

Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Schuylkill County Pennsylvania Comprising A Historical Sketch of the County by Samuel T. Wiley, Author of Histories of Niagara County, New York; Preston and Monongalia Counties, West Virginia; Fayette, Westmorland, Blair, Indiana and Armstrong Counties, Pennsylvania, Etc.; Together with about Five Hundred and Fifty Biographical Sketches of the Prominent Men and Leading Citizens of the County Carefully Revised and Edited by Henry W. Ruoff; Illustrated; Rush, West and Company, Publishers, Philadelphia, PA 1893



HON. S. C. KIRK.

**Hon. Salathiel Cleaver Kirk**, the present popular and efficient prothonotary of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, is the son of **Solomon and Margaret (Williams) Kirk**, and was born in Perry County, Pennsylvania, on April 11, 1845. **Solomon Kirk**, his father, was of Scotch descent, while his mother was of German descent. The former was born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, about the year 1813, and subsequently removed to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, thence to Harrisburg, and finally to Perry County, where the subject of this sketch was born. Subsequently he removed to Schuylkill County, where he died at the age of fifty-nine years.

**S. C. Kirk**, as he has always written his name, received his primary education in the public schools of Tremont, at which place his father died. When about the age of fifteen years he attended a local normal school at Tremont, held by

County Superintendent Krewson, and during his stay at this institution he met the expenses of tuition by acting as janitor, and by other services in connection with the school. At the close of the term he entered the class for examination and received a certificate permitting him to teach in the schools of Schuylkill County. In the following autumn he was awarded a primary school, and from that time advanced step by step until he was elected as teacher in the high school. Shortly after he began teaching, he entered the State normal school at Millersville, Pennsylvania, where he remained some time, but was at last forced to give up his course there through lack of funds. He reluctantly returned home, but by independent effort and close application redeemed in part the loss of instruction brought about by unfortunate circumstances. He was the founder of what is known as the West Schuylkill Normal school at Tremont, a local institution that did much towards helping the worthy and those of limited means to obtain an education and a start in life, some of whom are now prominent teachers in the county. He was secretary of the Teachers'

Institute of Schuylkill County for a number of years, and a member of the committee on permanent certificates.

During the eighteen years in which he was engaged in teaching, he also did more or less work of a literary character, especially for the newspaper press. He first began as an occasional contributor to the *Boston Pilot*, subsequently edited by John Boyle O'Reilly, to which he was a contributor for a number of years. Afterwards he became educational editor of the Pottsville Standard, and upon the retirement of Jacob Sanders, took charge of the Tremont News, now owned by U. G. Batdorff. In 1877, he founded the West Schuylkill Press, now edited and managed by one of his pupils, John A. Bechtel. In the spring of 1882, he accepted an editorial position on the Williamsport Sun and Banner, but one year later returned to Schuylkill County to assume the city editorship of the Miners' Journal. On the latter paper he remained under successive administrations, becoming associate editor latterly, which position he retained until his nomination for the office of prothonotary in 1890.

Politically, **Mr. Kirk** is a democrat, and while a staunch advocate of the principles of that party, is by no means given to the worship of party idols. He is a man who has always been independent in thought, and as a consequence has been independent in action. From factions and sects he has stood aloof, and accorded every man the same freedom in this respect that he claims for himself. The aim of all his political endeavors has been to promote purer political methods, secure good government, and conserve whatever in the past has been proven to be worthy of perpetuation. About the time he reached his majority he was elected to a place in the first council of the borough of Tremont, which he held for several years, and was elected a school director in the same borough. In 1878, in the fourth district, he received the unsolicited nomination of his party, and was elected as a representative to the State Legislature, though that district was overwhelmingly republican. During his term of office, **Mr. Kirk** was instrumental in calling to account many of the political abuses which existed at that time, and which became largely pertinent matters of inquiry by the Legislature of the State and of Legislative committees. By reason of the stand which he took in behalf of honest government and integrity in office, he was threatened with defeat in his district should he ever present himself again as a candidate for legislative honors. The next year shows clearly the status of political ethics in the fourth district—it was registered in **Mr. Kirk's** defeat by a small majority. In 1888, **Mr. Kirk**, at the urgent solicitation of his party, accepted a nomination for State Senator and came within one hundred and eighty-four votes of being elected in a district which is republican by from six hundred to eight hundred majority. Again in 1890, **Mr. Kirk** was presented by his party in nomination, for the office of prothonotary, and after a somewhat vigorous struggle, was elected to that position, whose duties he is now actively engaged in discharging, by a majority of over nineteen hundred.

Both as a public official and as a man, **Mr. Kirk's** career has been one of integrity and blamelessness. He has always been an enemy of political and social wrong, and has sought in his advocacy, and in so far as he was personally able, to bring about such an adjustment of relations as would conduce to harmony and public good. He is a man of striking personality, broad-minded, public spirited, conservative, and yet enterprising. In his official capacity he discharges the functions of his office with strictest fidelity, is accommodating, and always holds

himself in duty bound to discharge the functions of the public trust with an even more rigid fidelity than a private obligation.

On August 21, 1866, he was united in marriage with **Sarah Jane Netherwood**, a daughter of **William** and **Mary Netherwood**, of Tremont, Pennsylvania. To them have been born the following named children: **Ina E.**, wife of **James A. Rinck**, Esq., an attorney at- law of Tamaqua, Pennsylvania; **Emily Corinne**, a teacher in the public schools, and active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and **Elma**, who died about three years ago, in the seventh year of her age.

**Mr. Kirk** is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in which he holds the important positions of exhorter, class leader, and Sunday-school superintendent; president of the Young Men's Christian association; takes quite an active part in literary and forensic work, and is constantly called upon for political and other addresses. He is also president of the Pottsville branch of the Mutual Guarantee Building and Loan association, and is connected with different other organizations.

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