

COMMEMORATIVE

BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

—OF—

WASHINGTON COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA,

CONTAINING

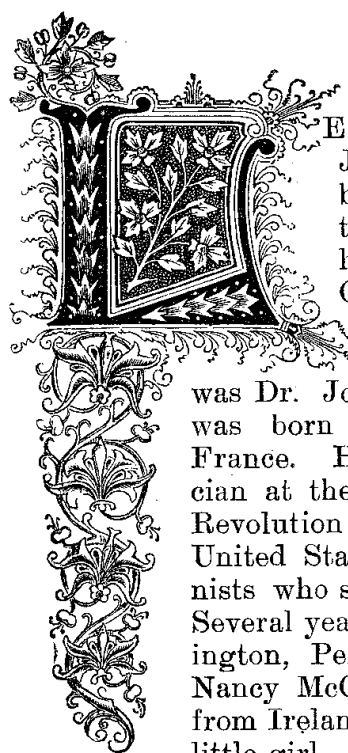
Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative
Citizens, and of many of the Early
Settled Families.

ILLUSTRATED



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WASHINGTON COUNTY.



ME MOYNE, DR. FRANCIS JULIUS, was born September 4, 1798, in Washington, Penn., where he spent his whole life, dying there October 14, 1879, in his eighty-second year. The father of Dr. Le Moyne

was Dr. John Julius Le Moyne, who was born and educated in Paris, France. He was a practicing physician at the beginning of the French Revolution in 1790, and came to the United States with the French colonists who settled at Gallipolis, Ohio. Several years after he came to Washington, Penn., and in 1797 married Nancy McCully, who had come over from Ireland with her family when a little girl.

The subject of this memoir was their only child. From the Scotch-Irish side of the house he derived a robust constitution and physical development that was unusual for strength, activity and endurance. As a young man, he had but few equals in all the sports that required strength and nerve. His school days were spent in his native town, where at the age of seventeen he graduated from Washington College in the class of 1815. He commenced the study of medicine with his father, and finished his course in Philadelphia. On his return from Philadelphia in the winter, in an old-fashioned stage coach, whose flimsy blinds were insufficient to repel the cold, they stopped, far in the night, at one of the hostleries in the mountains, which was filled with wagoners who occupied all the available space where warmth could be obtained. Not being therefore able to stop, the passengers were literally packed up to their necks in straw within the coach, and started toward Pittsburgh,

from which Dr. Le Moyne rode to Washington on horseback in a most terrible storm. It was a dreadful and dangerous ride, and the result was that he was so seriously injured by the exposure as to be a chronic sufferer from rheumatism for the rest of his life. He commenced the practice of medicine in 1822. Shortly after his return from the East, he met Miss Madelaine Romaine Bureau, at his father's house, who had accompanied her sister from Gallipolis in order to receive medical treatment. The young Doctor being smitten by the charms of the sprightly young lady, they were married in May, 1823.

About this time his father suffered heavy pecuniary losses by his endorsement for his friends, and his house, the present homestead, was sold to meet his liabilities. Francis borrowed the money from two kind friends, Mr. Alexander Reed and Mr. Kerr, who lent him upon his own endorsement, and he bought in the house. Thus he started in life heavily in debt. In a few years, by hard work and the most economical living, he not only paid off his own debts, but relieved his father from his embarrassments also. Our subject had eight children—three sons and five daughters—all of whom are living. Feeling deeply interested in education, he early manifested a desire to promote and extend its benefits. On April 2, 1830, he was elected a trustee of Washington College, in which position he remained a prominent and useful member until the union of Washington and Jefferson Colleges, which occurred in 1865. The Washington Female Seminary was established in 1836, and the Doctor was one of its earliest and firmest friends, and a member of its original board of trustees, where he worked in company with Alex. Reed, Colin M. Reed, T. McK. T. McKennan, John H. Ewing, Alex. Sweeney, Jacob Slagle, John L. Gow and others.

The Doctor became interested in the anti-slavery

question in 1835 or 1836. He had the reputation of being an able debater, having a fine presence, a good clear voice, a versatile and strongly self-reliant mind, and, in addition, a flow of language that made him a very dangerous adversary on the platform. On one occasion a young man, an early advocate of the anti-slavery cause, appeared in Washington and injudiciously gave a general challenge for a discussion. The challenge was at once accepted, and the day fixed for the meeting. The challenger expected to have Rev. Dr. Blanchard as his champion, but from some mischance the latter had left Pittsburgh before the news could reach him, and the young man came back himself to meet the engagement with forebodings of defeat. In this dilemma an appeal was made to Dr. Le Moyne for assistance, as he was known to be fond of intellectual gymnastics and always ready for a discussion. The Doctor, however, excused himself, had not examined the subject, was not prepared. But on being shown the constitution of the Anti-slavery Society, which was for the most part a declaration of the rights of man, he was induced to enter the arena as the champion of the slave. From this time forward he was known as one of the most aggressive of the anti-slavery party, and at the same time an opponent of the American Colonization Society, which he believed was established in the interests of American slavery. He became so prominent a partizan that in 1841 he was the candidate of the Abolition party for Governor of Pennsylvania. Of course he had no expectation of being elected, the object of the campaign being to create a political balance of power that would ultimately control the other parties. At the next election, in 1844, he was again the candidate, and also in 1847. During the early discussion both public and private, upon this exciting subject, there was sometimes manifested an intolerance toward him and his party that was painful and often oppressive. He was a man, however, who was not to be daunted by any show of force. Such was his peculiar mental constitution that majorities had no influence upon his judgments and actions. He was an original, independent thinker, and nothing apparently gave him so much satisfaction as the opportunity to maintain his views by discussion with a champion whom he considered a worthy opponent. After years spent in advocating the cause of liberty, he had the satisfaction and happiness of seeing the object of his greatest hopes accomplished in the emancipation of the slaves of the United States, and indeed in almost the whole world.

Having suffered, as, we have already related, a severe shock from exposure, Dr. Le Moyne was compelled, when about fifty-five years of age, to relinquish the arduous practice of his profession. So great were his sufferings, which he bore with

heroic fortitude, that for twenty-nine years he never occupied a bed to seek a night's repose. Of these matters of personal suffering he was very reluctant to speak, preferring to suffer in silence rather than annoy his friends with his griefs which he well knew they could not even alleviate. The latter portion of his life was devoted to banking, farming and the interests of education. He was a successful business man, and accumulated considerable property. As a farmer he was very enthusiastic and successful. He was one of the original members of the Washington County Agricultural Society, and maintained an active interest in it during his whole life. He farmed with brains. Being a chemist he understood something of the relations of plants to soils, and fertilizers, and it was very instructive to listen to his theories, which were, in many cases, the result of his own observation and experiments. He was one of the first to appreciate the importance of introducing improved sheep, cattle and horses into the county as a means of increasing the natural wealth of the people. He left a herd of the finest cattle in the State, and an elegant stock horse of superior blood. For years he was a member of a Farmers Club, that met in Washington for the comparison of views and for the discussion of such topics as concerned their peculiar interests. In 1866 and 1867, as president of the National Wool Growers Association, he succeeded in harmonizing the views of the manufacturers and producers of wool, and as a result their united efforts obtained the passage through Congress of the best wool tariff law the country has ever had.

When the erection of the present Town Hall in Washington was first talked of, Dr. F. Julius Le Moyne offered, if room in the building was given, to donate the sum of \$10,000 to found a public library. When the building project became settled, the offer was accepted, and the two large reading rooms with the vault rooms in them were set apart for the use of the library. Two thousand dollars of the sum donated was used in making fire-proof vaults where the books are kept. A like sum was set apart to be invested permanently, the annual interest thereon to be used in making additions of books; the remainder, \$6,000, has been expended in the purchase of the body of the library. The Citizens Library Association, in whose charge the library is, was incorporated by the court May 27, 1870, upon the petition of Dr. Le Moyne and others. The board of curators is composed of five persons: One appointed by the trustees of the college; one appointed by the court; and three elected by the people to serve for the term of three years; until his death Dr. Le Moyne was a member and president of the board. No one took a deeper interest in the matters of the corporation than he, and no one labored more zealously to make it a

power for good in the community. He did not limit his labors to devising plans for others to carry out, but, of choice, performed much of the drudgery himself. The first catalogue which was used for years was entirely the work of his heart and hand. It embraces several thousands of entries in the work, giving in one place for each work the title, name of author, shelf letter and number, and in another the name of the author, followed by the title, shelf letter and number. In doing this he would often write until after midnight, and the neat round hand, carefully-made letters and figures show that Dr. Le Moyneslighted nothing that came under his eye or hand. He often expressed his regret at the meetings of the curators that the work did not go forward more rapidly, and even during the last year, when he was suffering intensely, expressed his willingness to do any work that would fall to him. When he became unable to visit the library, at almost every meeting of the board he would make inquiry of the members as to number and character of the persons visiting the rooms nightly. Particularly was he desirous of making the library a place of resort for boys. He felt that while occupied there, they would not only be out of temptation, but would have the opportunity of acquiring useful knowledge. In selecting books his doubt about approving a book was removed by some one saying it "was a good book for boys." The only regret he had to express was that the people did not patronize the library in larger numbers, and that its influence was not more extensively felt in the community. But he was never heard to take to himself any credit for his munificent donation which breathed into life and kept on foot the library; on the contrary, he was disposed to assume that he had done nothing more than the duty he owed as a citizen of the community in which he had lived all his life.

About the time that the donation of \$10,000 was made for the Citizens' library, the Doctor felt it his duty to do something for the elevation of the colored people of the South, who had been enfranchised by the war. He made a donation of \$20,000 to the American Missionary Society, to be used in the erection and support of a colored normal school, in which colored people might be prepared to be the instructors of their race. A portion of this sum was devoted to building, and the remainder to the endowment of the institution. The site selected was on a bluff in the vicinity of the city of Memphis, Tenn. The school proved very successful, so much so that the Doctor added an additional \$5,000 for its equipment. His views upon the subject of education were somewhat in opposition to the system under which he was brought up. In the curriculum of his day, a great deal of time was devoted to the study of Greek

and Latin, very little to natural sciences and still less to English literature. The practical bent of his mind rebelled against what he deemed a false system of instruction. He was a naturalist by instinct; a keen observer of all the phenomena of nature; a fine practical gardener; a devoted admirer of flowers; a close botanical student and entomologist. These studies so charming to him were not taught him in school, and it was a matter of regret to him that they had not been. He insisted that the study of the ancient classics, for the unprofessional students, did not afford an equivalent for the time and money spent in their acquisition. With this idea in view he determined to endow a professorship in Washington and Jefferson College. In 1872 he paid to the treasurer of the college the sum of \$20,000 to endow the chair entitled "The Le Moyne Professorship of Agriculture and Correlative Branches," which chair is now filled by Prof. Ed Linton. In July, 1879, he made an additional endowment of \$20,000 for a chair of Applied Mathematics, with an additional \$1,000 to better equip the said chair and the chair of Agriculture. Five hundred of this last \$1,000 gift was appropriated by the local trustees to purchase in part a set of Ward's Casts, which were on exhibition at the Pittsburgh Exposition.

About 1875 the Doctor became interested in the subject of cremation, and in order to show his faith in it as a proper means of disposing of the dead, he in 1876 built a crematory a short distance from town. The furnace is but little more in appearance than a large gas retort. Into this, when heated, the body is placed and there consumed. Forty cremations have taken place in this crematory, the first being the remains of Baron De Palm, an Austrian, who died in New York, and which attracted more attention and newspaper comment than any like event since. Dr. Le Moyne's wishes in regard to his own remains were carried out to the letter, the cremation taking place on Thursday, October 16, 1879. His ashes are buried in the crematory lot, marked by a monument of granite on which is the following inscription:

F. JULIUS LE MOYNE, M. D.

born

SEPTEMBER 4, 1798,

died

OCTOBER 14, 1879.

"A FEARLESS ADVOCATE OF THE RIGHT."

The disease under which he finally succumbed was saccharine diabetes. With the eye of a philosopher he watched the progress of the disease for nearly six years, a much longer period than is

usually required for this malady to complete its work. At different periods investigations were interesting to himself and his profession. An autopsy showed that the conclusions arrived at by himself were in the main correct.

And now, in concluding these few and hasty lines, the question may arise what was the mental condition and what was the religious hope of this strong intellectual man, as he approached slowly but surely the confines which divide the present from the spirit world? Before the days of political abolitionism Dr. Le Moyne was a member of the Presbyterian Church, but when goaded to madness by the oppressions of slavery he felt that the church did not come up to what he conceived to be its duty, and he withdrew. Some have supposed, on account of his withdrawal from the church, and from his views on the cremation of the dead, that he had cut loose from his Christian moorings, and had drifted away out upon the shoreless sea of infidelity. He maintained that the burning of the dead was wholly and entirely a secular and sanitary measure, altogether outside of any religious considerations. The disposal of the dead, he maintained, should be made entirely dependent upon the safety and comfort of the living. Those who knew him best, and were most intimate with his views, are very free to assert that he never lost confidence in the great doctrine of salvation through faith in the merits of the atonement offered by the blood of Christ.
