

ALBERT S. BOLLES:
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

The republication of neglected but important books affords the opportunity of rehabilitating the reputation of writers who seem, unjustly, to have disappeared into oblivion. When Albert Sidney Bolles died in 1939, at the ripe old age of ninety-three, his passing went unhonored and unsung. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, in its second supplement, did not see fit to include his name; nor did the *American Historical Review* and *The Banker's Magazine* print obituary notices. Bolles had been a pioneer in the writing of American economic history; and as for *The Banker's Magazine*, he had been its editor—at the time when it was a leading financial journal in the English speaking-world—from 1880 to 1895. He had held academic chairs; been an early and close student of American commercial law and particularly of the law of banking; and in addition to a shelf full of books had written widely for periodicals. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

Bolles was born in Montville, Connecticut, on March 8, 1846 and studied law at the Albany Law School. He was admitted to the Connecticut bar, practiced, and for a brief time sat on the bench as a probate-court judge; but writing attracted him and from 1875 on he embarked on his vocation as editor and writer. He became—a not unusual occupation in the second half of the nineteenth century in England and America; virtually non-existent today—a man of letters, earning his living by his pen.

Bolles was named the editor of the *Norwich (Conn.) Bulletin* with which he was associated during 1875-1880; he then transferred his activities to a larger world. He became the editor of *The Banker's Magazine* (being published in New York) and was also named to a professorship in mercantile law and banking in the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance and Economy. He held this chair during 1883-1887; for the following eight years he was the chief