Modern English biography, volume 1 (of 6), A-H

Frederic Boase

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MODERN ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY

CONTAINING

MANY THOUSAND CONCISE MEMOIRS OF PERSONS WHO HAVE DIED SINCE THE YEAR 1850,

WITH AN INDEX OF THE MOST INTERESTING MATTER.

BY FREDERIC BOASE.

FACTA NON VERBA.

VOLUME I. A-H.

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FOR THE AUTHOR.

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Preface.

Biography like other subjects seems to have its fashion; at one time it is much attended to, at another time neglected. The Historical Register from 1717 to 1739, The European Magazine from 1782 to 1826, and The Gentleman's Magazine from 1731 to 1868 furnished most useful and excellent notices of deceased worthies; then there appeared for one year only, The Register and Magazine of Biography, the first volume by Mr. Thompson Cooper, F.S.A., the second by Mr. Edward Walford, M.A. After this period there was a lull and biography was for some time at a discount; gradually however _The Times_, which hitherto had paid little attention to the subject, commenced inserting numerous obituary notices, and this fashion gradually increased, until at the present day there are few numbers of that paper which do not contain interesting memoirs. Other periodicals followed suit, and now the majority of the daily and weekly journals not only give lives but many of them well engraved portraits.

In the meantime there also came out various books on biography, such as Men of the Time, Men of Mark, Eminent Women Series, English Men of Action, English Men of Letters, English Worthies, Great Artists, Great Writers, Memorable Men of the Nineteenth Century, Men worth Remembering, The Biograph and others, while various improved biographical dictionaries, more especially the Dictionary of National Biography, still in progress, were produced.

General Biography has now become so large a subject, that no one work can comprehend it, and it will, it is imagined, in future, be

necessary to attack it in small sections, if anything like justice is to be done to the matter.

Impressed with these ideas, the author of this work, who had during a period of twenty years made a collection of notes relating to English persons deceased since 1850, thought it not improbable that by printing his materials, he might be able to make a useful contribution to biographical literature. The first volume of “Modern English Biography” is the result; in it will be found memoirs referring to the period mentioned, of all privy councillors, knights, judges, recorders, queen’s counsel, serjeants, stipendiary magistrates, benchers of the inns of court, bishops, deans, archdeacons, chancellors, admirals, generals and members of parliament; other persons too, frequently omitted in biographical works, such as architects, engineers, inventors, ship builders, electricians, railway managers, publishers, actors, dramatists, musicians, music hall artistes, painters, sculptors, engravers, physicians, surgeons, sporting celebrities, eccentric characters and notorious criminals have also been inserted, in fact any one who has been well known and about whom a question might arise in general conversation. In addition, many foreigners who have spent portions of their lives in England and some few natives of the British colonies have been included.

The plan in these memoirs, of which there are nearly 8,000 in this volume, has been first to give the main facts in each life, then, in the case of authors, short though exact titles of their chief works, concluding with references to books where longer accounts are to be found. The subject of portraits has been made a speciality, and thousands of notices of likenesses in books, periodicals and newspapers have been inserted. The Transactions of the most

important scientific and literary societies as well as the best known magazines and newspapers have been examined and the biographical notices extracted.

The memoirs, though short, will be found to contain many exact facts not given in larger works. Great trouble has been taken about births and deaths, the dates of births frequently cannot be obtained and the places and dates of deaths of even very well known individuals are sometimes not easily settled. Information has been sought from all printed sources, from private individuals, and from church registers; reference has been also continually made to the books of the registrar general at Somerset House.

Froude in one of his Essays says “We want the biographies of common people;” this adage has been acted on in Modern English Biography, and many hundred notices of the less known authors, artists, newspaper proprietors and journalists, merchants, country gentlemen and others, which can be found in no other book, are here recorded.

Some reference must be made to the Knights Bachelor, an increasing and important body of men of much repute, about whom the annual knightages do not furnish exact information. For the elucidation of their history, the columns of the London Gazette have been carefully searched and the dates and places of their knighthood extracted, information which it is believed, cannot be found concentrated in any other single volume.

The memoirs are arranged lexicographically according to the surnames, the peers however have all been inserted under their titles, for the reason that their family names are not generally known to

ordinary readers.

To my father Mr. John Josias Arthur Boase and to my eldest brother the Rev. Charles William Boase, I am much indebted for their great kindness in conjointly defraying the cost of printing this work, which I claim, to be an important contribution to the English biography of the nineteenth century.

My thanks are due to Mr. William Prideaux Courtney and to my brother Mr. George Clement Boase, joint authors of the Bibliotheca Cornubiensis, as well as to my before mentioned brother the Rev. C. W. Boase, for kindly reading proofs and supplying additional facts, while to Mr. Richard Bissell Prosser late of the Patent Office and to Mr. Ralph Thomas author of The Handbook of Fictitious Names, I am under an obligation for information about inventors and other persons.

The Second Volume is in active preparation and will appear as soon as is possible, consistently with careful research.

In a biographical work arranged alphabetically an Index is not a necessity, but it was thought that one might add value to the book. A general index was not practicable, as it would have been as extensive as the work itself, but an elaborate and carefully considered compilation of the more remarkable, curious and interesting matter in the volume, has been made for me by my brother Mr. G. C. Boase. Clergy lists, Law lists and Army and Navy lists being common, the names of persons belonging to those professions have not been included. The first important heading in the index is that of Actors followed by Actors' Stage Names, a list probably unique, while Dancers, Singers and others have not been neglected. To Initialisms,

Fancy Names, Changes of Names and Pseudonyms much attention has been given and the entries are very extensive. Fellows of the Royal Society, astronomers, explorers, physicians, surgeons, civil engineers, painters and sculptors are duly recorded, while sport is represented by masters of hounds, betting men, racing men, cricketers, pedestrians and pugilists.

The names of the Knights Bachelor occupy considerable space, and the article London will be found very interesting. Some amount of additional information has been inserted in the Index, to which the reader is recommended to refer when using “Modern English Biography.”

FREDERIC BOASE.

36, James Street,
Buckingham Gate,
London, S.W.,
7 April, 1892.

Abbreviations.

A.A.G. assistant adjutant general.

A.D.C. aide de camp.

A.G. adjutant general.

A.I.C.E. associate of Institution of Civil Engineers.

A.R. Annual Register.

A.R.A. associate of the Royal Academy.

A.R.S.A. associate of the Royal Scottish Academy.

_b._ born.

B.A. bachelor of Arts.

bapt. baptized.

B. Chir. bachelor of surgery.

B.C.L. bachelor of civil laws.

B.D. bachelor of divinity.

B. Th. bachelor of theology.

B.I. British Institution.

bur. buried.

C. curate.

Cam. and Camb. Cambridge.

cap. chapter.

C.B. companion of the Bath.

C.C. Corpus Christi.

C.E. civil engineer.

ch. church.

Ch. Ch. Christ Church.

C.I.E. companion of the Indian Empire.

C.M.G. companion of St. Michael and St. George.

co. county.

col. colonel.

coll. college.

comr. commissioner.

cr. created.

C.S. civil service.

_d._ died.

D.A.A.G. deputy assistant adjutant general.

dau. daughter.

D.C.L. doctor of civil laws.

D.D. doctor of divinity.

ed. editor, also educated.

Edin. and Edinb. Edinburgh.

E.I.C.S. East India company’s service.

eld. eldest.

ex. and extraord. extraordinary.

F.C.S. fellow of Chemical Society.

F.G.S. fellow of Geological Society.

F.L.S. fellow of Linnean Society.

F.R.A.S. fellow of Royal Astronomical Society.

F.R.C.S. fellow of Royal College of Surgeons.

F.R.C.P. fellow of Royal College of Physicians.

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