

MARSHALL S. BIDWELL.

A MEMOIR

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL.

BY EDWARD F. DE LANCEY.

ONE of the most venerable and honored members of the Bar of New York, courtly in manners, profound in learning, pure in life, was Marshall Spring Bidwell.

Born in the year 1799 at Stockbridge, in that beautiful county of Berkshire, which has given to Massachusetts so many of her greatest men, he became a subject of George the Third, and took successively the oaths of allegiance to George the Fourth, William the Fourth and Victoria, sovereigns of Great Britain. Driven from their dominions in the prime of his life, by the iron hand of arbitrary power, and subsequently besought in vain to return and accept high judicial station, he lived and died a citizen of New York in 1872.

A memoir of Mr. Bidwell is not only the biography of an individual, but a statement of the early history of a new country,—a record of the sufferings of a neighboring people under arbitrary authority, and of their struggles to secure a government of law and justice.

Mr. Bidwell was the son of Barnabas Bidwell, a prominent lawyer of Massachusetts and at one time its Attorney-General, who in 1811 removed to the province of Ontario, then called Upper Canada. He was educated there under his father's eye. His legal studies began in March, 1816, when he was "articled as a clerk" under the English system, to Solomon Johns, an attorney of Bath in Upper Canada, and the next month entered as a student at law by the Law Society of that Province. In April, 1821, he was called to the degree of Barrister at Law by the same "Law Society of Upper Canada," an institution somewhat analogous to an English "Inn of Court," and having somewhat similar powers; and three years afterwards, in 1824, he was elected to the Eighth Provincial Parliament as one of the representatives of the County of Lennox and Addington.

In order to arrive at a correct understanding of Mr. Bidwell's peculiar and difficult position during his public life, it will be necessary to glance at the history of the Province.

At the close of the Revolutionary war, the British Government, it will be recollected, made a scanty provision in her remaining northern colonies for those who by remaining faithful to the Crown had