

**THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF
EDWIN GILLIAM BOOTH: A
PROMINENT LAWYER,
LEGISLATURE AND
PHILANTHROPIST**

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HENRY E. DWIGHT

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Edwin G. Booth.

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OF
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A PROMINENT
LAWYER, LEGISLATOR, AND PHILANTHROPIST.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
HENRY E. DWIGHT, M.D., D.D.

"Integer Vitæ et tenax propositi."—HORACE.

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PREFACE.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY has said that "memoirs are like analogies, and serve as pontoons" to the reader. They are bridges over which we walk to thoughts, ideas, and discoveries high above the point of starting. They are mirrors, in which a man beholdeth his natural face in a glass, and thereby learns to pass from the world which now is to that which is to come. Thus we learn to hear the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages, and to use them as a glass by which we receive more light, in a wider field of vision, from the word of God.

The nearer that the subject of this memoir was approached, and the more that was seen of him in the retired and most familiar scenes of life, the deeper was the love and esteem which he awakened, the more minute, exact, and faithful in all respects the narrative of his life may be given. Such a narrative will only excite the more affectionate admiration in that wide circle of friends and relatives where he moved like a star, full of life and splendor and joy.

That the history of such a life might prove satisfactory to those for whom it was prepared, careful researches were necessary, original documents must first be found, then transcribed, and much matter produced which had never before seen the light on a printed page. Whether the author has been successful or not in his attempt to

do justice to the life and character of his friend, he must leave others to judge.

It should be borne in mind, that to condense and select out of an immense mass of detail that which is really necessary to give a vivid picture of any life or character, is often far more difficult than to give a minute narrative of details. Among the side lights thus thrown upon the picture, are the facts connected with the early history of Virginia, the character of his maternal ancestors, the institutions at which he was fitted for life, and the era of his services as a legislator and reviser of the code of his native State. Points so important should not be passed over as matters of uncertainty, and therefore liable to confuse the reader. References to authorities have been given at the outset, to stimulate original research; but the author has been sparing of them, because the majority of his readers are unable to consult them with advantage. The more important works have been carefully studied, that opinions previously formed might be confirmed. From causes beyond his control he has been forced to curtail the history of eventful periods in a life which might instruct and interest others, since nothing in such a career which enlightens the mind and elevates the feelings is opposed to the objects for which the work has been undertaken.

In conclusion the author ventures to express the hope that this historical sketch may not only prove a source of comfort and consolation to those for whom it was designed, but to the intelligent reader everywhere.

H. E. D.

THE MEMOIR.