



Dr. George Cuvier Harlan.

NECROLOGY.

DR. GEORGE CUVIER HARLAN.

CHARLES A. OLIVER, M.D.,
Philadelphia.

Dr. George Cuvier Harlan, one of the most important and prominent members of our society, died on September 25, 1909.

Dr. Harlan was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on January 28, 1835. He was a son of the distinguished physician and scientist, Dr. Richard Harlan. In 1855 he received the degree of B.A. from Delaware College, obtaining the Master's degree three years later. He graduated in medicine from the University of Pennsylvania in 1858, his inaugural thesis being upon the subject of the "Iris."

On April 6, 1857, apparently several months before he graduated in medicine, he was appointed resident physician at Wills' Hospital. From March 4, 1861, to 1864, he enjoyed a full surgeoncy, returning to active work in the same capacity in 1868, and remaining uninterruptedly in office for twenty-three years, resigning on May 8, 1901. On the ninth of the following October he was made consulting surgeon to the institution, which position he occupied until the time of his death. He also held residencies in the Pennsylvania and St. Joseph's hospitals, occupying the latter position during the term of service of 1858-1859. Later, he became Attending Surgeon to the St. Mary's and the Children's hospitals.

On May 21, 1861 (at the beginning of the War of the Re-

bellion), he was appointed an Acting Assistant Surgeon in the United States Navy, being assigned to the gun-boat Union. He resigned on the fifteenth of August of the same year, and on the fourteenth of the following September was made Major and Surgeon in the Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry. During the war he was captured and sent to the well-known Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. He was honorably mustered out on September 28, 1864. In June of 1863 he received the appointment of Acting Medical Inspector, followed, in five years' time, by the position of Pension Examining Surgeon.

In 1875 he became ophthalmologist (afterward consulting ophthalmologist) to the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, at which place he made many scientific investigations and did much clinical work. His interest in the welfare of the eyes of the children there placed under his charge never lessened.

Four years later he became connected with the Eye and Ear Department of the Pennsylvania Hospital, which he raised to the high standard of efficiency that it at present maintains. He served in the same capacity at the Children's Hospital. At the time of his death he occupied the position of Emeritus Surgeon at the former institution.

His ophthalmic work, so cheerfully done at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb as consulting ophthalmologist, was commenced in 1883, and continued until the time of his death.

He had the honor of occupying the first chair of ophthalmology (later emeritus) at the Philadelphia Polyclinic and School for Graduates in Medicine. His remarkable teaching abilities will be long remembered by many of his students. His exposition of the subject was properly limited to practicalities, no attempt for self-laudation or exhibition of rapid and useless—and, as we have too often seen, destructive—operative procedure ever being made.

Among his most important memberships in societies may be mentioned: The College of Physicians of Philadelphia in 1865, the American Ophthalmological Society in 1873, the Wills' Hospital Ophthalmic Society from its foundation, the International Congress of Ophthalmology in 1876, the Philadelphia County Medical Society in 1876, the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania and the American Medical Association, and the American Otological Society in 1882.

He was a member of the University Club of Philadelphia, and a Companion of the First Class of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.

He enjoyed many honors. In 1885 he was made a member of the Committee on Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, acting as Chairman of the Committee for many years. In 1893 he was elected President of the American Ophthalmological Society, and in 1904 he was appointed Chairman of the Section on Ophthalmology at the Universal (Louisiana Purchase) Exposition, held in St. Louis, Missouri. He was President of the Association of Wills' Hospital Residents and Ex-residents, and had the honor of being dean of the active membership of a similar association connected with the St. Joseph's Hospital of Philadelphia. He was a member of the managerial board of the American Hospital for Diseases of the Stomach up to the time of his death.

His contributions to his special branch of medicine have been important and numerous. For a long period of time his little book, entitled "Eyesight and How to Care for It," published in 1879, enjoyed a large and useful circulation. His two articles on "Diseases of the Eyelids" and "Operations Performed upon the Eyelids," in the third volume of Norris and Oliver's "System of Diseases of the Eye," must be ranked among the highest and the most practical expositions of the subject that we have in ophthalmology. At

the time of his death he was associated with the editorial staff of the widely known journal, "Ophthalmology." His operation for symblepharon and his tests for malingering are broadly known and are extensively employed.

Dr. Harlan was a widower. One son and two daughters survive him.

Repeating what the memorialist once said:* "As an operator he stands *par excellence* as one of the most careful, the most conscientious, and the most successful of all special surgeons. This the memorialist well knows from a long personal experience, during which he had been personally associated with him in much of his operative work. He was ever eminent for all manner of important hints, judicious helps, and best methods of procedure. Always calm amid danger, sure as to action, and oftentimes turning an apparently disastrous result into an advantageous one, he was *facile princeps*. The cunning of his hands was constantly in absolute correlation with deliberate, and yet rapid, judgment. Many a time when, through some misadventure, an apparently smooth piece of operative work has necessitated an impromptu difference of action, has he quickly discussed the modification, and made the change in such a manner as to give the utmost good of result. It was a pleasure for any conscientious and progressive man to be near and with him under such circumstances (and now, when often alone, or in association with fellow colleagues, does the memorialist find this good and great man's advice and fine counsel come echoing back to him. For one, he is and shall be forever grateful for many acts of loving affection, help, and kindness).

"As a man he was gentlemanly, noble, and unassuming. He knew true friendship in all of its meanings. His greatest preferences were conversation with a few companions of the highest grade, culture, and refinement, perusal of a book

* The Ophthalmic Record, December, 1909.

of biography, ethics, or travel, or a ride along the country byways amid nature and all of her beauties.

“His death—an accidental one, occasioned by a fall from the back of his favorite horse a few days before—stopped his chosen work, took him from us, and ruined his hoped-for happiness of an undisturbed and unimpaired old age in a quiet home near those who cared for him and loved him.”

Of him it can be truly said: The best and the most depended-upon men are those who are the most quiet in ordinary life and who possess the greatest calmness amid danger.

DR. SAMUEL BENEDICT ST. JOHN.

CHARLES STEDMAN BULL, M.D.,
New York.

Dr. Samuel Benedict St. John was born in Hudson, Ohio, July 24, 1845, the son of Samuel and Amelia Palmer Curtis St. John, and was of Revolutionary ancestry.

His father, Dr. Samuel St. John, was a professor in the Western Reserve College of Ohio, and later in the Cleveland Medical College. Subsequently he was Professor of Chemistry in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York for twenty years.

Samuel Benedict St. John received his early education in the public schools of Cleveland, Ohio, and New Canaan, Conn. He then entered Yale University, and graduated A.B. in the class of 1866. He then matriculated at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York, and graduated M.D. in 1870.

Dr. St. John served on the house staff of Bellevue Hospital, New York, from April, 1870, to October, 1871, and afterward was appointed the first house surgeon in the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital.