

CENTENNIAL BIOGRAPHY.

MEN OF MARK

OF

CUMBERLAND VALLEY, PA.

1776—1876.

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## N. B. LANE, M. D.

**N**ICHOLAS BITTINGER LANE was a native of Franklin county. He was born near Mont Alto Furnace, at the base of the South Mountain, in Quincy township, on the 15th day of August, 1802. His ancestors were emigrants from Holland, who came to this country at a very early period, and settled in Lancaster county, near Litiz. Samuel Lane, the father of the subject of this sketch, a wheelwright by trade, worked his way into Franklin county, and married the daughter of Nicholas Bittinger, a large land owner, who had signalized himself in the days of the Revolution as an ardent Whig, and who was captured by the British at Fort Washington. Inheriting a respectable property in Quincy township, from his father-in-law, he settled himself permanently near Funkstown. Daniel and Samuel Hughes, of Hagerstown, the latter a very distinguished lawyer, determining to erect a furnace on their mountain lands near that village, selected Mr. Lane as their superintendent, and under his directions were erected, and for a number of years operated, the "Mont Alto Iron Works," now so successfully conducted by Col. George B. Wiestling. Nicholas, the only son of Samuel Lane, was educated with as much care and instruction as could be provided him at home, and in the village of Waynesboro', where he was taught the mysteries of Surveying by John Flanagan, Esq., one of the most marked men of the county. In the spring of 1818, young Lane, then in his sixteenth year, commenced the study of medicine with Dr. S. D. Culbertson, of Chambersburg, an eminent practitioner of that day, with whom he remained until his medical course was completed in the spring of 1822; when he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, not being twenty-one years of age, from the celebrated University of Pennsylvania, and winning the distinction of having his *thesis* published in a leading medical journal of that day, by request of the Faculty.

In 1824, Dr. Lane formed a partnership in the practice of medicine with Dr. Alexander T. Dean, then located in Chambersburg, who was one of the most accomplished physicians in the State, which association continued until Dr. Dean formed the design of removing to Harrisburg. The firm of Lane, Bain & Culbertson was then formed, but was of short duration; Dr. Culbertson relinquishing practice altogether, and Dr. Bain returning to Baltimore from whence he had moved to

Chambersburg. Dr. Lane, after the dissolution of the partnership, continued the practice of medicine for about twenty years, acquiring a large amount of business and gaining a reputation as a skilful physician excelled by none in the State, until he was disabled by the disease which closed his life on the 15th of April, 1853.

The life of a country physician is meagre of incidents of public interest, although so fraught with beneficence to individuals; his toils and anxieties, his days and nights of watching and care, his studies and habits of thought being devoted to the sole object of relieving sickness, healing wounds and averting the shafts of the last enemy. Great public affairs go on around him unparticipated and almost unobserved by him; other professions win applause and honours for their followers, large fortunes are made and high renown won by his fellows in other pursuits, but the worn and wearied country physician is almost submerged from public observation while he seeks to rescue the precious freight that this wrecked body yet bears. How many a splendid intellect, how much culture and sagacity in this grand class of workers have passed unnoticed, unsuspected! Among this class, Dr. Lane enjoyed an honourable position. He was a quiet, modest and courteous gentleman, fond of study, well posted in all the branches of his profession, wonderfully successful in the treatment of diseases, and as an operative surgeon cautious and skilful; besides, he had fine literary tastes, was a keen, forcible and ready writer, contributing frequently to the *medical journals* of his day, and in every scheme of reform and progress his pen could be relied upon as a powerful ally and advocate in his own community.

Dr. Lane took a deep interest in church affairs, although not a bigot in religion. While maintaining his own views firmly, he at all times yielded a respectful deference to the opinions of others; thus securing the good will and esteem of all denominations of Christians. He died in the faith of his fathers, a full believer in the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Dr. Lane left a family of several sons and daughters. Two of his sons are engaged extensively in mercantile pursuits in the city of Pittsburgh. Two others have adopted the profession of their father and are pursuing the practice of medicine in their native county. Dr. William C. Lane, his eldest son, graduated in the University of Pennsylvania. As a physician he has received a thorough course of training—is devotedly attached to his profession and highly esteemed as an efficient practitioner in the community in which he is located. As a local historian he deserves more than a passing notice. No

man in the State is better informed, or has written more, on the early settlement of this part of the Cumberland valley than Dr. Lane. Its first settlers, its Indian wars and depredations, its noted men and events, its early churches and forts, interesting facts and incidents, adventures, traditions, &c., &c.; in all this, he is a perfect storehouse of knowledge. He writes with great ease and elegance, and will dash off page upon page of local history, detailing events, giving dates, &c., with a rapidity and accuracy truly wonderful. His writings have appeared from time to time, for years past, in our local newspapers, and are of great value as contributions to our early history, and if compiled would fill volumes. During the war of the Rebellion he served as surgeon of the One Hundred and Twenty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, and afterwards as surgeon of the Board of Enrolment of the Sixteenth District of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Samuel G. Lane, second son of Dr. N. B. Lane, received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with the highest honours, and at once entered upon the practice of medicine. Young, talented and zealous, of undoubted integrity, fine social qualities, and a mind generously stored with varied learning, he soon took position in the very front rank of his profession, acquiring a respectable practice and the confidence and esteem of the entire community. At the breaking out of the Rebellion he received the appointment of Surgeon to the Fifth Pennsylvania Reserves, sharing in the full the active service and dangers of the campaign with that noted regiment. His energy and ability as a surgeon attracted the attention of Gov. Curtin, who called him from active service in the field and commissioned him Assistant Surgeon General of the State. In this responsible position, by his strict attention to business, generous and impartial conduct, he was looked upon then, as now, with affection and gratitude by the entire medical corps of the state. As a writer Dr. Lane possesses remarkable ability, contributing much as correspondent and editor to the newspapers of his native town.