

JOSEPH RUSLING WHITAKER.

1824-1895.

This preliminary sketch of the antecedents of Joseph Rusling Whitaker is necessary for an appreciation of his life and character. In them we find the clue to his work, and bearing them in mind we are able to understand the motives which inspired and controlled his actions. He had an unusual reverence and regard for his father, viewing his achievements with admiration and emulating them, and to a great extent the latter, in increasing age, depended upon him. When his father died he became the head of the family, to whom all went for advice, and, if need be, for assistance, and he felt himself charged with the responsibility. Joseph Whitaker looked back upon the past with more or less of pain, and forward to the future with something of foreboding, the outcome of a sensitive pride and of knowledge of the uncertainties of life. He saw tendencies among some of his descendants, against the effects of which he wanted, so far as he could, to protect them. In anticipation of death he called his son to him, and going over the children and grandchildren in turn, gauging their capabilities and the prospects in store for them, he imposed upon him the burden of providing for their welfare, should the occasion arise. The charge was accepted as a duty to be performed.

In a two-and-a-half-story stone house, containing eight rooms, on a hill overlooking the Delaware Iron Works, upon the Red Clay Creek, six miles from Wilmington, Del., Joseph Rusling Whitaker was born, May 31, 1824. He had no recollection of the place, and never saw it again after his parents left it in the fall of 1826. His childhood was spent in Phoenixville, Pa., where he went to