

PREFACE.

To learn something of the origin and history of one's family would appear to be a natural and almost universal desire of mankind. The same curiosity which leads us to peer into the hidden future prompts us to travel back to the early days of our ancestors, to inquire from whence they came, where were their homes, and what were their names and deeds. And he who collects and preserves from oblivion the names and history of individuals and families performs a service worthy of general recognition. The value of biography and of the history of nations, governments, and institutions is universally acknowledged, and the carefully preserved records of families often possess an interest and value similar in kind, if not equal in degree.

In our own country, the pressure of business interests absorbs so much of the time and energy of the people that until within a recent period these matters have received much less attention than in the Old World. There all records of births, marriages, and deaths have for ages been carefully preserved, and are always easy of access. The advantages of this custom are many and obvious; ancestry may be more easily traced, inheritance claims readily established, statistics of great value may be easily collected, and the interests of coming generations in many ways subserved.

The origin of this volume is due to a circumstance which may be worthy of narration. Up to three-score years the compiler knew comparatively nothing of his