

CENTENNIAL BIOGRAPHY.

MEN OF MARK

OF


CUMBERLAND VALLEY, PA.

1776—1876.

ALFRED NEVIN, D. D., LL. D.

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JOSEPH McCARRELL, D. D.

HE following sketch of this eminent scholar and divine, is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Forsyth, of Newburg, N. Y., (now Chaplain at West Point, N. Y.)

The Rev. Joseph McCarrell, D. D., son of John McCarrell and Mary McKnight, was a native of Shippensburg, Penn., and was born on the 9th of July, 1795.

His parents were warmly attached members of the Associate Reformed Church of that place, and the region was one whose history was connected with the earliest annals of the denomination, in the communion of which Dr. McCarrell lived and died, and for which he had an unchangeable affection. His mind was early turned towards the ministry of the Gospel; and he entered upon studies preparatory thereto, availing himself of such helps as were within his reach, though in the main he had to depend upon his own efforts, and was in fact, to a great extent, a self-made man.

While thus engaged, the war of 1812 came on. In the summer of 1814, Washington was burnt by the British, and Baltimore was threatened with the same fate at the hands of the barbarian, Admiral Cockburn, the wretch who promised his followers "the beauty and booty" of that city. The whole country was aroused; the adjacent counties of Pennsylvania sent as quickly as possible their militia to the point of danger; while from Shippensburg every person capable of bearing arms hurried to the defence of Baltimore. Joseph McCarrell was one of these volunteers. He thus not only had a taste of military life, but from the hill about two miles from the city, on which his regiment was placed, he witnessed the magnificent spectacle of the bombardment of Fort M'Henry. And he was one of those who through the long night watched the garrison flag, and when the morning dawned, saw with inexpressible joy the glorious banner still waving defiance to the foe.

Soon after his return home, Mr. McCarrell entered Washington College, Washington, Pennsylvania, and graduated with high honours in the class of 1815. For several years after leaving college, he was engaged in teaching in Bellefonte, in Greensburg, and in Carlisle, while he was at the same time pursuing the studies that would fit him for the sacred profession to which he was looking forward. In 1818, he entered the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed

Church, then in New York, under the care of that distinguished man, Dr. John M. Mason. He brought to the Seminary an amount of attainment in certain branches of learning, which very few possess when leaving it, for he had made himself a thorough Hebrew scholar, and had read the whole of the Old Testament in that language. Having finished the prescribed course of study, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Big Spring, Pa., on the 21st of June, 1821. For several months he supplied the Associate Reformed Church in Murray street, New York, (vacant by the resignation of Dr. Mason,) with so much acceptance, that not a few of its members wished to call him as their pastor. But he was destined to spend his life in another sphere.

Dr. McCarrell came to Newburg in the autumn of 1822. He was soon after invited to assume the pastoral care of the Associate Reformed Church there, and on the 13th of March, 1823, he was ordained and installed. The old church erected in 1795, was in the extreme southern end of the village, on ground now owned by Capt. H. Robison. The present edifice was built in 1821, and had been dedicated a few months before Dr. McCarrell arrived in Newburg. He is, consequently, the only one who had served the congregation as a pastor since it began to worship in the church at the corner of First and Grand streets. His pastorate was nearly twice as long as the united pastorate of his four predecessors. The society, though one of the oldest in Newburg, was by no means large when he became its pastor, but from that time it steadily advanced in numbers, and has become the mother of two congregations. In 1829, the Seminary, which had been suspended for some years, was revived, established at Newburg, and Dr. McCarrell was chosen Professor of Theology. Towards the close of that year he entered upon his work of instruction, and from that period until near the end of life he continued to discharge his two-fold duties as Pastor and Professor. And all who saw him, as he went out and in among us for so many years, knew that they were looking upon a "living epistle of Christ."

From time to time he took part in the public questions of the day, discussing them in the pulpit and through the press, but only those in which he deemed that some great moral or religious principle was involved. His last years were made sad by various causes, which could not operate upon such a nature as his without reaching and affecting the fountain of physical life. The unfortunate separation from brethren with whom he had been so long and closely connected in ecclesiastical fellowship, the changes in the denomination to which he was so warmly attached, and lastly the loss of a beloved daughter, all helped to make a deep and visible impression upon him. During his last two years,

it was obvious to all that his strength had been weakened in the way. Still he seemed to have derived so much benefit from a few months' rest, that about the beginning of his last year the hope was entertained that he might recover strength before he went hence. He did resume his labour and continued it for a month, but early in March he was obliged to give it up again. On two succeeding Sabbaths he was able to be in church, though declining to take part in the service. The last Sabbath of his life was the last day on which he conducted family worship, and it is worthy of note that the psalm then sung, in course, was the seventeenth, last four verses. He was mercifully spared all acute suffering and mental wandering during his illness. He was calm, serene, peaceful, and at last fell "on sleep," in Jesus, as quietly as an infant in its mother's arms. He died at an early hour on the morning of Tuesday, 29th of March, 1864, and was buried in Newburg, in the "Old Graveyard," in the centre of the city, where he is surrounded by his elders—who are also "waiting for the adoption."

Dr. McCarrell's private character I can hardly venture to portray. If I were to do so, I might be charged with presenting an ideal and not a real character. So, at any rate, I would have judged the Doctor's character, had I merely met with it in a description, and not enjoyed the felicity of knowing it. In all his familiar intercourses he was as simple as a child, and when engaged in conversation there was *naïve* spontaneity and richness in his turns of thought that was exceedingly refreshing. In his speech there was no satire, just because in his nature there was no bitterness. Humour, quaint, fantastic, happy humour, like Paul Richter's—only more elegant—overflowed his table talk, imparted to it the richest flavour. Yet, over all his speech and manner, there breathed a sacred tenderness which flowed not from any earthly source, but was the fragrance of a heavenly spirit. His childlike faith imparted, at all times, a charm to his daily life. His nature so trustful, so affectionate and given to meditation, seemed to be ground well prepared for the seed of God, and surely in it that seed so grew and fructified as it is rarely seen on earth. He always appeared to me like the beloved apostle whose head lay confidently on the breast of Jesus, and to whom were revealed the most glorious visions of the church's future. The spiritual insight, the purity of conscience, the ecstatic joy, the womanly gentleness of feeling which are especially attributed to that apostle, were all of them characteristic of this good old man.

No one could look upon Dr. McCarrell without receiving the impression that he was a man of power, though not of the sort which works with noise and observation. Such was the impression which he

made upon the Professor of the Military Academy at West Point, many years, when the pulpit was supplied by the minister of the vicinity, during a vacancy in the chaplaincy. With his strong subjective tendency, his modesty and the comparatively sequestered sphere in which he moved, the occasions fitted to show the real grasp and vigour of his intellect were few and rare. But when one did arise, no one who heard him could doubt (though he might not agree with his reasonings,) he was a workman of a high order, and that there slumbered within him the fire of real eloquence. And so too no one could be brought into even casual contact with Dr. McCarrell without seeing that he was a good man. In all my intercourse with men never have I met with one in whom masculine vigour of intellect was combined with more of the gentler grace of the Gospel; nor one who surpassed him in childlike simplicity, unselfishness and profound reverence for all sacred things. He had his failings, no doubt, but even they leaned to virtue's side.

The ministers whom he helped to train are connected with various branches of the church, and occupy widely scattered fields of labour, but to all of them the tidings that their venerated professor was no more were sad indeed. The student who met him for the first time might get the idea that he was a man of dull and phlegmatic temperament, but he would soon discover that under that calm exterior there beat a large and very tender heart. He had the art of winning his pupil's love, without the least visible effort on his part to do so.

His method of instruction was modeled after that pursued by Dr. Mason, though with some modifications, which, perhaps, were not improvements. With both, the Bible in its original tongue was one great text book. Dr. McCarrell was very fond of treating subjects analytically, and he was a master of this mode of discussion; but it would have been of advantage to himself and his pupils, if he had combined it with the synthetic. Yet no student of right views and feelings, could pass through his hands without becoming a sound theologian, well instructed in the Scriptures.

As a preacher he was solemn, instructive, impressive. As a writer he was clear and forcible. Among his publications were "Sermons on Baptism," a sermon on "The Christian's Hope," and an "Answer to a Discourse preached by Dr. William E. Channing, at the Dedication of the Second Congregational Unitarian Church, New York, December 7th, 1826."

Dr. McCarrell was married to Jane B. Leiper, of Shippensburg, who still survives him. His family consisted of eight children, (four of them are still living,) and one grandson.

EDWARD CRAWFORD, ESQ.



EDWARD CRAWFORD, son of Edward Crawford and Elizabeth Sterritt, was born in 1758. In the year 1776, and at the early age of eighteen, he entered the military service of his country as an officer of the Revolutionary Army, in which he continued until the war terminated, and peace acknowledged us to be, what we had declared we were, an independent nation. Of his fatigues and exposure during this period nothing need be said; they were common to all who shared the honour and danger of the service, but the modesty and reserve of the deceased on this subject were so remarkable, that for many years it did not become known to his most intimate friends, (and it never was communicated to others,) that he received a severe wound during one of the battles in New Jersey, and came near to losing his life at the siege of Yorktown, in Virginia. Soon after the close of the war, and upon the erection of Franklin county, he was appointed to the several offices of Prothonotary, &c.; in one of which he was succeeded by Col. Findlay, of Mercersburg. To the capacity and fidelity with which the organization of these offices was made, the routine of business established, and the various duties discharged throughout the twenty-four years and upwards that he held them, the entire community could bear witness. In connection with Alexander Colhoun, he established the Chambersburg (now the First National) Bank, 1807. He was its first President, and was re-elected to this office for twenty-three years, until removed by death. In any project for the public good he was among the foremost, exerting his extensive influence, and devoting his personal services and pecuniary aid to promote the general interests, with a zeal and liberality not at all abated by advanced and advancing years, and the short hold he seemed to have upon the world.

In addition to the positions of honour, trust and usefulness, already referred to, Mr. Crawford occupied many others. He was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati; he was elected a manager of the Franklin County Bible Society, December 12th, 1814; he was appointed to meet the soldiers on their return from the defence of Baltimore, and addressed them; for some years he served as a Trustee of Falling Spring Presbyterian Church. As he was one of the oldest, so was he one of the most useful, and one of the most respected citizens of

Chambersburg. He died at the age of seventy-five years. So long a life necessarily carried with it more or less of the crosses and distresses of this world, from which he was not entirely exempt—but in his cup was mingled an unusual portion of all that makes life valuable—the respect of the whole community, the sincere esteem of his fellow-citizens to whom he was more intimately known, and the ardent and devoted affections of those intimately connected with him—these conspired in aid of a clear and excellent understanding, and a warm and generous heart, to encourage and invigorate the efforts of his life, and to give enjoyment and happiness to his declining years. He was a wealthy, hospitable, public-spirited, unselfish man, and when called to fall under the stroke that spares none, his loss was deeply and long deplored by the community with which he had so long been identified, and especially by those bound to him by closer ties.

Mr. Crawford was married twice. His first wife was Catharine Hostinger, of York, Pa. Thomas Hartley Crawford was a son by this marriage, who attained eminence as a lawyer, was elected to Congress from his district, became Secretary of Indian Affairs under President Jackson, and was afterwards Judge of the District Court, Washington, D. C. His second wife was Rebecca Colhoun. Their daughter, Elizabeth Sterritt, married Reade Washington, Esq., of Clark county, Va. His grandson, Edward Crawford Washington, was killed in the advance on Vicksburg, May, 1863.