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great-grandfather, John Hart, of New Jersey, was a fearless and outspoken opponent of Great Britain, and as one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, proved that he had the courage of his convictions. Another ancestor of Judge Stowe, his grandfather, was a soldier in the army under Washington. Judge Stowe's father, Hiram Stowe, was one of the oldest residents of the town of Bridgewater, the principal merchant of the place, and in the latter days of his life a banker. He had charge of the local branch of the Bank of Pittsburgh, until it was abolished, and was variously connected with a number of other monetary concerns in the city of Pittsburgh. He was an enterprising and sagacious business man and accumulated a large estate. His widow is still living at the old homestead in Beaver County, and although quite advanced in years, retains a fair degree of health and the possession of all her faculties. Her father was the late Major Darragh, a prominent politician and at one time a member of the State Senate of Pennsylvania. Judge Stowe was educated at Washington College, Pennsylvania, which he entered at the age of fifteen. A classmate, referring to him at this period of his life, says: "He was a good student and stood high in his class. He did not slight anything that came to him in course, but was inclined less to the languages than to logic, rhetoric and mathematics. He read widely, and was, I think, at that time the best informed man in college upon topics outside of his studies. He was very fond of reading Webster's speeches and often talked to me of their great logical power and purity of style. He was not much of an orator himself. He always distrusted his own powers and was nervous and diffident, although lively enough when he was among his fellows. He had already selected the law as his profession and frequently told me his ambition was to be a judge." In 1845 he was graduated and at once began the study of law under Moses Hampton, Esq., of Pittsburgh—then a lawyer of great repute and large practice and afterwards on the bench of Allegheny County. The circumstances which led him to settle at Pittsburgh illustrate the powerful influence often exerted unconsciously but irresistibly by an accidental acquaintance. It had been his intention to go from Washington College to Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky, there study law, get admitted to the bar and settle down to practice in the "blue grass region." This carefully thought out plan would undoubtedly have been put into execution but for the fact that on one evening during his junior year he met at the rooms of a classmate a young man named John H. Hampton, also a fellow-student. This young gentleman (at present

EDWIN H. STOWE.

HON. EDWIN HENRY STOWE, President-Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, upon the bench of which he has served with honor and distinction for nearly a generation, was born in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, within the limits of the present borough of Bridgewater, January 2, 1826. His ancestors came from England and were among the early settlers of the Colonies, and at the time of the Revolution were people of position and influence. In that struggle his maternal

the senior member of the leading law firm of Hampton and Dalzell, of Pittsburgh) came from Pittsburgh to the college in 1844, and entered the sophomore class. He was a fine singer and had a choice collection of ballads and patriotic songs at his tongue's end. The first exhibition of his rare vocal powers captivated young Stowe and the two soon became room-mates and fast friends. Moses Hampton was the father of Mr Stowe's friend and he took a warm interest in his son's associate and offered to give him a place in his office. Under the circumstances it was not difficult for young Stowe to make up his mind to abandon his Kentucky plans, and thus it came to pass that his lines fell in Pittsburgh instead of at Lexington. He began his legal studies in 1846, prosecuted them leisurely and thoroughly, and in 1849 passed the usual examination and was admitted to practice as an attorney. His business sign was first displayed on a building which stood on Fourth Avenue, below Smithfield Street. To the newly fledged lawyer rent was an important item, and with a view to the practice of economy in this respect, Mr. Stowe joined himself in partnership with S. J. R. McMillen, subsequently Chief Justice and late United States Senator for Minnesota. This arrangement terminated within a twelvemonth, when Mr. McMillen left Pittsburgh for the West and afterwards Mr. Stowe was associated at different times with Alexander M. Watson and E. P. Jones, and in 1854 entered into partnership with his old college friend, John H. Hampton, Esq. A close and careful student by nature, Mr. Stowe devoted himself from the first to the mastery of his profession. His thirst for legal knowledge amounted almost to a passion, and as he had a strong constitution and abundant capacity for hard work, he gratified it to the utmost. He soon acquired the reputation of being the best informed man of his years at the bar, upon the fundamental principles of jurisprudence. He made a special study of constitutional law and his attainments in this department also early brought him great repute. But while excelling as a counsellor he had no special aptitude as a pleader. It was remarked of him by a friend that he preferred working for ten hours in his office over a knotty question of law to making a ten minutes speech to a jury. It may be noted here that after he became associated in practice with Mr. Hampton, he rarely appeared as a pleader. The judicial bent of his mind was clearly shown on many occasions during the first years of his practice. There was a gravity and dignity in his character which impressed all who came in contact with him. At the moot courts organized for practice by his young professional associates, at the time he was studying law, he was not

infrequently chosen to act as Judge, and always discharged his duties as such with dignity and earnestness, giving careful attention to each case and writing out lengthy opinions with as much care and vigor as though great interests were involved. After practicing at the bar with honor and success for thirteen years, Mr. Stowe was nominated, in 1862, by the Republicans, for the office of Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County. His Democratic opponent in this campaign was Judge Shaler of Pittsburgh, whom he defeated by a large majority. In 1872, at the conclusion of his term of office, he was re-nominated by the Republicans. During the ten years he had sat upon the bench he kept his judicial ermine unspotted and won so excellent a reputation as a just and upright judge that even his harshest political opponents found nothing to criticise. The consequence was that the Democrats made no nomination and he was re-elected without opposition. In 1882, at the expiration of his second term of ten years, he was re-nominated by the Republicans, and, as before, re-elected without Democratic opposition. In this campaign the bar of Allegheny County, without distinction of party, and openly proclaiming that it had no other end in view than the promotion of the pure and impartial administration of the law, unanimously recommended him to the suffrages of the people. The committee making the report said:

"Among the distinguished gentlemen with whom he has been associated on the bench, and who have made the record of the judiciary a credit to our whole community, he has been conspicuous for his courage, integrity and impartiality in the duties of his high and responsible office. For nearly twenty years we have been associated with him personally and professionally, and we desire to say and do say without any dictation or the assumption of any special right to advise, except what grows out of our professional relations, that into no hands would we more confidently and gladly commit the life, liberty and property of this community, and largely they are in the power of the Court. A wise, learned and just judge is the safeguard of them all, and once secured should be retained."

At the Democratic County Convention held at Pittsburgh, in 1882, the following preamble and resolutions presented by the Committee on Judiciary were adopted:

"Whereas, since the organization of the Democratic party it has been a part of its creed to keep the judiciary out of and above politics; and

Whereas, the term of E. H. Stowe, President-Judge of the Common Pleas Court, No. 1, will expire this year, and

Whereas, Judge Stowe possesses a fitness for this position that is universally acknowledged and entitles him to a unanimous election, and further, in view of the fact that the Democratic County Con-

vention ten years ago placed his name on the ticket then formed and voted for by Democrats, therefore,

Resolved, that this committee recommend to the Democratic County Convention, to be held this year, the propriety of making no nomination in opposition to Judge Stowe for President-Judge."

It seldom happens that any man in public life, in any capacity whatever, receives such an unqualified endorsement from the opposite party; and that Judge Stowe has received it is evidence of the strongest kind that he has conferred dignity upon his office as well as derived dignity from it. Since his elevation to the bench he has ranked as one of the ablest Common Pleas Judges in the State. His opinions are carefully framed and have the merit of being brief and to the point. It is rare that they are reversed in the Supreme Court. Conscientiousness marks every one of his judicial acts, and so willing is he to do absolute justice in every case, that he does not hesitate to listen to arguments against his own rulings and judgments. The manhood and integrity of the man are always uppermost, and if he finds that he is wrong, he immediately reverses his previous decision, having no other pride in the matter than that of uprightness and justice. It is not necessary in a biographical sketch intended for the general reader to do more than refer to Judge Stowe's cases. During his long experience on the bench he has presided at a number of the most important cases tried in the courts of Pittsburgh. In the majority of these, of course, the legal points argued and decided were of a character to be appreciated only by those learned in the law. But there were many cases of much more than ordinary interest to the lay mind. Of these may be mentioned the famous Clark-McCully "bond of friendship" case, in which his ruling that Mr. Clark was a competent witness, afterwards affirmed by the Supreme Court, won the case for him. Another case of far-reaching importance is known as "the Rising Main case" and is a leading one on the power of city Councils to discriminate between bidders for public works and award the contract to a bidder other than the lowest. In the Ortwein murder case, which also was tried before him, the doctrine was laid down for the first time in Pennsylvania that where the defense of insanity is set up against a charge of murder, the insanity must be proved to the satisfaction of the jury. It is not sufficient to merely create a reasonable doubt in their minds. His decision in this case was upheld by the Supreme bench. In 1881 there was a very decided public sentiment in favor of elevating Judge Stowe to the Supreme bench, and he was strongly urged for the position. In 1888 this sentiment was again shown through the

action of the bar of Allegheny County which, at a meeting held on February 8, unanimously resolved to recommend Hon. Edwin H. Stowe for nomination by the coming Republican State Convention as a candidate for the office of Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. In the address to the people throughout the Commonwealth, soliciting their co-operation, the committee, composed of thirty-one distinguished members of the bar and representing all shades of political opinion, said:

"Judge Stowe's judicial experience has extended over a period of twenty-five years, and he possesses every quality, mental, physical, personal and political, which ought to co-exist in a judge to such a degree as to make him eminently fit for this nomination."

After referring to his truly remarkable success at the polls the committee allude to his character as a judge and a man, and as their testimony to his abilities and worth is that of individuals personally and intimately acquainted with him, it is here given in full as a fitting conclusion to this imperfect sketch of one of the most learned and upright judges in the State:

"Edwin H. Stowe was fitted by nature to be a judge. Education and experience have developed his natural qualifications to the highest degree. There is nothing artificial or strained in his treatment of a legal question; his mental processes are systematic, and his method of reasoning logical and undeviating. His mind is a stranger to anything narrow or distorted. Few men can bear comparison with him in the readiness and thoroughness with which he discerns the legal principles applicable to a given state of facts; and few can command a greater wealth of varied and sound legal learning. Well schooled in the technical learning of his profession, he always may be safely trusted in the practical application of settled principles to new and unsettled questions; and it may be confidently asserted that no Common Pleas Judge in the Commonwealth excels him in his knowledge of equity practice and in the judicious application of equitable principles. His Court has always been an important one. The wonderful developments of recent years in Western Pennsylvania have brought before him legal questions of the utmost magnitude, novelty and importance, and he has always proved himself abundantly able to meet and master them. He is a resolute, independent, fearless and impartial judge, ever anxious for a just determination of the causes tried before him. He is an industrious man and always prompt in the performance of his work. He is a genial man and in the full vigor of his physical manhood."

In 1864 Judge Stowe married Miss Emma Vick, youngest daughter of Charles Vick, Esq., an English gentleman of culture and means who came to this country and settled in Allegheny. By this marriage there were three sons—Charles Herman Stowe, a very promising youth who died in 1881, aged fifteen years; Edwin Walford Stowe and Percy Van Deusen Stowe.