



Gov. C. W. POWELL
Gov. JOHN C. HELM
Kentucky



*Governor Frank
Johnson*



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE

HON. JOHN L. HELM,

LATE

GOVERNOR OF KENTUCKY.

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IN THE SENATE OF KENTUCKY,

MARCH e, X868.

MR. ALEXANDER moved the following resolution, viz :

Resolved, That a Committee of two of the Senate be appointed by the Chair, to act in conjunction with a similar Committee of the House, to prepare Biographical Sketches of the HON. L. W. POWELL and the HON. JOHN L. HELM, and that the Public Printer be directed to print three thousand eight hundred copies of each Biography for the use of the Senate, together with the speeches delivered on the passage of the resolutions in regard to their death in the Senate and the House, the same to be published in pamphlet form, accompanied with lithographic portraits of the deceased, and that they be mailed to the members of both Houses, postage paid.

Which was twice read and adopted. Senators JOSEPH M. ALEXANDER, of the county of Fleming, and BEN. J. WEBB, of the City of Louisville, were appointed, in pursuance of the resolution, to perform the duty assigned thereunder.

On the same day Mr. MCKENZIE presented the above resolution in the House of Representatives, where it was unanimously adopted, and the following named gentlemen were appointed to perform the duty indicated by the resolution, viz: Messrs. J. A. MCKENZIE, of Christian county; S. I. M. MAJOR, of Franklin county; and R. M. SPALDING, of Marion county.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a well-established fact, that success has rarely resulted from the efforts of even able and experienced writers, when they have attempted to bring before their readers personations of individual character and habit. Few have been the really readable biographies that have appeared in our language, and of these, immeasurably the best was written and compiled by one whose literary reputation has no other foundation for its support. Writers of biography are apt to have too little regard for details. They write in the style of the historian, and appear to condemn every circumstance in the lives of those whose characters they would depict which has not a direct connection with certain grand purposes in the pursuit of which their years were passed.

The great Lexicographer and Essayist, Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, though he possessed a mind immeasurably superior to that of his biographer, could not have written a book of the kind that would have held its place in the world of letters as has his own Life by JAMES BOSWELL. As the inferior mental organism of BOSWELL had no capacity for learned display, so the superior one of Dr. JOHNSON had none for that which was merely *postprandial*. The latter's ponderous intellect would have held in contempt the club-conversations and table-talk which, in the former's work, are found so charming to the great mass of readers.

Just as the aggregate of human miseries is made up, for the most part, of little cares and annoyances, so true human happiness has much affinity with little things.

There is a certain charm about the conversations—the trivial incidents of every-day life—of men who have filled high places in the State, or in the world of science, which

is appreciable by everybody. But these, as connected with great numbers of eminent men, have all been lost for want of a chronicler. Hence it is, that biographers are so often obliged to assume in style the dead level of compact history, which is altogether unsuited to such writings; and hence, too, their works are little read and less appreciated.

In justice to one of the most useful—as he was certainly one of the most esteemed—men of our day, we have sought diligently to remedy, in the present instance, this usual defect of all modern biography, but with results, we cannot but acknowledge, by no means commensurate with our wishes.

Governor HELMS was a mind of no common order ; and dying, as he did, in the zenith of his fame, it is not to be wondered at that his fellow-citizens should desire to preserve the record of his life. We, who have been commissioned to perform this duty, may well fear that the result of our labors will be found very imperfect by those who had the honor of the late Governor's intimate acquaintance. They **will** believe us, however, when we state that we have given to our work such attention as was in our power and such ability as we could command.

It is due to the members of Governor HELMS family to state that they have furnished us with almost the entire details of his private life contained in the following pages. We are indebted, likewise, to the Hon. CHARLES WINTER-SMITH, of Elizabethtown, for much valuable information that has either been embodied in the text of our work or in the copious notes which will be found appended.

JOS. M. ALEXANDER,
BEN. J. WEBB,

Senate Committee.

J. A. MCKENZIE,
S. I. M. MAJOR,
R. M. SPALDING,

House Committee.