

HISTORY
OF
LANCASTER COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA,
WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF MANY OF ITS
PIONEERS AND PROMINENT MEN.

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ILLUSTRATED.

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FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MUHLENBERG, M.D., was the youngest child of the Rev. Dr. G. Henry Ernest Muhlenberg, and was born the 14th of March, 1795, in the city of Lancaster, where his father was pastor, for thirty-five years, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity. His preliminary education he received in the German and English private and parochial schools of his native city and in the family of his father, who was a university scholar, and a gentleman of high culture, refined taste, and exalted Christian character. There was no system of public-school education at that time, either at Lancaster or in the State; the education of the young, therefore, was provided for by congregational schools and those of a private and voluntary character, which varied in excellence and duration with the ability of the teacher and the support given to him. Such schools as these the doctor attended, and often mentioned to his family the names of the principals of them with gratitude or pleasantry, in accordance with his conviction of the benefit or the converse he had experienced whilst connected with them. His children thus remember to this day the names of Gallagher, Snowden, Hutchins, and Benjamin Schipper, a distinguished teacher of the classics at the commencement of this century. All of these, with the exception of the first, were gentlemen of education and experience in their profession; but *John Gallagher*, as he was known among the boys, seems to have been of that class of teachers whom Dr. Goldsmith has so pleasantly immortalized in his poems.

After the completion of this curriculum of private study, which embraced a solid, though not an extended, education in the English, German, Latin, and Greek languages and the elements of mathematics, and a considerable knowledge of botany, one of the favorite pursuits of his father, he was placed as a student of medicine in the office of the eminent Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia. The Rev. Dr. Muhlenberg was personally well acquainted with Dr. Rush, had been associated with him in works of general benevolence and patriotism, and had a high appreciation of his ability as a physician and his excellence of character. The son probably entered his office in the year 1812, and continued with him as private pupil, and heard his lectures in the University of Pennsylvania, until the spring of 1814, when

he received, April 4th, the degree of M.D. from that justly celebrated institution. He managed, by zeal, industry, and self-reliance, to be graduated with honor; for though, as already said, his preparatory education had been solid, it had not been of such an extended and thorough character in all directions as to enable him to get through without great diligence. The writer remembers to have heard the doctor say that when he first went to Philadelphia a copy of Ewing's "Natural Philosophy" had been put into his hands at the suggestion of his preceptor to complete by private study his defective mathematical education, but that he found it, owing to the want of the necessary elementary knowledge, a dry and unprofitable employment. No doubt this consciousness of the deficiency of his education in some directions stimulated him to greater effort in his professional studies, which, under the guidance of his able instructor, gave him honorable eminence among his fellow-students and prepared him for further success in subsequent life. It may be said here that he always entertained a high regard for his preceptor, and often spoke of him as a gentleman of high culture and an impressive and eloquent lecturer.

After his graduation in the University of Pennsylvania he returned to his native city, with the view of entering upon the practice of his profession, and one year afterwards lost his excellent father by a stroke of apoplexy, and thus, with but limited means of support, was thrown upon his own resources. His father died May 23, 1815. He was married to his first wife Feb. 6, 1816. This lady was a granddaughter of the Rev. John Helfrich Schaum, one of the early ministers of the Lutheran Church, sent over from Halle. This gentleman had come over to America in the year 1745.

From necessity and inclination he devoted himself with all the energy of his nature to the noble profession he had selected for his life-work, and in the discharge of the duties connected with it in the departments of general practice and surgery, which then, and especially in the county, were intimately united, he spent fifty years of the best part of his life in ministering to the wants of his fellow-men. In this long period of practice he built up for himself a widespread reputation and a competent support. His skill was greater in general practice than in surgery, for which the tenderness of his heart somewhat disqualified him. But in the multiplied forms of acute and chronic disease he had few superiors in Pennsylvania in accurate diagnosis and judicious treatment. Too modest to claim this for himself, the writer knows these qualifications to have been accorded to him, as the result of his long and varied practice, by some of the most eminent of his medical contemporaries in the schools of Philadelphia and elsewhere. His benevolent labors were not confined to the city of his birth, in every part of which, among the rich and the poor, he was a daily visitant, but extended to the most dis-

tant parts of the county, and adjoining counties, in cases of his own, or in consultation with other physicians. Everywhere he gained the confidence and respect of the people by the soundness of his judgment, the urbanity of his manner, and the warmth of his heart. His kind and sympathetic words by the bedside of his patients often acted as a charm, and did as much good as the medicine he administered. Nor did he merely show concern for the bodily ills of those to whom he was ministering, he was also solicitous to promote their higher and spiritual welfare. Where necessary he did not hesitate to mingle encouragement with reproof; he brought up before the minds of the dying the promises of the divine Word for their consolation, and often, when requested, offered up prayers to God in their behalf. Both kinds of services are germane to this profession, and ought never to be separated. He also frequently accelerated the cure of his poorer patients by sending them delicacies from his own table, and in other cases awakened for them the sympathies and secured the benefactions of their fellow-citizens. Services of this kind, continued for so many years, and which were not intermitted until he was disqualified for them by blindness and organic disease of another kind, cannot be fitly described in a few words; they are gratefully remembered on earth and have been rewarded in heaven. While his profession was the great field in which his usefulness was most conspicuously and most constantly displayed, he was also ever ready to promote the welfare of his fellow-citizens in other directions, and to advance the prosperity of the city of his birth and the land of his nativity whenever a suitable opportunity offered. He served as prothonotary in the years 1821-23, having been appointed by Governor Hiester, and his occupancy of this office brought him into contact with the leading legal and literary gentlemen of Lancaster, which both improved his mind and increased his influence. He was appointed register of wills afterwards by Governor Shultz, and served two terms.

As president of the Lancaster Bank, with James Evans, Esq., as cashier, he aided in rescuing it from destruction, and in raising it to a high degree of usefulness and prosperity. With other gentlemen he interested himself for the improvement of the Conestoga, by a series of locks, to bring it into connection with tide-water, for commercial purposes, and used his influence and contributed of his means to make it a success. The money was lost, though the improvement remains.

He was also much interested in early life in politics, being connected with the Democratic party, and along with Mr. Buchanan he aided in promoting the measures of that organization, so long as they were in his judgment calculated to promote the general good. He was also a member of the military company which, in 1812, with Mr. Buchanan as captain, went to Baltimore to volunteer their services in defense of

that city on the appearance of the British. On their arrival at Baltimore the danger was past. The doctor remained a steadfast personal and political friend of Mr. Buchanan until, as President, he took sides with the South in the Kansas struggle, and failed to oppose with the necessary vigor the efforts of the secessionists to dismember our country. Love of country then impelled the doctor to forsake the friend of his youth and the party favoring such pernicious doctrines. In the great Rebellion his voice gave no uncertain sound. He could not prefer party to the welfare of his country. Descended from a grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg, who was called by the British, when encamped round his residence, in the neighborhood of Valley Forge, and occupying Philadelphia, "an arch rebel;" having also had one uncle, Maj.-Gen. Peter Muhlenberg, who had served in the Revolution with distinction, from its commencement in Charleston, S. C., to its brilliant close at Yorktown; named after another uncle, the Hon. Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, who had been obliged to flee from New York on its occupancy by the English troops, and was afterwards Speaker of the First and Third Congresses of the United States; conscious also that his own father had several times been obliged to flee from Philadelphia in disguise to escape falling into the hands of the invaders of our country, and had lost in consequence nearly all of his property, by nature and education all the pulsations of his heart were for that glorious Union which had been secured at such sacrifices. Without hesitation he united with the war party to preserve the Constitution and the government. His aid was solicited and given in the organization of the Union League, and he became its first president. Throughout the entire struggle he and all of the name were found on the side of their country, and none rejoiced more than he did on the final triumph of the cause of the Union. The doctor might have had high political positions. He declined the offers; he had no aspirations for public honors of this kind. Once, to satisfy his friends, with no hope of election, he ran as a candidate for Congress against the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens.

We turn now to another sphere of his honored and useful life, that of education and religion. Here he co-operated at a comparatively early period with other gentlemen of Lancaster of different religious denominations to establish the Lancasterian public school for the benefit of the poor of the city, and one of his nieces for a long period was the successful principal of the female department. Subsequently he aided in the promotion of the success of the Lancaster County Academy, of which he was one of the trustees. Still more important services, however, did he render in this direction when, after the introduction of the public-school system, this institution was merged into and became a part of Franklin College, incorporated in the year 1787 by the Legis-

lature of Pennsylvania for the benefit of the Germans and their descendants. His father had been one of its early trustees and president, and the son, aided by other public-spirited gentlemen of Lancaster of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, had husbanded the proceeds arising from the sale of the lands granted it by the State with great industry and care, until the negotiations of the different parties interested in it for the division of its funds, or its reorganization, were in progress a few years anterior to 1850. It was owing chiefly to his earnest efforts and influence with others in the course of the able and animated discussion on this subject that the final result was reached, the removal of Marshall College to Lancaster, to be united with the old institution, and the founding of the Franklin Professorship in Pennsylvania College, at Gettysburg, by the Lutheran share of the funds. Though this was contrary to the doctor's wishes in the outset of the debate, he acquiesced in the seemingly providential termination of the matter; and it is now apparent that these measures have greatly benefited Lancaster and the two churches for whom Franklin College was mainly incorporated. Thus the sacrifice of his own personal preferences by the unselfish subject of our sketch resulted in greater good to the institutions of his own church; and at the very last meeting of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania of the Lutheran Church, May, 1883, the incumbent of the "Franklin Professorship," at Gettysburg, was transferred as Professor of Dogmatic Theology to the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. The doctor and his associates in the board of trustees of Franklin College were united with the board at Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg.

In the Lutheran congregation of the Holy Trinity, to which he belonged throughout his life, he was among the first to advocate the introduction of English preaching, which was done so gradually and judiciously that no injustice was done to the German interests; and in all the other measures proposed for its benefit, such as the call of pastors, the remodeling of the church building, Woodward Hall Cemetery, removal of debt, etc., by his wise and prudent counsels and active co-operation he contributed greatly to bring about its present prosperity. For many years he was a member of its vestry, either as trustee or elder, and when not holding office he was regularly consulted, and seldom were his views opposed. In a representative capacity he was, on many occasions, delegate to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the General Synod of the Lutheran Church.

It may be proper to state that the doctor seldom allowed himself any recreation from the duties of his profession. He was never abroad, nor even at any of the places of summer resort. His patients dreaded even his temporary absence to such a degree that he exercised self-denial in this regard also to subserve their interests. It gave him pleasure to spend the few

hours of leisure afforded him in his profession on the small farm and lots he owned in the neighborhood of the city, and his simple and pure tastes were thus easily gratified.

In personal appearance the doctor was noble and commanding, and every one felt in his presence that he was no ordinary character, and could not be trifled with. His frame was muscular and his constitution sound and vigorous, both of which he inherited from his father, who, though "a man of peace," was considered the strongest man in Lancaster County, to say nothing more. The doctor was twice-married, the first time to the lady already mentioned, the second time to Ann Eliza Duchman. He had by the first marriage five, and by the second nine, children.

The last few years of his life he was a great sufferer. In addition to his blindness, he was obliged to endure protracted and intense bodily pain from organic disease. All these complicated ills he endured with heroic fortitude and Christian resignation, and, in spite of his keen suffering, retained the use of his faculties unclouded to the last. His judgment of his own condition was so accurate that it almost amounted to a prediction. He concluded, from his symptoms, that he might live until the Fourth of July, the natal day of our great republic. He actually died on the 5th of that month, a few hours after the time determined upon in his own reflections. How happy are we in being able to say for him, and for others who are following in that beaten track to the grave, that he died in hope of a glorious immortality through the merits of that Saviour who had redeemed him, and for whom he had endeavored, with ever-increasing fidelity, to live and to labor! "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."