Cheney walking to and from the Normal School always with elastic step and apparently in sturdy physical condition. His entire life spelled service of the most devoted and exalted kind."

"I can never forget the Doctor's words to me when I took up my work at Cortland, 'Brother, here is your department, and I wish you all success.' I have never forgotten the word or its significance nor did I ever find reason to doubt its sincerity. My stay in Cortland was the pleasantest feature of my life and very much of this was due to the kindness, consideration, and sympathy of Dr. Cheney."

"Doctor Cheney has attained the highest form of unmortality in his generous, unselfish, willing, unflinching service to others; he lives in the lives of those who knew him and so shall he continue to live and work here. He was never too busy to listen, never too tired to share a burden, wise in counsel, considerate of everyone, and a tower of strength for the right at all times."

“He was always a great inspiration to me and he did so much to make my work in the Normal a pleasure. He never withheld the word of help, encouragement, and praise that meant so much. To have been privileged to be associated with him for three years is indeed gratifying to me, and I shall ever hold his memory most dear.”

A Former Member of the Local Board

“The last time I saw him he seemed in full health and overflowing good spirits, greeting me with the same cordiality and gracious kindness that always characterized his intercourse with friends and acquaintances. I loved the man from the time I first met him. I have not one unpleasant recollection connected with him, but many recollections of his cordial good will.”

State Department of Education

“My long-time friend; * * * * an exceedingly efficient principal of a great school.”

A. S. Draper.

“I had known him from the time I first began to teach in a country school. It was a pleasure to work with him. In the training of teachers for the public schools, he has rendered the state a great service.”

Thomas E. Finegan.

Teachers and Principals of Other Educational Institutions.

"We all rejoice that the sorrow of so many friends will be associated with so many previous memories of one whose life was so devoted to good works, whose character was so noble and whose contributions to the welfare of mankind were so great. We all admired Dr. Cheney for his wisdom and for his manhood."

"I knew Dr. Cheney well and for a period of years and always looked upon him as a model school man, sane and safe in all matters of our common work."

"I have known Dr. Cheney for many years and I have esteemed him most highly. He has done a splendid work. He has many, many friends who will cherish his memory. I esteem it a great privilege to be one of these friends."

"His going was a shock, but a glorious translation; not a thought of leaving friends, not a conscious pain, but in the midst of his labors, stepping into the realities of the glorified life.

"His has been a busy, useful life. He has left his impression upon thousands of young people to be repeated in the generations to come. When you recall his long public service you will find comfort in the thought of his usefulness. He has left a glorious heritage to us all, and for this we will be thankful."

"It was my happy privilege to know Dr. Cheney for many years and to be intimately associated with him, and our relations were always so cordial that the loss comes to me as a personal bereavement. The memory of his faithful and successful work at Cortland will always be a grateful possession of the school."

"I wish to bear sincere witness to his sterling worth, his genial nature, his strong intellectuality, his admirable executive ability, his inspiring service. I have lost a dear friend."

Miscellaneous

"We have all lost a most loyal friend, and surely his noble work in this world, was awaiting him as the richest crown in the next."

"I have often remembered and often quoted to teachers a remark he once made to me in substance, that when he decided to become a teacher he determined never to indulge in any practice which if indulged in by his pupils, might be detrimental to them, that he wanted to be free to support precept with practice. It was a sense of responsibility not always found in teachers or others in influential positions."

"I had a visit with Dr. Cheney just the day before he went Home. What a loss to our church and to our district. We have no stronger man in Cazenovia District than he."

"I count it a great privilege to have known him. The one thing which appealed to me in Dr. Cheney above all other things which shone out in his life and work was his *manly championing of the right*.

"So few are ready when the call
Is wafted homeward from the deep—
The summons that must come to all.
The tryst that mortal man must keep.
But he was ready; through the day
He did his task and lived his prayer,
A weary hill made hard the way,
He saw the roses growing there."

"He has left the impress of his personality upon my old home, Kingston, N. Y., and many in that city will mourn his unexpected demise."

“When I go down to the grave I can say like many others, ‘I have finished my day’s work.’ But I cannot say, ‘I have finished my life.’ My day’s work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight, it opens on the dawn.”

—*Victor Hugo.*

I cannot say, and I will not say
That he is dead. He is just away!

With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand
He has wandered into an unknown land,

And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.

Think of him still as the same, I say,
He is not dead—he is just—away!

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

[Inscription on Memorial Tablet Presented by the Class of 1912]

In Loving Memory of

Francis John Cheney

Principal of this School

1891-1912

Kind, frank, straightforward, full of strength and courage, but also of gentleness and sympathy, strength of conviction was his, but no trace of bitterness; strength of mind and character but no trace of arrogance. He loved culture and scholarship, but truth and noble character more. He was a loyal, helpful friend to his students and associates. He inspired in them moral earnestness, love of right, the spirit of harmony. In them he still lives and his work goes on. A citizen, public spirited, responsive to the demand of his community, ready to do his part. He loved his kind. He kept faith. His life availed.

