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In Memoriam: Charles Edwin Bessey; David MacMillan Houghtelin

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PLATE I



Dr. Charles Edwin Bessey.



IN MEMORIAM

DR. CHARLES EDWIN BESSEY.

L. H. PAMMEL.

A host of friends throughout this land were grieved at the death of Dr. Charles Edwin Bessey, whose long years of activity as a teacher, investigator and citizen, were known throughout this broad country of ours. To his many friends in Iowa his death came as a shock, because it was here that he laid the foundations for that broad scientific life, a life devoted most enthusiastically to the science of botany, a life devoted to the teaching profession, a life devoted to the student in the class room and out of it. It was indeed a purposeful life, always full of sunshine and gladness. There were many of the older students at Ames who felt that Dr. Bessey was their personal friend, ready always to do something for them. To these students he gave his best. He gave some of his best years to administrative work at Ames and the University of Nebraska. Chancellor Avery says, "His death is not only a misfortune to the University organization, in the upbuilding of which the effort of the greater part of his life was spent; but also a direct personal loss to students, alumni, and faculty people among whom he numbered his friends by hundreds." The Daily Nebraskan of March 1st says that the summation of the philosophy of life is formed, according to Professor Bessey's own expression, in the word "love".

Doctor Bessey was always temperate. In my long acquaintance with him I never heard him say an unkind thing of anyone. Though he differed in opinion or may have disliked some persons, he tempered his remarks so as to leave the impression that the man or woman had splendid qualities. Professor Pool says "He even sought to temper criticism whenever possible." He was devoted to his family and his friends. Many a young botanist owes his success to the help Doctor Bessey gave him.

He was an inspiring teacher and always youthful. I last met him at the quarter centennial celebration of the Missouri Botanical Garden last October. Though perhaps not as vigorous as formerly he was as enthusiastic as when I met him more than a quarter of a century ago. It was his unbounded enthusiasm that made him such a successful teacher. It enlisted a large number of men to study botany.

Professor R. J. Pool says, "To have met with him was to honor him; to have been taught by him was a priceless privilege; to have been intimately associated with him and to have walked with him into the fields and gardens and to have received from him an insight into the great realm of which he was master was to have been led very close to the Great Omnipotent who causes the snowflakes to fall, O, so softly, when our beloved friend passes beyond the great divide where nothing but flowerland and love will greet him."

Doctor Bessey was linked to Iowa in many ways. He was called to Iowa State College as Professor of Botany and Zoology in 1870 and served until 1884. The State University of Iowa conferred on him the Ph.D. degree in 1879, and Grinnell College the degree of LL.D. in 1898. He received the B.S. degree from Michigan Agricultural College in 1869 and the M.S. degree in 1872. He was born in Milton, Ohio, May 21, 1845, being at the time of his death scarcely seventy years old. One would think years of usefulness were still ahead of him. The last visit I paid Dr. Bessey was a little more than a year ago and I was told he was away in Arizona studying some plant physiological problems. Many honors were given to him. He was president of the Old Iowa Academy of Sciences and one of its founders, and it is natural that he should have associated himself with the New Iowa Academy of Science and should have presented a paper on the Trees of Nebraska at a meeting at Ames inaugurating botanical quarters in the New Central Building standing where the old Main Building stood and where thirty-five years before he gave lectures on botany.

He was also president of the Botanical Society of America 1896; the Microscopical Society 1901; the Society for the Promotion of Agricultural Science 1889-1891. He was a member of the leading scientific societies of the United States and Europe.

PLATE II



Reverend David MacMillan Houghtelin.

Doctor Bessey published much. Many of the papers embodied the results of searching investigation and reflection. The last paper was one on "The Phylogenetic Taxonomy of Flowering Plants," which was delivered at the Quarter Centennial Celebration of the Missouri Botanical Garden.

His reputation rested largely on his Text Book of Botany, published while Professor at Ames. This passed through several editions. Later only his Essentials of Botany was published. This was revised with the collaboration of his son Ernest Bessey as the "Essentials of College Botany." This embodied his views of how botany should be taught, and he elaborated particularly parts dealing with the classification of plants. For many years he was one of the editors of The American Naturalist and of Science. In addition to various botanical notes he frequently reviewed important botanical papers.

Doctor Bessey has left his impression on American botany by his writing and teaching and botanical science has lost one of its most sincere men, a friend and a great teacher.

THE REVEREND DAVID MACMILLAN HOUGHTELIN.

JOHN L. TILTON.

David MacMillan Houghtelin was born at Gettysburg, Penn., January 14, 1872, and died at the Methodist Hospital, Des Moines, Iowa, June 3, 1913, aged 41 years. He was a graduate of Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, class of 1896, a graduate of Boston University School of Theology, class of 1900, and a graduate student at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1908. Most of the years since graduation were devoted to the work of the ministry, but from 1910 till the time of his death his life was devoted to the interests of the Methodist Hospital at Des Moines. While not engaged in scientific work his interest in science was such that he became an "associate" member of the Iowa Academy of Science in 1912, retaining his membership till the time of his death. In the death of Mr. Houghtelin the Academy has lost one of those many friends whose attitude of sympathy toward scientific work is greatly appreciated by the scientific workers of the state.

