

PREFACE

Biography is not only the most fascinating, but is also the most instructive and popular branch of history. Biography not only possesses the advantages of general history, but often brings to light the springs of great events which, in the comprehensive range of history, would have escaped attention. Biography is the analysis of history; history is the synthesis of biography. All the great historians in the world have used biography freely in their histories; and to read history without regard to biography is to make it unintelligible. Biographical history is history by induction, which is the natural and philosophical method. It is far more complete in its scope than the mere chronicling of public events, for in it is contained all the elements of human progress, together with the groupings of history and the minutia of biography. The history of any nation, State or country is best and most forcibly written in the life records of its energetic and enterprising citizens, and the Congress of the United States, in view of this, in 1876, recommended to State and county authorities the importance and necessity of collecting and preserving the histories and biographies of their prominent men and useful citizens.

Nothing, however, was done in the counties of the Keystone State toward the collection of biographical history, beyond securing a few sketches of public men who had passed away, until 1889, when the publisher of this work compiled and published the first cyclopaedia of biographies that was ever issued in Pennsylvania. In Indiana and in Armstrong, as in all other counties of this great Union, the present generation has but little history of past generations except what is furnished by tradition, which is the most uncertain and unreliable method in the world of transmitting ancestral history. In attempting to rescue from oblivion and divorce from tradition the early history of many of the old and leading families of Indiana and Armstrong counties, the publisher has been well aided by the enterprising and progressive citizens of these counties. Cotemporary biography has been given in connection with ancestral history, and thus is presented the lives of those in the present, as well as those of the past, who have been instrumental in making each of these two counties what it is today—a fitting home for nearly every industry which labor and capital can set in motion, and a land where moral and intellectual progress keeps pace with rapid commercial and industrial development.

The geological feature has been introduced to give an adequate and correct idea of the great mineral wealth of these counties. The geology given is taken mainly from the volumes of the Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania.

In the preparation of the historical part of this work over a thousand volumes were consulted in great libraries of the United States, beside a careful and tedious examination of public records and State archives. On account of limited space many events of local history were condensed from the present histories of the two counties, and the sickness of S. T. Wiley; the historian and editor-in-charge of the work, prevented their verification from court records and other authentic sources of information.

In this cyclopaedia of biographies we would seek, by presenting the lives of so many who have been example of industry and perseverance in the way of right, to excite to virtue and stimulate to exertion the sons of Indiana and Armstrong counties, and influence them to pursuits that will lead to wealth, fame, happiness and honor, as well as

to influence them to lead lives such as will prevent their names from being carried down
“the stream of oblivion, and swallowed up in the gulf of unregistered mortality.”

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