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AN

EULOGIUM

ON

CASPAR WISTAR, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY,

BY

CHARLES CALDWELL, M. D.

Professor of Natural History, in the University of Pennsylvania.

DELIVERED BY APPOINTMENT, BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE
PHILADELPHIA MEDICAL SOCIETY;

AND

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1818.

2
To his friend
J. Doney

Medical Hall, February 21, 1818.

At a Meeting of the Philadelphia Medical Society, held on the 21st of February, 1818,

Resolved Unanimously, That the Thanks of the Society be presented to Dr. Caldwell, for his eloquent Eulogium, upon their late venerable associate, Dr. Caspar Wistar; and that he be requested to furnish them a copy for publication.

N. CHAPMAN, President.

Extract from the Minutes.

JAMES P. FREEMAN, Secretary.

AN EULOGIUM, &c.

Gentlemen of the Philadelphia Medical Society,

MELANCHOLY and afflictive, in no ordinary degree, is the event, which has, this day, called us together.

Pursuant to the arrangements, which arose out of that event, in the institution to which we belong, it has become, on the present occasion, my province to speak, and yours to hear, of that which must shortly put me to silence, and take from you, the power to listen.

Death, under whatever circumstances it may occur, but rarely fails to be the harbinger of sorrow. So multiplied are the ties, that bind together the human family, and so numerous the cords of sympathy, which entwine around the human heart, that this is true, in relation to the death of the humblest individuals—even of those, whose years had precluded them from bestowing benefits, or imposing obligations.

When the infant breathes its last, no breast so steeled, no heart so callous, as not to feel some touch of tenderness. Its cold remains are sighed over with regret, and the clay that covers it, moistened with tears of pity or affection, by some one, to whom it had been endeared, by its innocence, its sufferings, or those bonds of nature, which all must recognize. Transient as was its existence, and brief its story, its memory, notwithstanding, lives, for a time, in the fond recital of surviving mourners.

When, like a fair and opening flower, the youth is cut down, in the morning of his promise, deeper are the lamentations, and more embittered the sorrows, which break around his bier. The lively hopes he had conceived, and the gay wishes which had inspired him; the attachments he had contracted, and the friendships he had formed; the visions of felicity, in which he had indulged his ardent imagination, and the golden prospects, which were brightening before him; all these, press on the recollection, and sadden the heart, of his afflicted associates. The remembrance of what he was, is cherished with tenderness, while, at the anticipation of what he would have been, the soul sickens with the pang of annihilated hope. On the spirits of all, to whom he had been endeared, by his worth, his virtues, or his amiable qualities, gloom and heaviness hang, for a season, blighting and withering them, like an untimely frost.

The husband and the father, prematurely and unexpectedly drops into the grave, and the bereavement is felt, in all the poignancy of aggravated woe. Long subsisting friendships irremediably dissevered, a widow, broken-hearted and disconsolate, left without a protector, children, of tender years, exposed to the devices and seductions of the world, without their legitimate guardian and guide, society deprived of a valuable member, the state of an active and a useful citizen, and his country, perhaps, of a gallant defender: these considerations darken the character, and add to the weight of the afflictive visitation. Deeply and permanently is the loss deplored by the family and immediate connections of the deceased; and sincerely is it regretted by that section of the community to which he was known.

But when, in obedience to the dispensations of Heaven, the nation is suddenly deprived of one, who, to all that most adorns, and renders most inestimable, the private

individual, unites the higher excellencies of the public character—spotless in reputation, courteous in manners, amiable in deportment, cultivated in intellect, rich in experience, mature in judgment, yet, still, in the vigour of active life—of one, who, by a devotedness, seldom equalled, to the duties of an arduous and important profession, had attained to an eminence that has never been surpassed; who, with an ample store of knowledge in his profession, possessed a talent, peculiarly his own, of rendering that knowledge most useful and fascinating—who, in descending from the station which he had long filled, left, in relation to it, no equal behind him, and none, therefore, who could, at once, appear as his successor, with all the powers which he had exhibited: when a personage thus eminently endowed and qualified, mingles with the dead, the voice of private grief, too circumscribed for an occasion so calamitous, is lost in the expression of public sorrow. A people is the sufferer; and it becomes, therefore, the province of a people to mourn.

Such, my fellow members—I feel confident, that I am not about to address you in terms of exaggerated praise—such was the individual, whose death it has been recently our fortune to deplore; and whose virtues we have, this day, assembled to commemorate.

WISTAR, who has been the preceptor, and the benefactor of us all; whose worth and amiability won our hearts, while his luminous, and impressive eloquence, enlightened our understandings; the last surviving founder of the medical school, in which we have been instructed; the revered of his colleagues, the idol of his class; of whose standing in science his country was proud, and to whose eminence, as a teacher, even Europe had done homage; from the summit of his high career, before his

sun had been shorn of a beam of its brightness, Wistar has suddenly and prematurely gone down to the tomb!

In a case, like this, when, through the influence of kind recollections, and the workings of gratitude for benefits received, the sensibility is awakened, and the fancy warmed, I well know, that, without intending it, the eulogist is prone to the language of hyperbole. Notwithstanding this, I hazard the assertion, and fearlessly appeal to facts, to substantiate it, that, considered as a man and a citizen, a practitioner and a teacher, the deceased exhibited an aggregate of greatness and worth, which the world has but rarely witnessed in an individual. In no recollected instance, has this aggregate been exceeded. A well drawn picture of what he was, would confirm the assertion. Profound should be our grief, then, and lofty, though not indiscriminate, our praises, when we lament and eulogize, one of the best and most distinguished of men.

But, before attempting a delineation of his character, it is fit, that I lay before you, in succinct detail, a sketch of the life of our illustrious fellow member. And, here, let me remark, that, were it my business to fashion a model, for the student, the physician, and the teacher to imitate, I could scarcely imagine one, more perfect, than that which it is my duty to endeavour to depict.

CASPAR WISTAR was born, in the city of Philadelphia, on the 13th of September, 1761. His paternal parentage was of German, his maternal, of English origin. He was himself an American, in the true acceptance of the term, being the second, in descent, from his European ancestors. His family, which was of excellent repute, belonged to that highly respectable sect of Christians, denominated, The Society of Friends.

His English education, as well as that in the dead languages, he received at the "Public School of Philadel.

phia," which had been established by charter from William Penn. Of his elevated standing, and classical attainments, in that institution, we have ample assurance. Such was the issue of them, that he, there, spoke, and, through life, continued to speak, the Latin tongue, with a facility and correctness, which we rarely witness in the United States. Add to this, that his venerable teacher, at the time, is still living, and bears honorable testimony to the docility of his temper, and his amiable manners, his exemplary deportment, and excellent scholarship. He became, afterwards, so far versed in the German and French languages, as to converse in them both, with competent fluency. The great and acknowledged advantages, always and necessarily resulting from a substantial and well conducted course of early instruction, he felt and manifested, to the close of his life.

His academical education having been finished, in the year 1777, he entered immediately on the study of medicine, under the direction of the late Dr. Redman, then a distinguished practical physician, availing himself, at the same time, of the advantages to be derived, at that period, from the lectures delivered, in the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania.

Respecting his life, during the term of his medical pupilage, in this country, I know but little, that is worthy of recital. I am informed, however, by numbers, particularly by a physician, of high standing, who was a cotemporary student, and his personal friend, that he was regarded as a youth of distinguished promise. His aim, from the first, was lofty; and he early manifested a very liberal curiosity, with great zeal and persevering industry, in his attempts to gratify it. He was not a pupil who dealt merely in tasks; and did not, therefore, confine himself to a technical and limited tract of study. A youth, thus humble and narrow, in his views, will never become great. With

the vigilance and avidity of a true son of science, he explored and exhausted every source of knowledge, within his reach, that might tend to qualify him for the profession he had chosen. He had already learnt to estimate aright, the sacred duties and the arduous task, of him, who has entrusted to him the care of the health and lives of his fellow beings; and resolutely determined, to prepare himself, to the utmost, for the high responsibility. Acting with conscience and good faith, in conformity to such a resolution, which was to be regarded, in him, as a certain pledge of future eminence, he soon became distinguished, for his years, in the knowledge of medicine. A gentleman, who honours me with his presence, saw him under examination, before the faculty of this university, for the degree of bachelor of medicine; and does not hesitate, deliberately to declare, that his acquittance was the most excellent he ever witnessed.

He was examined, by two physicians, attached to different systems of pathology, the one a Boerhaavian, the other a Cullenian; a circumstance not a little delicate, and embarrassing to the candidate. But he passed triumphantly through the trial, replying to the questions of each gentleman, according to his own peculiar tenets, with an address and self-possession, that excited, in an equal degree, admiration and surprize. It need scarcely be added, that the medical honour asked for, was very flatteringly conferred.

Ambitious of the highest professional attainments, and attracted by the reputation of the teachers and resources of Europe, young Wistar sailed for England, in the year 1783, to complete his studies in the school of Edinburgh. Under the auspices of that celebrated seat of science, and in attendance on the hospitals and lectures in London, he passed his time, until late in the autumn of the year 1786, when he again embarked for the

United States, and arrived in New York, in the month of January, 1787.

Those years of absence from his native country, constituted a most important period of his life. As his taste, his habits, and his high-minded determinations, accompanied him abroad, throughout the whole term of his expatriation, his industry, in pursuit of liberal science, knew neither pause nor relaxation. The associations he formed, the friendships he contracted, and the reputation he established, wherever he resided, were exceedingly honourable to himself and his country. In the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, a scientific institution of no small renown, he became a distinguished and a leading member. Without soliciting the office, and under circumstances peculiarly flattering to him, he was promoted to the presidency; and was universally acknowledged, and is still remembered and spoken of, by those who were his cotemporaries, as one of the ablest debaters in the society. Yet, at that period, Sir James M'Intosh, who has since distinguished himself, by his eloquence, in the British senate, and Mr. Emmett, the strength and ornament of the bar of New York, both of whom are graduates in medicine, and other gentlemen, not inferior in promise or standing, were members of the institution. I need scarcely add, that, of all exercises, the conflict of debate is the best test of the strength and sagacity, the promptness and general resources of the mind. He who maintains an ascendancy there, has no cause to shrink from any other trial.

In the year 1786, the university of Edinburgh conferred on him the highest honours of his profession; on which occasion, he published and defended a very ingenious Thesis, "*De animo demisso*," written in chaste and classical Latin.

Before quitting the island, he performed, on foot, in

company with one or two friends, a tour of observation, which deserves to be noticed. Regardless of privation, danger, and fatigue, he twice traversed the Highlands of Scotland, attracted, in part, by the wildness of the scenery of that celebrated region; and partly by a wish to become acquainted with the manners, customs, and diseases, of the hardy inhabitants. A thirst for knowledge, like this, with the industry and enterprize, which usually accompany it, could scarcely fail to bestow on its possessor, rank and consideration, as a man of science. For, it is industry—steady and untiring industry, rather than genius, that acquires information, and prepares for usefulness.

To the term of his residence in Great Britain, Dr. Wistar never reverted, but with sentiments of delight. He often dwelt on it, in retrospect, as one of the happiest periods of his life. The abundant sources of improvement which he enjoyed, the numerous literary and scientific connections he formed, many of which continued until the close of his life, and the distinguished individuals to whom he had access, and with whom he was on terms of easy intimacy, constituted to him subjects of the most grateful recollection.

Such was the character which he established when abroad, and so favourable the impression which his general deportment created, that, in the estimation of all, who knew him intimately, in London and Edinburgh, his prospects were considered brilliant, and his destinies high. By no American, who had been previously educated, in the British schools, was he surpassed in the general amount of reputation. The branches of medical science, to which he appears to have been most devoted, and which he had cultivated, therefore, with the highest effect, were anatomy, surgery, and chemistry.

In the general doctrines of physiology, his knowledge was also comprehensive and profound.

Returning to his native city, with the numerous and high qualifications which he possessed, and supported by an extensive and a weighty family connection, peculiarly attached to him, not more on account of his intellectual acquirements, than of his moral worth, his prospects, as to business, were flattering and certain. Accordingly, but a few years had elapsed, when he ranked with the most eminent physicians of the place—his extent of practice equal; his success not inferior; and the attachment of his patients to him, perhaps, unparalleled.

Indeed, if benevolent attentions, and important services, bestowed with singular assiduity, and zeal, and in a manner the most tender, courteous, and soothing—if a perfect devotedness to the welfare of others, with a total disregard of all considerations of personal convenience, gratification, or profit—if sympathy, in suffering, a patience unwearied, and, perhaps, unexampled, in trials to relieve, and the ministry of consolation, where the efforts of art and skill had been frustrated—if these be calculated to produce returns of affection and gratitude, Wistar, as a physician, could not fail to be beloved.

The prominent traits of his character, as a practitioner of medicine, are believed to have been, the peculiar sensibility and benevolence of his heart; the deep interest he felt in the welfare of those whom he attended, and the sentiments of actual friendship he conceived for them, whatever might be their rank or condition in life; his patient and minute investigations into the nature of their diseases, and the unbounded pains he never failed to take, in devising means to afford them relief. Of all the practitioners, I have ever known, he encountered, voluntarily, in his attendance on any given number of patients, the largest amount of

labour and trouble. To this he was induced by an unusually scrupulous and conscientious regard for the discharge of his whole duty, even to the last and minutest conceivable act. For, a physician of a more pure, vigilant, and sensitive conscience, never honoured the profession of medicine.

In relation to medical morality and decorum, he was a pattern of excellence—free from all intentional fault; and, therefore, justly, without reproach. As respected the rights and feelings of young practitioners, in particular, his conduct was peculiarly delicate and honourable. In the charities of his profession, to the lowly and indigent, he recognized no bounds, but his leisure to serve them.*

As an operative and practical surgeon, he was eminently distinguished: and, if, in this respect, he did not attain the foremost rank, the failure was attributable to no want of judgment or skill; but to an inordinately high-wrought constitutional sensibility, which rendered him tremulous, and, at times, perhaps, embarrassed, when he ought to have been steady, cool and collected. Add to this, that the standard by which he was measured, in the city of Philadelphia, is of the loftiest order; the gentleman who constitutes it, being, as I feel persuaded, the ablest master of surgery of the age. In no place, except Philadelphia, would Wistar have been accounted inferior

* A man of colour, whom he had faithfully attended, through a severe fit of sickness, called on him, some time after his recovery, to express his gratitude, and reward him for his trouble. "How much money have you brought with you?" said he to this honest African, with his usual good nature. "Ten dollars, master, and I wish you to accept it, till I get more."

The Doctor, taking from his pocket a ten dollar note, placed it in the hand of his patient, saying, "There, my man, now you have twenty dollars: go home, and make a good use of them; and let me hear from you again, should you, in any way, need my assistance."

to the first. In the knowledge of the principles of surgery, no one surpassed him.

In the wide and multifarious field of letters, taste, and general science, Dr. Wistar had been a patient and a successful labourer. The harvest he had gathered in, was choice and ample. In a course of learned conversation, the most varied and extensive, few subjects could be introduced, of which he did not possess a competent knowledge. It must be remarked, however, that although he was peculiarly happy in originating, and giving a direction to conversation, he rarely aspired to the privilege of leading it. From motives of modesty and deference, he was more inclined to listen than to speak. Yet he took occasionally, and not unfrequently, his turn, in discourse, never failing to gratify, and seldom to instruct.

He possessed, moreover, an unusual facility in so adapting his conversation to circumstances and characters, as to render it interesting to every one present. If he addressed a promiscuous circle, he spoke like a man of the world; carefully avoiding every thing professional, technical, or, in any way, insulated: if, an individual, he so suited his remarks to his taste and capacities, as to entice him into discourse; and draw from him his knowledge of the topic discussed.

If, by his pen, he contributed but little to augment the literary stores of his country, it was not from a want of resources, but of time. Too much, for the advantage of science, did the constant pressure of active engagements, withdraw him from the retirement and labours of the closet.

But, we have reason to congratulate ourselves, and our medical brethren, that it pleased Heaven not to remove him, until he had given to the world, an invaluable record of his powers as a writer.

Passing by, as of inferior note, several exceedingly

sensible and well written papers, which he published, at different periods of his life, as well as one that is now in the press, on the subject of a discovery he made in osteology, I here allude to his "System of Anatomy," a work, which can scarcely fail to carry his name, with no common distinction, to remote posterity.

I do not say, that this production is enriched by discoveries, in the branch of science, to which it relates. The fact I know to be otherwise. But I *do* say, that as a text-book, for a lecturer, and a source of elementary instruction, in anatomy, to students of medicine, the only purpose for which it was intended, it is without a rival, in any language. It is marked by a masterly display of strong professional *common sense*; the most valuable quality such a work can possess. Able, then, must that writer be, and much must he have achieved, who has borne off the palm from every competitor.

Judgment, and sagacity, of the highest order, can do nothing more, than adapt, precisely, the means to the end. But such adaptation is abundantly manifested, in the matter and arrangement of Wistar's Anatomy.

As a man, Dr. Wistar's character was peculiar and strong: not so assimilated to that of the great mass of men, as to pass, like a shadow, across the mind, disappear in the throng, and be forgotten. The impression it made on discriminating observers, was deep and indelible; like that resulting from his manly countenance, which, all who had attentively beheld, must continue to remember.

If, from the delicate texture of his mind, his extreme sensibility was ever the source of an irritable temper—and it is scarcely possible to admit that it was not—maturity in years, with long continued habits of self-control, had completely subdued it. This is praise, of no ordinary standard: for self-conquest, where the feelings

are keen, and the passions strong, is an attainment equally arduous and elevated.

Experience and observation had, early, taught him, that to become, as a public teacher, useful, to the full extent of his wishes, he must acquire, from moral causes, the entire mastery and rule of his class. He further knew, that, to govern others, he must first attain the power of governing himself. The enterprize, for this purpose, was resolutely commenced; and, in it, as in every other, in which he engaged, his persevering industry was crowned with success. Hence, although on occasions innumerable, where minds of common texture, would be scarcely affected, he felt with a keenness amounting to pain, it was rare that his mildness and equanimity forsook him. Although his countenance might be agitated, and clouded, for a moment, it was instantly revisited, by the calm of sunshine, and the smile of serenity. Those who were his constant associates, and who had been, long and confidentially, the friends of his heart, unreservedly declare, that they never heard him utter a harsh or even an unkind expression, against those who had most flagrantly injured or wronged him. If circumstances compelled him to signify his disapprobation, he did it in terms the most delicate and inoffensive; and, less in a style of resentment, than regret. He, oftentimes, extended his charities further, and, by an act of generosity, as rare as it is amiable, endeavoured to lessen the magnitude of offences, by finding, for the offenders, an excuse or an apology. This must have been the effect of the most high-toned benevolence; for no man was quicker in his perception of a fault, or more sincere in his abhorrence of vice.

A philanthropist of a purer spirit, and freer from the rule of sordid motives, it would be difficult to find. To

feelings of cold self-interest he was as much a stranger, as is consistent with the character of the human mind.

The delicacy, perhaps, I might say, the fastidiousness, of his sense of justice, to others, was, oftentimes, the cause of injustice to himself. This was emphatically true, in relation to his charges for professional services. Although his income, from that source, was sufficiently ample, it might have been rendered much more so, had he punctually called for the customary fees.

An anecdote, not without interest, in relation to this point, deserves to be recited, as it is well calculated to illustrate his character.

Between the period of his commencing practice, and that of his having a family, when there was no one to suffer from an indulgence of his generosity, Dr. Wistar experienced a severe fit of sickness, from which he did not, for a time, expect to recover.

Having arranged his worldly affairs, in presence of some friends, who had assembled, for the purpose, he was delicately requested, by one of them, to make known his pleasure, in relation to the disposition to be made of his account books. His reply was, "Burn them. The account between me and my patients, is already balanced. By their kindness towards me, and the praises they have bestowed on me, beyond what I merited, they have made ample returns for any services I rendered them. Besides, in the hurry of business, or from some other cause, I may have forgotten to give credit for monies received; and no man, after my death, must have reason to allege, that I ever wronged him."

Another anecdote, somewhat analogous, and no less honourable to him, as a man of conscience, is worthy, as I persuade myself, of a place in your memory.

Several years ago, he found it impracticable to impart to those young gentlemen who intrusted to his di-

rection their medical education, the amount of practical instruction, which he deemed requisite, from the difficulty he experienced of procuring for them frequent admissions into the chambers of the sick. He, accordingly, declined the superintendence of the studies of private pupils, notwithstanding the repeated offer of liberal fees, declaring, that he could not do them justice; and that he would, therefore, neither receive their money, nor permit them to spend their time in his office, as he could not reciprocate an equivalent in knowledge.

In his attachments, Dr. Wistar was warm and steady; and, in his professions, even more than sincere; for he rarely expressed, in words, the extent of the favours he was ready to confer. Few men were more prompt to encounter sacrifices, if necessary, in serving those, with whom he was associated in ties of friendship. In private charities, as well as in contributions to public purposes, he was generous and free: a liberal, but not an ostentatious giver.

A feature, somewhat peculiar, in the character of his mind, was the slowness and hesitancy, with which he usually decided, in matters that appeared neither intricate nor weighty. His decision was rarely formed, until after more examination, reflection, and balancing, than are customary, on such occasions; or, than, in common estimation, the case required.

Hence, without much hesitation, and, regardless of that courtesy, which he never violated, some have pronounced him dull of apprehension; while others considered him wavering and irresolute.

But, the truth is, that the charges were alike inconsiderate and groundless. Wistar was neither irresolute nor dull. His perceptions were clear, and his judgment sound; but the march of his mind was unusually cautious. Two of his predominant passions were, the love

of truth, and the dread of error. Hence, he admitted no evidence, however plain, until he had carefully examined it, in its nature, and bearings; and thoroughly convinced himself that it was without defect. His decision, once formed, was with difficulty shaken. He maintained it with a firmness, manly but courteous: acknowledged, with his characteristic politeness, the force of his antagonist's arguments; but, perseveringly opposed to them the weight of his own. Without meaning to run the slightest parallel between him and Washington, it will be permitted me to observe, that, in relation to this point, the character of their minds was precisely the same. Washington never precipitately formed a decision: but, in argument as in war, his ground, when taken, was resolutely maintained.

The following anecdote, received from a friend, who had been much in his confidence, is characteristic of the amiable and benevolent affections of the deceased.

Several years antecedent to his death, his infirm health compelled him to resign a considerable portion of his practice, as a physician. This event gave him exquisite pain; not on account of its affecting his interest; for, on that point, he never expended a thought; but, because it obliged him to relinquish his patients, and sever the ties which had long bound him to them, at a time, when his ample experience and mature judgment, were best calculated to enable him to render them service. In twice attempting to communicate, to his friend, his feelings, on this occasion, his narrative was interrupted by tears; and he never again recurred to the subject.

His dwelling was, at all times, the seat of hospitality; and, during the winter, the weekly resort of his literary friends, in common with strangers of distinction, who visited the city. The company met, without ceremony, on a stated evening, where, in the midst of a succession

of suitable refreshments, the time passed away, oftentimes until a late hour, in agreeable, varied, and instructive discourse. This hospitable and conciliating practice, contributed, not a little, to multiply and strengthen those attachments to his person, which, to use a technical, though not an unapt, expression, rendered him, at length, a *sensorium commune*, to a very large and increasing circle.

The marks of public confidence and favour, conferred on Dr. Wistar, in the course of his life, were numerous and strong.

Shortly after his return from Europe, he was called to the chair of Chemistry, in the College of Philadelphia, a scientific institution, at that time existing; and, on its being soon afterwards united to the University of Pennsylvania—an important measure, in the effecting of which, he, though young, was pre-eminently instrumental,—he was associated, with the late Dr. Shippen, as adjunct professor of Anatomy and Surgery. On the death of that able and eloquent teacher, he became, as a matter of course, by an unanimous vote of the trustees of the university, the sole occupant of the chair of Anatomy. He also succeeded Dr. Shippen, as physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital; an institution, which, for many years, he served with great fidelity and effect.

Having been long a distinguished member, and one of the vice-presidents of the American Philosophical Society, he was elevated, on the resignation of Mr. Jefferson, in the commencement of the year 1816, by a very honourable vote, to the presidency of that institution.

He was president of the Society established for the abolition of African slavery; one of the counsellors of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia; a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, and of several other scientific and professional institu-

tions, in the United States, as well as of some of the most respectable, on the continent of Europe.

But, the legitimate field of Dr. Wistar's fame, remains to be mentioned. It was his anatomical lecture room. It is not fiction, but history, to declare, that, *there*, he manifested a greatness, and shone with a lustre, peculiarly his own.

If the real eminence and utility of a teacher, are to be measured by the amount of the instruction he imparts, and the perspicuity and impressiveness with which he communicates it; and I know of no other standard by which they can be measured; Dr. Wistar, as a lecturer on anatomy, stood unrivalled. An anatomical instructor, so able, so attractive, so accomplished; uniting so many indispensable requisites—solid, combined with popular powers—is no where to be found. Such is the deliberate and unanimous voice of those, who, having attended him, and travelled the round of the schools of Europe, are qualified to judge, and privileged to decide. In relation to this point, therefore, and it will not be denied to be important and honourable, the old world must bow in homage to the new. To his fame, then, be it recorded—and his fellow citizens of this place, will read with exultation, while they bedew with a tear, the page of history, which shall contain the record—that, in common with Washington and Franklin, Hamilton and Fulton, Wistar has done his part, to bestow on his country a lustre unrivalled. If those worthies were foremost, in their respective spheres, he was, in like manner, foremost, in his.

But, let it not be supposed, that the qualifications which constituted his greatness, as a teacher, were received gratuitously from the hand of nature. No opinion could be more unfounded; and, you will indulge me, in adding, more unfortunate. It would be neither honourable nor complimentary to the character of the deceased.

What nature bestows, comes unsought; and the individual possessing it, however favoured, has no claim to the merit of having acquired it. True honour and merit are the fruit of actions and attainments, in the achievement of which the will is concerned, and where industry and enterprize constitute the means.

Were it true, that Dr. Wistar's greatness was conferr'd on him by nature, his death should overwhelm us with absolute despair, from an apprehension that his place could never be supplied. But, signal as is our loss—and no one esteems it weightier than I do—the prospect is not, I trust, so gloomy and unpromising; the evil is not without a remedy.

Our departed associate exhibited a memorable and most instructive example, of what industry can effect. With talents highly respectable, but not pre-eminent—and I hold the assertion honourable to his memory—he was, under Providence, the real author of his own greatness. His distinction over others, he owed to his conscience operating on his intellect; to an inflexible determination, to improve, to the utmost, what nature had given him; to a paramount sense of duty, which always accompanied him; and, in whatever he engaged, urged him irresistibly, never to be found deficient, when he was expected to be prepared; nor to be, in any case, second, where it was in his power to be first.

To the elevation, which, as a teacher, he ultimately attained, his ascent was gradual, not rapid. It was the result of a life-time of persevering labour; his achievements, in the last, still surpassing those, of the preceding year. Had he lived to complete the course of lectures, in the midst of which, it was the pleasure of Heaven to terminate his career, it would have been decidedly the most excellent he ever delivered.

All this, I say, arose from the preponderating influence

of his moral qualities, invigorating his industry, and subliming, to their highest pitch, the operations of his mind. But, as a man is excellent, in proportion as he is moral, to become great from that source, is to be truly great.

As his class increased, in numbers, which was annually the case, and he perceived that he was operating on a widening scale, Dr. Wistar, felt the responsibilities of his station augmented. He did not, as many are known to do, hold himself privileged to relax into indolence, and the enjoyment of comparative ease, because his fame was established, and his fortune made. He recognized in that fame, which drew yearly around him, a greater crowd of pupils, nothing but an obligation to maintain and augment it, by higher exertions, and a more efficient discharge of duty. He regarded it as a pledge to the public, that he would not only preserve it unsullied, but brighten it to the last. He had, moreover, too much honesty and public spirit, not to task, to the utmost, all the powers and resources of his mind, to render the increase of his usefulness commensurate with that of the reward he received, and the sphere throughout which his influence was to be felt.

When his class had become too large, to witness, with satisfaction and advantage, the demonstration of certain minute, but important objects of anatomy, in their natural dimensions, he had recourse to the expedient—a most invaluable one—of teaching by models, of gigantic size. Although he did not first conceive the idea of this mode of anatomical demonstration, he was so far the author of it, as to have been the first to carry it to any practical and useful extent. What others thought of, only as a curiosity, or, at most, as a matter of some moment, in very few instances, he adopted, wherever it could be useful, as an important expedient. In no school, but that

of Philadelphia, has the use of models, as a regular means of instruction in anatomy, been practised on a liberal and competent scale. To Wistar, then, belongs the honour, of having introduced and established, on a durable basis, a mode of imparting knowledge, in that branch of science, which will, no doubt, hereafter, be universally adopted, where classes are large; and justly regarded as an essential improvement.

He exhibited, also, if not the first, at least, the best arranged and most perfect example, of a great and unwieldy class, divided, and associated in minor sections, each section to be separately instructed, and the means of such instruction amply provided. In fact, his whole scheme of instruction is believed to have been characterized by more method and regularity, than have marked that of any other teacher. But, it will not be denied, that such schemes are usually valuable, in proportion to the regularity and method that pervade them.

Conjoined with the great correctness and extent of his knowledge, and his entire devotion to the duties of his chair, Dr. Wistar possessed many exterior qualifications, which ought not, in a teacher, to be lightly estimated: I should rather say, that they are of indispensable necessity; and must never be neglected by him, who wishes to maintain a high standing, in the medical school of this city.

I allude to his gentlemanly and imposing aspect, his dignified deportment, the urbanity of his manners, his respectful address, the earnestness and fluency of his elocution, and that refined and conciliating courtesy, with which he saluted and took leave of his class. I allude, in fact, to the easy, able, perspicuous and attractive *manner*, in which he diffused around him the streams of instruction. And here, let me remark, which I wish to be understood as attempting to do, with peculiar em-

phasis, that he who is not thus accomplished, in his *mode* of communicating knowledge, no matter how accurate and extensive his knowledge may be, will never become useful and great, as a medical teacher. Let it not be forgotten, that, for all the purposes of public instruction, the *manner* in which knowledge is imparted, is of consideration, but little inferior to the knowledge itself.

These qualities, then, superficial as some of them may appear, contributed, not a little, to the success of our distinguished associate, as a lecturer. They won, so completely, the favour of his class, and gave him such a perfect ascendancy in their affections, as to enable him to command their entire attention. But attention is the legitimate parent of knowledge.

His pupils would have blushed to have been seen inattentive or idle, when he was himself so deeply engaged; or, to have been found ignorant of that which he took such pains to teach them, and which he always represented as so signally important. For, to forfeit the favour, or wound the feelings of a beloved preceptor, is painful to the mind of ingenuous youth. As no one, then, could be inattentive, in his presence, none could attend his lectures, without being instructed. He infused into his class, no inconsiderable portion of his own love of the science he taught; a circumstance, which, of itself, was an infallible earnest of industry and attainment. To become one of his pupils, was to become an anatomist.

Dr. Wistar seldom made a more amiable display of his magnanimity and benevolence, than in his deportment towards candidates, when under examination, for a degree in medicine. On these occasions, his conduct was marked with peculiar correctness, candour and delicacy. His determination was inflexible, never to admit, to the honours

of his profession, an unqualified member. But, his solicitude was equally great, to discriminate faithfully, between the embarrassed and the uninformed. Hence, his first questions were always plain and easy; and propounded with the utmost mildness and perspicuity. As the candidate became relieved from his embarrassment, his interrogatories rose in difficulty, until he made, ultimately, a full and satisfactory trial of his strength. By thus associating justice and mercy, he acquitted, at once, his conscience and his feelings.

If, on the part of the examined, the trial resulted in a failure, and it devolved on him, to communicate the intelligence, he performed the duty, in a manner so soothing, and marked with such keenness of sensibility, in himself, that the candidate almost forgot his own feelings, in the kindness manifested, and the pain experienced, by his sympathizing preceptor.

Such is the hasty and imperfect sketch, my leisure and resources have permitted me to prepare, of the life and public character, of our departed associate.

Into the sanctuary of his private and domestic character, I cannot, must not, enter. That shrine is, yet, too hallowed, for the foot of a stranger, however softly and reverently he might tread. Until time shall have dried up some portion of the tears that water it, it should be sacred to the inspection of his connections and family; whose sorrows have already pronounced its eulogy, far beyond what I could utter, were my fancy awakened, to its brightest conflagration, and had I even the command of a super-human tongue.

The deep solicitude* which the sickness of Dr. Wistar, for some days, created, and the strong sensation, which the annunciation of his death, produced throughout the city, must be as fresh in your recollection as in mine. Those manifestations of public attachment, and

* Dr. Wistar died, on Thursday, the 22d of January, 1818, a few minutes before eight o'clock, P. M.

From the time his perilous situation had become known to his fellow citizens, his hall was so crowded, by anxious inquirers, that, to satisfy them, his physicians found it requisite to make, regularly, twice a day, a formal report of the state of his health. This in writing, was placed on a table, for general inspection.

His death threw over the city an unusual gloom. On the countenance of thousands, hung the cloud of real sorrow. The University, and all the literary and scientific institutions of Philadelphia, suspended their proceedings, until after his interment; and passed resolutions complimentary to his memory.

The medical class, with great correctness of sentiment, and tenderness of feeling, requested permission to bear his body to the grave, as their last act of attention and duty, to the remains of him, whom they had loved and revered, as a preceptor and a father.

The concourse, at his funeral, was unusually great.

Dr. Wistar was, in stature, about the middle height; his person stout and muscular, his neck short, his head large, his features strong, his nose aquiline, his complexion ruddy, his eyes hazle, and his countenance marked with a peculiar and most conciliating smile.

In his person, he was uncommonly neat and gentlemanly: in good breeding, no one surpassed him.

He was twice married. By his first marriage he had no issue. By his second, he had three children; whom, with their widowed mother, he has left to deplore the loss of the kindest and best of husbands and fathers.

Of the disease which proved fatal to him, I forbear to speak. An accurate and detailed account of it, will, no doubt, be placed on record, by the physicians who were around him during his sickness.

Whatever might have been the nature, of the acute complaint, under which he laboured, it appears certain, that the ossification of one of the valves of the heart, which was found to exist, contributed not a little, to the fatality of the issue, by weakening the recuperative power of the system.

public sympathy, anticipating this day's feeble effort, proclaimed his panegyric, warm, sincere, and eloquent, from the hearts of thousands.

The chasm which he has left behind him, in the bosom of private friendship, no future arrangement must be expected to fill. That can be effected only by a reunion of kindred spirits, in another and a happier sphere, where the renovated connection will subsist and brighten through an endless duration.

The breach produced in the wider circle of social intercourse, will not be repaired without much difficulty. Men equal to Wistar, in the rare and estimable qualities of the heart, appear but seldom. From these voids, however, our country, at large, will not be a sufferer.

But there exists another vacancy, of a higher character, and more multiplied and extensive relations, in the filling of which, the American nation is deeply concerned. I refer to that, created in the medical school of the university of Pennsylvania.

The chair of anatomy, in that institution, is without an occupant. To place in it a teacher, equal, at first, to him who has been removed from it, I hold to be impossible. Search the world, and you will fail in the effort.

But a teacher may be placed in it, capable, from the manifold advantages he will enjoy, in the valuable cabinet and instructive example of his predecessor, of rendering himself equal. And I feel persuaded, that the wisdom and discernment of that enlightened body, whose province it is, to make the selection, will be fortunate in their choice. To call to the chair, the best qualified anatomist, and the ablest demonstrator, our country affords, is all they can do; and all that the public can reasonably expect.

He who aspires to be the successor to Wistar, should be confident in his possession of lofty qualities. If he

prove deficient in these, his degradation will be equally inevitable and deep. The source of this degradation, will be twofold; the memory of his predecessor, and the example of his colleagues. He will find himself placed on a perilous height. His station, still gilded by the rays of departed splendour, will be in the midst of men, whose resources are great, whose intellects are disciplined, and with whom, therefore, to be compared, is a privilege no less dangerous than honorable.

Of the state and character of the medical school of Philadelphia, I have had no inconsiderable knowledge, for more than twenty years; and I am happy and proud, thus publicly to testify, without the least apprehension of being found in the wrong, that the chairs which are, at present, filled, contain as able teachers, as ever honored them.

Notwithstanding the losses, then, which, within a few successive years, the school has sustained, in the death of a Rush, a Barton, and a Wistar, by a liberal and judicious employment of the talents and learning, placed at the disposal of its legitimate guardians, it will continue to flourish—I feel convinced it will—in the triumphant ascendancy, it has heretofore maintained.

