

Commemorative Biographical Encyclopedia of the Juniata Valley, Comprising the Counties of Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry, Pennsylvania, J. M. Runk and Company, Publishers 1897

Rev. W. R. H. Deatrich, D. D., Newport, Perry County, Pa., was born at St. Thomas, Franklin County, Pa., June 28, 1834. He is a son of **John** and **Mary (Brazier) Deatrich**. His ancestors, paternal and maternal, came from the Palatinate, on the Rhine. His grandfather, **John Ludwig Deatrich**, was well educated, and was intended by his parents for one of the learned professions, but such was not his own inclination. In early life, he turned his attention to the New World and as he grew in years, its attraction for him increased, till at length he bade farewell to the Fatherland, and set out for America. He sailed from Rotterdam, clearance at Cowes, England, in the ship "Minerva," John Spuriers, master, and landed at Philadelphia, October 29, 1767. He was married in this country to a Lady who, with her parents, crossed the ocean in the same vessel with him. With an eye to business, **John Ludwig Deatrich**, "with a little colony of his countrymen, moved westward, and took up their abode in what was called, at that early day, the "Conococheague Settlement," in the beautiful and fertile Cumberland Valley. This settlement is now embraced in the territory of Franklin County, Pa. Here **Mr. Deatrich** became a prosperous farmer. He loved his new home and his adopted country, showing his patriotism by becoming a soldier in the Revolutionary army; as such, he passed through many trying scenes. He had a family of twelve children, of whom **John**, born at the homestead in Franklin County, February 2, 1796, was the youngest. It is clear that, although the elder **Deatrich** declined a professional career, it was not through lack of ability, or an appreciation of learning. These traits were his, and became the heritage of his posterity. Thus we find that, although an artisan, **John Deatrich** enjoyed a liberal education, and was a warm friend and supporter of popular education, as afforded by the common school system.

John Deatrich was twice married; his only child by his first wife is **James Deatrich, Esq.**, of Roaring Spring, Blair County, Pa. Of the second marriage, the first child is **Rev. W. R. Humphrey**; the others are three daughters, and two sons: **Charles McCauley**, a merchant, of St. Thomas, Pa.; and **John Calvin**. **Prof. John Calvin Deatrich**, A. M., died very suddenly, in the midst of his life-work, August 8, 1896, at Chambersburg, Pa. He was unmarried. The following kindly tribute to his memory says no more than is well known to **Mr. Deatrich's** large circle of acquaintances in the valley: "***Professor Deatrich** belonged to a large and honored relationship, about all of whom are members of the Reformed Church. He was a life-long member, and during the fifty-one years of his life, devoted himself to all the interests of the church, and greatly endeared himself to all with whom he associated. He was the leading member of the St. Thomas Church. From a scholar in the Sunday school he became a teacher, then an officer, and ended his labors as superintendent. He had been honored with the sacred offices of deacon and elder in the church, and was known far and wide for his faithfulness in everything he undertook. But **Professor Deatrich** was best and most widely known as a teacher, than whom there was no better in the county of Franklin. For a number of years he was principal of a select school in St. Thomas, in which he prepared pupils for teaching and for college. In this work he was successful, and will be lovingly remembered by the many young men and women who sat at his feet. His kindness of heart, amiable disposition, humble spirit, correct judgment and honesty of purpose, won him many friends, and made him a valuable citizen.*" The father and mother also rest from their labors. They were devoted Christians, whose supreme delight it was, by precept

and example, to train up their children in the true knowledge and fear of God, according to the articles of the Christian faith and doctrine as laid down in the Old and New Testaments and in the symbols of the Reformed Church.

In accordance with their pious practice, their son, **W. R. H. Deatrich**, was baptized when less than three months old, September 14, 1834, by Rev. Frederick Rahausser. After having been instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion, he was admitted to his first communion, May 4, 1850, under the ministry of the Rev. Nicholas Gehr, D. D., who catechized and confirmed him in the faith of the Reformed Church at St. Thomas. The boy received his secular instruction in the common schools and in two schools of higher education, the Franklin and Marshall Collegiate Institute, at Mercersburg, Pa., whose principal was the Rev. Prof. John R. Kooker, A. M., and the Franklin Academy, at Chambersburg, then under the care of that wonderful linguist, John Knight Shryock, A. M. His theological preparation was made in the study of the Rev. Samuel Philips, A. M.; he also received valuable assistance from the Revs. Samuel R. Fisher, D. D., Benjamin S. Schneck, D. D., and Benjamin Bausman, D. D. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Classis of Mercersburg, Synod of the Potomac of the Reformed Church in the United States, at its annual meeting, in Chambersburg, Pa., May 22, 1860, and was ordained to the holy ministry in the church at Grindstone Hill, near Chambersburg, November 17, 1860, by the same classis, through a committee consisting of the Revs. Henry W. Super, D. D., Thomas G. Apple, D. D., and Samuel Philips, A. M. During a ministry of thirty-six years, **Rev. Dr. Deatrich** has served four pastorates: Grindstone Hill, three years and six months; Gettysburg, Pa., nine years and six months; Mechanicsburg, Pa., eight years; and Newport, fifteen years; he is still in the active work of the Christian ministry at the last-named place. His charge comprises three congregations, Trinity, at New Bloomfield, Pa., organized about 1798 by Rev. Anthony Houtz, the Church of the Incarnation, Newport, Pa., organized in 1820, by Rev. Jacob Scholl, and St. John's, at Marklesville, Pa., organized about 1825 by Rev. Jacob Scholl; all in a prosperous condition, and free from debt. The congregation at Newport has the most valuable and attractive church property in the county. Its trustees have recently contracted with a New York manufacturing company for a first-class pipe organ to be built in the church edifice, with bellows operated by a water motor.

For seventeen years **Dr. Deatrich** was stated clerk of the Classis of Zion, embracing the parishes within the counties of Adams, York, Cumberland and Perry. On June 9, 1868, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa., the leading institution of learning in the Reformed Church, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts; on June 9, 1896, he received from the same institution that of Doctor of Divinity. He has served upon the various boards of the church, but takes especial pleasure in the memory of "nine delightful years" on the Board of Visitors of the Theological Seminary at Lancaster, Pa. He has more than once presided at the sessions of the Classis of Carlisle, and was president of the Synod of the Potomac of the Reformed Church in the United States at its annual sessions, held in October, 1888, at Woodstock, Va. That part of the Reformed Church which is of German origin is now denominated by the above title, to distinguish it from the "Reformed Church in America," formerly known as Dutch Reformed, which took its rise, as indicated by its earlier name, in Holland. **Dr. Deatrich** was, June 30, 1875, elected an alumnus of Franklin and Marshall College; he has also been made an honorary member of Marshall Literary Society, of Mercersburg College; of the Phrenokosmian Society of Pennsylvania College; and of the Diagonthean Literary Society of Franklin and Marshall. He

has frequently lectured with acceptance before literary societies, county and district teachers' institutes, and church societies. The Doctor's kindly presence and genial humor, a perennial characteristic of his, go far to render his presentation of truth striking and effective. He is well-known, especially in his own denomination, as a sincere, faithful and untiring Christian worker, whose long and devoted services have endeared him to many friends. **Rev. Dr. Deatrich** learned to admire the Masonic and Odd Fellows' fraternities on the battlefield at Gettysburg, where amid danger and death their members persisted in their quiet ministries to the sick and dying. Seeking their society and fellowship, he was initiated into Good Samaritan Lodge, 336, Masonic, in May, 1864, at Gettysburg; was advanced to companionship in Samuel C. Perkins R. A. Chapter, 209, at Mechanicsburg, Pa., in February, 1878, and knighted in St. John's Commandery, No. 8, at Carlisle, Pa., in April, 1880. He became a member of Lodge No. 124, I. O. O. F., at Gettysburg, in February, 1867. As to politics, he was formerly an "old-fashioned Democrat," but finds now so much of confusion and corruption everywhere, that he finds it difficult to define his portion. This pastor of many experiences has a bit of a war record, which we will give nearly in his own words: "In my early ministry, I was arrested, near Chambersburg, Pa., July 1, 1863, by order of General Imboden, of the Confederate army, on suspicion of robbing his mail, and marched on foot with his cavalry and mounted infantry to the battlefield of Gettysburg, a distance of 24 miles. The day was extremely warm; the thermometer indicated ninety degrees. I weighed over two hundred pounds, and wore a silk hat. I saw the famous charge of Pickett from the Confederate side, and I had all the poetry of war knocked clean out of me. I was finally discharged, and given a pass to my home, dated on the battlefield, in Adams County, July 3, 1863, which I have pasted, for reservation, on the front lid of my Biblia Polyglotta; I prize it as a souvenir of war times. On my return from the battle ground, I got mixed up with General Lee's retreating army. The common soldiers, looking at my aldermanic proportions and silk hat, regarded me as a high official. They asked me many questions; among these were: 'Where did you git that hat?' 'Come down out of that big hat—needn't say you ain't in it,—I see your feet hanging out!'"

It remains only to speak of **Rev. Dr. Deatrich's** marriage. He was united in holy wedlock to **Mary Clark Maxwell**, May 3, 1855, by the Rev. Jacob Hassler, D. D., of Ft. Loudon, Pa. **Dr.** and **Mrs. Deatrich** have one child, **Mrs. Julien E. Epping**, of Portland, Ore.

www.theperryhistorians.org