

HISTORIC SULLIVAN

*A History of Sullivan County, Tennessee
with brief Biographies of the
Makers of History*

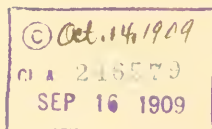
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JAMES D. TADLOCK.

A BIOGRAPHY.

James D. Tadlock was born at Mill Brook, Greene county, Tennessee, August 4, 1825, and died in Bristol, Tennessee, August, 1899.

In his youth he worked on his father's farm and attended school at Washington College, later completing his education at Princeton Seminary. He then became professor of mathematics in Washington College and afterwards conducted a school for girls at Jonesboro.

When King College was founded by James King in 1867, Tadlock became its first president. This school, however, was run as a high school the first year.

He remained president of King College for eighteen years. In 1885 he was called to the chair of ecclesiastical history and church government in Columbia (S. C.) Theological Seminary, where he remained thirteen years. In 1898 he returned to Bristol and again filled the chair of mathematics at King College until March the following year, when he was taken sick. He died in August of the same year.

Along with school duties he did ministerial work. Although at one time he preached regularly at the Cold Spring church and frequently in Bristol and other places it was always in connection with school work. His best remembered sermons are, "No Night There," "Let The Redeemed Say So," "Security of the Believer," "The Final Confirmation," "The Vision of Dry Bones," "Quit Ye Like Men." The latter was the subject of the first baccalaureate sermon preached at King College, he having been chosen by the graduating class to deliver it. That sermon followed those young men all through their lives.

His sermons combined the ornate and profound with



JAMES D. TADLOCK

such rare completeness that, despite a poor delivery, they were impressive and persuasive.

But he loved the schoolroom. He loved the society of young men. His knowledge of a young man's needs and ambitions and frailties was gained by his every-day labors with them. He took them aside and talked with them, and, while always frank and occasionally almost severe, there were other times when his criticisms took a whimsical turn.

One Friday afternoon, during chapel exercises an advanced student read an exhaustive treatise on a current topic. He dealt in rounded periods and hyperbole, and, at the conclusion, left the stage as though he had completed his work—left but little to be said. His thesis drew extended discussion from the faculty, but when it reached Dr. Tadlock he simply remarked, "Mr. ———, the portico was bigger than the house—call the next speaker."

On another afternoon one of the younger students read an essay on "Idleness". It closed with, "Idleness is the most indolent thing I know of." The only comment offered by Dr. Tadlock was, "Mr. ——— a hog is more like a hog than anything I know of—call the next speaker."

In his chosen field—mathematics—he had mastered all the difficult problems and made others. He worked out problems on the blackboard with a rapidity that amazed the students. Mathematics caused him to live much in the abstract—away from people, away from earth; and while in a domestic way he lived one of those old fashioned, happy, home lives, this abstraction often carried him far away from his family as it did from his associates. One of his little daughters, desiring to get something that she did not especially need, sought the aid of her mother, "Mama, you ask papa for the money, I'm not well acquainted with him."

His mind was a labyrinth of logarithms. Sometimes, when taking a stroll, he would pass a friend and never see him. He has been known to walk half a mile with a congenial companion and not say a word.

"Dr. Tadlock, if I treated people as you do, I wouldn't have a friend in the world," said one of his faculty in friendly rebuke, and yet that professor knew that every boy in school idolized Dr. Tadlock. Among them he was affectionately called "Old J. D."

It makes little difference whether a man seeks friends or not—if he be proficient in what he professes and lives up to what he teaches there will be no need of trenches for his defense. Napoleon, with all his austerity, found breastworks made of the dead bodies of the Old Guard, when his life was in danger.

Dr. Tadlock would not make debts. He would go without provisions—coffee or sugar or meat—before he would go in debt for them.

He was not understood by the poor people. They believed him to be aloof from them and yet no man had more consideration for them.

A newly married couple of moderate circumstances, living near the college, was once serenaded by the students. They used tin pans and horns and kept up a horrible noise. The next day Dr. Tadlock kindly admonished them—"Young men, don't do that. They are our neighbors; they are poor and your act may have hurt them. Their privileges are few, their wants are many; respect them, don't mistreat them."

The one great lesson he tried to teach young men was manliness.

A young man was once added to the faculty of King College, whose ability was never questioned, but whose youth invited censure because a portion of the students felt he was prejudiced and had gone beyond the bounds of the faculty privileges in taking sides with one literary society against the other. This feeling reached

a climax when the young professor declined to pass a member of the rebellious society on a senior examination.

The students mutinied. They would have^q the professor put out of the faculty, and circulated a petition to this effect. It reached Dr. Tadlock, and holding it up before the students at chapel exercises one morning he said, "I see on the petition the name of ——— ———, a noisy little 'Prep,' who never recited a lesson to Prof. ——— in his life and yet he asks that this man be removed." Thus he presented the ridiculous side and shamed them. Then, in concluding, he arose to higher appeals—"Young men,"—and when he thus addressed them every listener knew he appealed to every bit of manliness there was in them—"Young men, this young man is just beginning his life-work as you will soon go out to begin yours. You will meet difficulties as he is meeting them here today; you will meet men who will try to drag you down as you are trying to drag this young man down. Don't throw obstacles in his way; you will regret it in the years to come. Young men, stand by this young man." The petition was withdrawn.