

COMMEMORATIVE  
BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD  
— OF —  
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA,

INCLUDING THE COUNTIES OF  
Centre, Clearfield, Jefferson and Clarion,

CONTAINING  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF PROMINENT AND REPRESENTATIVE  
CITIZENS, AND OF MANY OF THE EARLY SETTLED FAMILIES.

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~ ILLUSTRATED ~

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CHICAGO:  
J. H. BEERS & CO.  
1898.

**GOV. DANIEL H. HASTINGS.** The life history of Daniel Hartman Hastings, governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds of the aspiring youth of to-day. It would be difficult to imagine a less promising environment than that in which were spent the early years of this distinguished orator, lawyer, soldier, financier and statesman.

William Hastings, his father, was born in Ireland, and, not long after marriage with a native of Scotland, left his home in County Derry, Ireland, to come to the New World, settling in 1832 in what is now Clinton county, near his father, who had preceded him to America. The Pennsylvania canal was then in process of construction, and George Hastings, the grandfather of the subject of this notice, having obtained a contract for the construction of a section of it, his father worked upon it as a laborer for some time, but afterward found employment as a farm hand. Neither parent had been given educational advantages—even of a rudimentary sort—and their log cabin, two miles from Salona, could be supplied with but limited comforts on their meagre income of fifty cents a day. Nine children shared its shelter and their parents' love, and Governor Hastings, who first saw the light there February 26, 1849, doubtless owes much of his practical common sense to the lessons learned amid the close economies and stern realities of a poor man's home. He was named for Rev. Daniel Hartman, a venerable minister of the M. E. Church, to whom the success of his namesake was a source of joy and pride. The public schools of that day and locality were not of the best, but the means required to place the bright boy under more suitable training could not be spared from the slender purse of the parents. Mr. George Hopson, of Farrandsville, however, generously made provision for his attendance at a select school taught by Miss Mary A. Crosby. Through her care and influence he acquired a fair knowledge of the English branches, but at an early age he was obliged to leave school in order to assist in the task of gaining a livelihood. When the Civil war broke out his elder brothers

took up arms in defense of the Union, and young as he was the future governor showed his martial spirit by running away repeatedly from his home with intent to enlist in some fighting regiment. On his first attempt he succeeded in reaching Lock Haven, and on the second he made his way to Williamsport; but each time he was captured and taken home. The third time he reached Carlisle, had actually donned the uniform of a private soldier, and was rejoicing in the attainment of his wish when his father again appeared, and the boy sorrowfully returned to the Nittany Valley farm, and resumed his distasteful toil with the hoe and the plow.

In the winter of 1863, a school in Wayne township, Clinton county, became vacant through the appointment of its teacher, Col. W. W. S. Snodely, as county superintendent. Although but fourteen years old the future governor determined to apply for the place and, borrowing a dollar, he trudged eighteen miles through the snow on a wintry day, and secured a promise of appointment should he pass the examination. He walk back to Lock Haven on the same day, gained the required certificate, and the next morning walked to the school in time to open the day's session. His dollar had been spent, however, and during this first trying day in his new sphere he had nothing to eat. His success in the school made further employment easy to obtain, and for some years his winters were spent in teaching, while in the vacation he assisted his father as before. His evenings were devoted to study, and so rapidly did he progress in learning and in professional skill that in 1867 he was elected principal of the Bellefonte Academy, and superintendent of the public schools of Bellefonte, his duties including the oversight of all the schools in the borough. While there he pursued a course of study in Latin and Greek with Prof. W. H. Murray, of the Episcopal School, as a tutor. From 1867 to 1875 Gov. Hastings filled the position of principal with marked success, and during two years of this period he displayed conspicuous ability in journalism as assistant editor of the *Bellefonte Republican*. By some means known only to himself he also found time to read law, and on April 29, 1875, was admitted to the Bar. He became at once a member of the firm of Bush, Yocum & Hastings, which continued until the withdrawal of Mr. Bush in 1877, when the firm name of Yocum & Hastings was adopted. In 1878, when Mr. Yocum was elected to Congress, a new partner was taken, and the business continued under the name of Hastings & Reeder.

In the meantime our subject had married (in

1877) Miss Jane Armstrong Rankin, daughter of James H. Rankin, who at the time of his death was the senior member of the Centre County Bar. His success in his profession and his growing reputation as an orator brought him into prominence in public life, and he was elected a member of the school board, then Burgess of Bellefonte, trustee of the M. E. Church, and trustee of the Pennsylvania State College, of Dickinson College at Carlisle, and of other educational institutions. In July, 1877, the Pennsylvania National Guard was called out to suppress the well-remembered riots, and at Gen. Beaver's request our subject accompanied the command to Altoona as an aid on the General's staff. His long-suppressed inclination for military life made this opportunity a welcome one, and his energy and ability quickly attracted attention. In July, 1877, he was appointed a captain in the 5th Regiment; in March, 1878, he was elected and commissioned lieutenant-colonel of the 5th. In June, 1883, he was appointed assistant adjutant-general of the 2d Brigade, and in March, 1884, he was elected colonel of the 5th Regiment, which in the annual inspection of 1886 achieved the highest standing of any in the State.

So capable did he prove himself in military affairs, that he was offered the appointment of adjutant-general of the State, and in January, 1887, he resigned the colonelcy to take this wider sphere of responsibility, in which he won new laurels. At the time of the division encampment at Mt. Gretna, in 1887, when Gen. Sheridan reviewed the eight thousand guardsmen, the sight of the long ranks of infantry in perfect alignment, each soldier equipped as for actual warfare with uniform and accoutrements complete, and the cavalry and batteries following in like perfection of detail, the hero of Winchester was heard to say, "that looks more like business than anything I have seen in this country since the disbandment of the army at Washington in 1865." To the united energies and vigilance of Gens. Hartranft and Hastings this success was attributed, and the National Guard had cause on this and other occasions to note Gen. Hastings' zeal and efficiency. He was appointed with Gen. Hartranft and others upon a commission to revise the military code, and rendered excellent service in the preparation of the bill under which the militia has since been given increased strength and effectiveness.

An ardent Republican from his youth up, Gov. Hastings has always taken deep interest in politics, and, fitted as he was by nature and training for usefulness in that field, it is not sur-

prising that he was early called to take an active place in the front rank of workers. His first triumph was as a manager of the Congressional campaign of 1878, when his partner, Seth H. Yocum, was a candidate. The task was no light one, as the Democratic majority usually reached 3,000; but through shrewd and tactful management Mr. Yocum was elected, defeating ex-Governor Andrew G. Curtin. In 1882, during Gen. Beaver's campaign for the office of governor, Gen. Hastings, as a personal friend and political sympathizer, supported him with untiring energy. In no wise disheartened by the defeat of that year, he presented Gen. Beaver's name to the State Convention of 1886 for renomination, and succeeded in having justice done to a brave and generous man against whom misrepresentation and prejudice had temporarily prevailed. In 1887 Gov. Hastings was chairman of the State Convention which nominated Henry W. Williams for Judge of the Supreme Court, and William B. Hart for State Treasurer. In Pennsylvania his power as an orator had long been known, but it was not until the Republican National Convention of 1888 that the country learned of his ability. Hon. John Sherman was Pennsylvania's choice for President, and Gov. Hastings, who was present as a delegate-at-large, was elected to bring the name of that candidate before the convention. It was a time, a place, a theme, to arouse our spokesman to do his best, and in his half-hour address he gained a national reputation, and the newspapers throughout the land paid tribute to his brilliancy and charm as an orator. "Gath" telegraphed to the *Chicago Tribune* that day: "Sherman was best put in the field. The Pennsylvania man who lives in the little mountain town of Bellefonte made the best speech which has been heard at this display. It was worthy of being the party platform. Hastings, who made it, they say will some day be heard in the Senate or run for governor."

Murat Halstead, of the *Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette*, wrote in his paper: "As to the reception of the presentation of nomination there was no marked preference shown for any candidate until the splendid oration of Gen. Hastings, of Pennsylvania, nominating Sherman. Then things took a more decided shape. Gen. Hastings has a magnificent appearance and delivery, and his superb ringing sentences fell one after another, bright as new coin, each word clear as a bugle note; the mighty multitude felt the magic of oratory, of a man speaking worthily on a great occasion. There never was a finer speech made on such an occasion, and I remember Ingersoll's nomination of Blaine at Cincinnati. Gen. Hast-

ings walks up at once to a place among the few of our public speakers." His success made so deep an impression that he was called upon by the presiding officer to take the chair for the day, and was also invited to second the nomination of Hon. Levi P. Morton for the Vice-Presidency. As may be supposed he was the most popular orator of the campaign of that year, and he did noble service in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, contributing greatly to the success of the cause. The influence thus gained has been strengthened and widened in succeeding campaigns, and in the memorable struggle of 1896 his rare gifts were devoted with supreme energy to the task of upholding his country's honor and integrity.

These and similar triumphs won admiration. It remains to mention a time when Gov. Hastings won also the love of every kindly heart. The story of the Johnstown disaster followed, as the weeks passed, by the story of rescue and restoration under the guidance of the clear brain, keen eye and sympathetic heart of the man who took charge of that scene of desolation. On the fateful day of May 31, 1889, Gen. Hastings was at Hastings, a flourishing town in Cambria county, named in his honor, looking after the extensive coal-mining operations there in which he is interested in partnership with Gov. Beaver, Robert Coleman and Col. J. L. Spangler. During the night news came of the frightful devastation in the valley of the Conemaugh, and with the break of day Gen. Hastings started with Col. Spangler to drive over flooded roads and broken bridges to Johnstown, where they arrived at 4 P. M. He lost no time in telegraphing to Gov. Beaver for supplies, and then he took off his coat and bent his energies to the work of relief. His executive ability and forceful character, no less than his official rank, indicated the man for the hour, and by general consent he assumed the practical management of affairs, and as has been said won "by his uniform kindness and sympathetic actions the gratitude of his fellow citizens throughout the State." The surviving inhabitants of the stricken city gave a public recognition of his great work on the evening of July 13, 1889, when the Governor took his leave of the place, and the soldiers of the G. A. R. manifested the appreciation of his soldierly qualities by presenting a badge of their order beautifully set with diamonds, claiming that by his gallant and faithful service on that field of death and living agony he had proven himself a worthy comrade.

Pennsylvania has learned to look to this section for first-class gubernatorial timber, and the supply furnished in the past has abundantly tes-

tified that confidence. What more natural than that this distinguished son should be called upon to administer to the affairs of the State! The story of his election in 1894 by the largest majority ever given in Pennsylvania to the head of the State ticket need not be retold here. Since January 15, 1895, Gov. Hastings has filled his high office in a manner to disarm criticism, and his steadily increasing fame points to yet more advanced posts of duty.

In the words of one who knows him well: "As a citizen he is clever, generous and universally popular, and in thorough and complete sympathy with the people. No one hesitates to ask him a favor, for his disposition is gentle and obliging. Entertaining and agreeable in conversation, he is a citizen of sterling worth, and exemplary in the discharge of all his social duties. His practical acquaintance and thorough sympathy with all that concerns the public welfare, his readiness to respond to every just call upon him as a citizen and as a man at whatever sacrifice, have had a thorough public test, and the whole career of his life affords an example worthy of imitation. Nothing but the louder cry of his country ever came in conflict with his duty to his parents; as a teacher he was painstaking, considerate and successful; as a lawyer he brings to the discharge of his duties honesty and earnestness of purpose, commendable zeal and energy, good judgment, strong convictions of duty and great knowledge of the law. In official position he has been equal to every emergency that arose, and in all cases brought great credit to the offices he has thus far been intrusted with.