

Memoir of the life and character of Prof. Valentine Mott, facile princeps / by Samuel W. Francis.

Contributors

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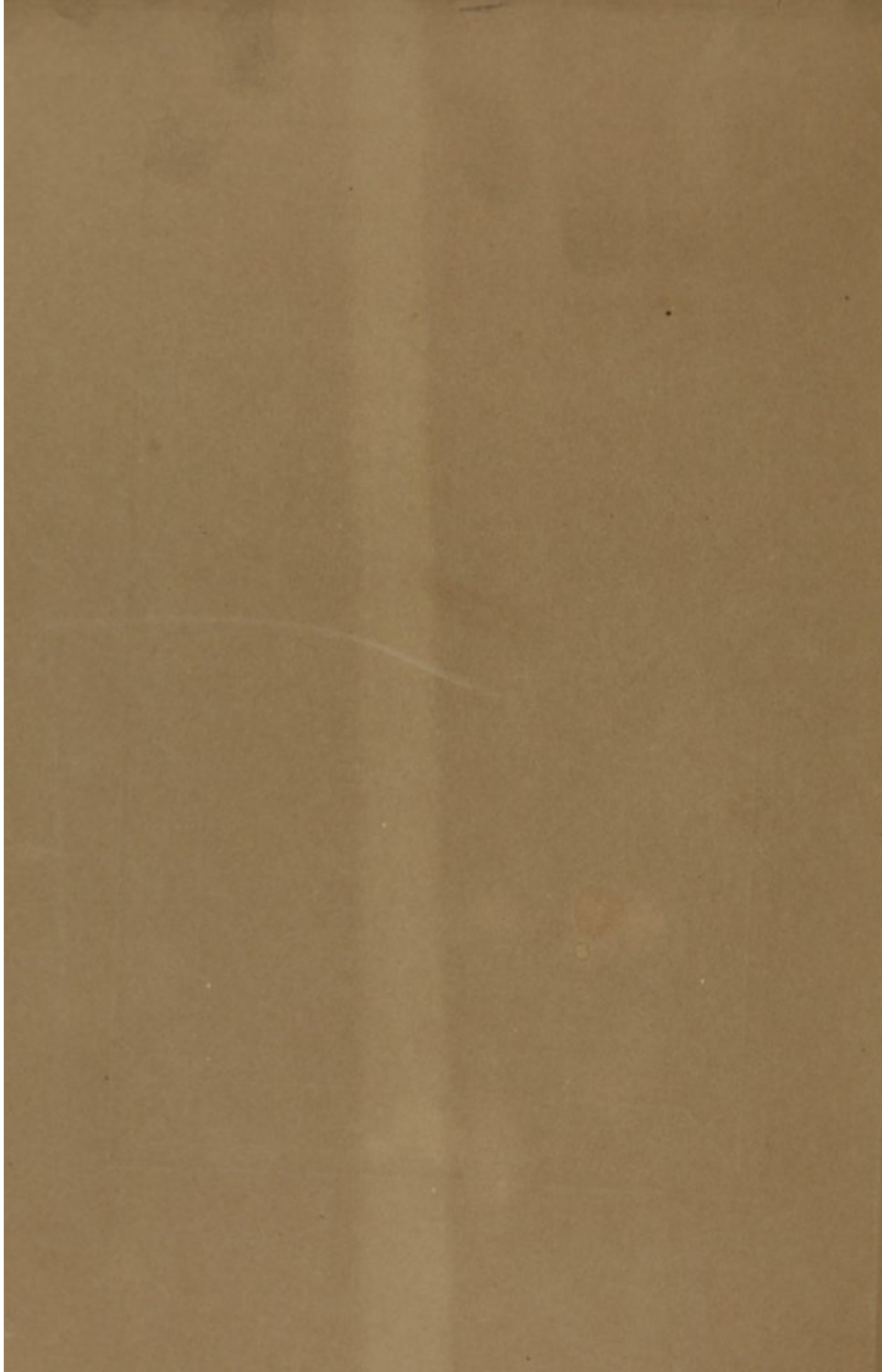
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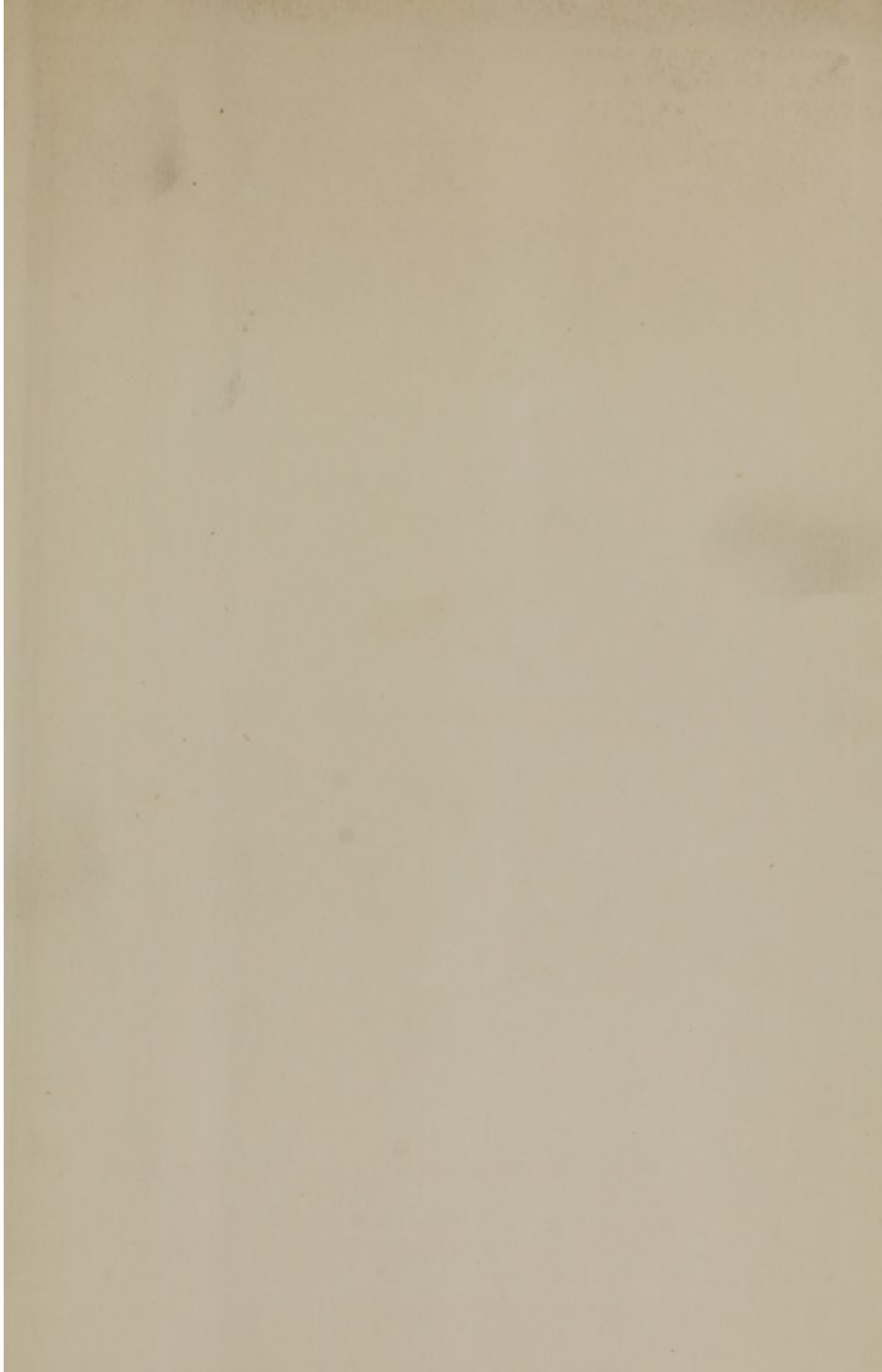
REMINISCENCES

OF

DR. VALENTINE MOTT.









Eng. by W. P. Johnson. From a photograph by Brad.

Valentine Tott.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



1880

W. C. BISHOP

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This Memoir

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

HENRY T. TUCKERMAN, Esq.,

WHOM IT IS AN HONOR TO KNOW

AND A PRIVILEGE TO LOVE;

WHOSE BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE TO MY BLESSED FATHER MUST EVER ENDEAR

HIM TO THE HEART OF ONE WHO EXPERIENCES

A PLEASURABLE COMFORT,

IN SIGNING HIMSELF

HIS GRATEFUL FRIEND,

SAMUEL W. FRANCIS.

REVISED
PREFACE

The present biography was first prepared for and printed in condensed form in *Apples' Annals* (London, 1850). It was enlarged and published in the *Illustrated Weekly and Monthly Magazine* during the first of a series of "Biographical Sketches of Distinguished Living New York Persons," and appearing in book form in 1851. Through the courtesy of Dr. S. W. Hurler, Mr. Whitton has been permitted to anticipate its publication in this city and issue the edition of what may not prove uninteresting to the friends and associates of the talented deceased author. The ground matter has been taken from the original. The great use of Mr. Mott's name has essentially paid the debt. It will be useful and interesting to

PREFACE.



THE present Biography was first prepared for and printed in condensed form in Appleton's American Cyclopædia. Subsequently it was enlarged and published in the Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Reporter, being the first of a series of "Biographical Sketches of Distinguished Living New York Surgeons," now reprinting in book form in Philadelphia. Through the courtesy of Dr. S. W. Butler, Mr. Widdleton has been permitted to anticipate its publication in that city, and issue this edition of what may not prove uninteresting to the friends and associates of the beloved deceased, suitable additions having been made to the original. The greatness of Dr. Mott renders him essentially public property. The field for anecdote and reminiscence lies

open to all. And surely it should not be deemed presumptuous for one of the junior members of the profession to cast a little pebble—crystal from its sincerity—on the spot where admiring multitudes will eventually rear up a mammoth cairn.

S. W. F.



MEMOIR.

—•••—
“ So past the strong heroic soul away,
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.”

Tennyson.

VALENTINE MOTT, M. D., LL. D., etc., etc., the eminently distinguished American Surgeon, was born at Glen Cove, Oyster Bay, Long Island, August 20th, 1785 ; and died April 26th, 1865, in his eightieth year, at his residence, 1 Gramercy Park, N. Y. His father, Dr. Henry Mott, a native of Hempstead, L. I., and descended from Adam Mott, was born in 1757, and educated under the supervision of Dr. Samuel Bard. He practiced medicine for many years in the City of New York, and died at the advanced age of eighty-three.

Valentine, his only surviving son in later years, first received the elements of a classical foundation, from a private instructor, at Newtown, L. I., where he continued till 1804, when he entered Columbia College for the purpose of attending a full course of medical lectures. During that period young Mott also entered the office of his relative, Dr. Valentine Seaman, and became a student in practical earnest. He was graduated M. D. in 1806, and proceeded

almost immediately to Europe, the facilities for acquiring accurate information and clinical experience in this city, being almost altogether confined to jails, almshouses and prison-ships; besides being under the supervision of unprincipled, ignorant politicians, who, in most cases, sacrificed the lives of the diseased to the acquirement of unmerited gains. Proceeding at once to London, he devoted all his energies, with untiring zeal, to the imbibition of a thorough knowledge of bedside surgery and therapeutical science. Visiting, with never-failing interest and marked faithfulness, St. Thomas', Bartholomew's and Guy's Hospitals, under the personal supervision of the celebrated Abernethy, the acute and fascinating Sir Charles Bell, and the bold and successful Sir Astley Cooper, he continued his investigations, the latter gentleman being his preceptor in the respective branches of anatomy and surgery. In the medical department, Currie, the propounder of original thoughts, roused the ambition of the young physician; while the views of Haighton relative to the parturient female and the infirmities of women and children, peculiarly influenced the train of his mind.

At Edinburgh Dr. Mott attended the lectures of those best qualified to teach; and especially did he listen to Hope, Playfair, and Gregory, whose lectures on chemistry, philosophy and the practice of medicine were of wide repute. Dugald Stewart, justly renowned for his profound remarks, also instilled into his retentive mind many precepts that proved of lasting benefit in after years.

Even while abroad the young American surgeon's intrepidity and coolness in operations, invariably attended with the most promising results, pre-eminently qualified him to meet with a warm reception from his appreciative countrymen; and, accordingly on his return to the United States, in 1809, he was at once called to fill the chair of surgery in Columbia College. This responsible position he held with credit to himself and honor to his native land, till that institution was merged into the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1813, of which Dr. Samuel Bard was President. Here he continued as professor until the year 1826; but difficulties arising with the trustees and professors on principles of collegiate government he resigned, withdrew from that school, and founded, with his able associates Drs. Hosack, Mitchell, Francis, and others, another nucleus of learning, designated "Rutgers Medical College," which, though possessed of the first talent in the country, continued in existence but four years. The charter having been disputed, the Legislature, in no slight degree influenced by painstaking enemies, vetoed its further movements.

Since 1830 Dr. Mott has, with unceasing labor, devoted his time to lecturing in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and subsequently before the University Medical College as Professor of Surgery and Relative Anatomy, of which latter branch of science he is the founder. Here he fulfilled his mission as Ex-President of the Faculty and Emeritus Professor till the day of his death. The vast reputa-

tion which Dr. Mott enjoys throughout the world is mainly due to his original operations as a surgeon; his bold carefulness and self-possession when undertaking that which was entirely new, and his great success in rescuing from prolonged torture the victims of a morbid growth. Many a time has the young anatomist been called upon to perform, at midnight, by the flickering aid of a tallow candle, or the musty light of a muffled lamp, operations not only difficult in themselves and dangerous to the patient, but without any other assistance than that of excited relatives, or ignorant friends. Such operations as that for hernia, the ligation of a lacerated artery or the performance of tracheotomy, have not only been attended with complete success, but afforded instant relief to the sinking sufferer.

So intent was the young professor on practical improvement; so desirous was he of a solid foundation on which to base his knowledge of relative anatomy; that, in the very face of unyielding prejudice and penal laws of an unbending character, he determined to follow out the course of nerves, pursue the ramifications of inosculating blood-vessels, and in every way strengthen his mind and revive his memory by a thorough dissection of the concealed cadaver.

At this time it was imprisonment for many years to be found even with the limb of a dead man; and an infuriated mob would soon have lynched the offending student had he been but suspected. But this did not deter the zealous surgeon, fresh from the hospitals of London, from forming a scheme as bold

as it was dangerous, and adding in magnified colors a thrilling romance to the painful details of a midnight feat.

One dark and gloomy evening, when all around was still, and the few patrolmen on their beat alone betrayed the evidence of man's existence, Dr. Mott, not yet quite thirty, dressed in the clothes of some poor workman, seated on a cart, drove out of town and met, at the appointed hour, those who entered fully into this rash business. Pulling up at the side of a field he waited patiently till eleven bodies had been stowed away carefully in this unique hearse and concealed by an appropriate clothing suggestive of a different load. Then, not in company with other braves nor followed by a single friend, but solitary and alone, at dead of night, at the imminent risk of life and reputation, young Dr. Mott drove through the half-lit lanes, down Broadway to Barclay street, to the Medical College, where efficient aid soon relieved him of a load of care. This bold exploit is not only indicative of the Doctor's energy and desire for learning, but especially is it a proof of his indifference to danger, or rather willingness to incur risk of a personal nature to obtain a ripe reward. Moreover, had he been detected in the act of purloining or in any way carrying off bodies for dissection, his life not only might have been sacrificed, but a name, tarnished by the opprobrious epithets of an unenlightened community, would have caused more exquisite suffering than the severest physical torture of an injured frame. This same fearlessness, when surrounded by pestilential

fevers and contagious diseases, while in the performance of his rounds of duty, has ever marked the career of one of the busiest men of modern times. It is nothing to work hard for several years and then subside with or without a fortune; but to keep it up from youth to hoary age is creditable indeed, and worthy of emulation.

Later in life, when Dr. Mott visited Paris, he was invited to witness a private operation at the residence of the patient by the attending surgeon. It was to be the removal of a formidable malignant tumor of the neck, involving the deep jugular vein, and presenting many characteristics that warned the careful and conscientious practitioner. The operation was commenced; and Dr. Mott informed me that never in the whole course of his life had he seen anybody but a butcher cut as did this Frenchman. The consequence was that in a short time the deep jugular was severed. Dr. Mott instantly placed his finger on the vein and stayed the flow of blood. Again, in a few minutes the jugular was cut a second time, and, as the patient was an old gentleman and by these two successive accidents had lost much blood, a small portion of the tumor was cut off, the hole filled in with lint and the patient left. About a week after, Dr. Mott met the surgeon who had performed this operation and asked him how his patient was. He shrugged his shoulders, turned his head on one side and said gravely: "Oh yes! poor old fellow, he grew pious all of a sudden and died!" What a remark for one of the first surgeons of Paris to make!

Dr. Mott is the originator, in the United States, of clinical instruction in surgery or bedside practice as demonstrated to the student of medicine. As early as the year 1818, when but thirty-three years of age, he placed a ligature around the brachio-cephalic trunk or *arteria innominata*, only two inches from the heart, for aneurism of the right subclavian artery, for the first time in the history of surgery. The patient survived the operation twenty-eight days, thereby indicating the feasibility of so hazardous and unparalleled an undertaking. What is most remarkable to the practitioner, seemingly inconsistent with the laws of circulation, is the discovery made by the operator; for Professor Mott states that though all apparent supply of blood-vessels was cut off from the right arm, pulsation could be distinctly felt in the radial artery, and the limb in no way presented the slightest evidence of sphacelation. On the twenty-fifth day, however, secondary hemorrhage having taken place, the life of the patient was speedily terminated. It certainly is alone worthy of proclaiming Dr. Mott the Napoleon of surgery.

This operation was successfully performed by Dr. A. W. Smyth in New Orleans in July, 1864. The patient entirely recovered, and thereby effectually proved the feasibility of this great undertaking 46 years after the experiment had been made. In speaking of this, to him most cordial news, Dr. Mott said to me: "My son, I can now die happy."

In the year 1828 he excised the entire right clavicle for malignant disease of that bone, where it was

necessary to apply forty ligatures, expose the pleura, and look for arteries displaced to an almost incredible degree by the abnormal growth of a cancerous tumor. In discussing this operation, Dr. Mott, himself, asserts that it is the most dangerous and difficult that can be performed upon the human body. Though many surgeons, possessed of the most ungenerous impulses, have sought to rob him of this his Waterloo operation, a priority of thirty years is sufficient evidence in favor of his pre-eminence. The patient is still living and enjoys perfect health, being able to perform in the most satisfactory manner the part of a pastor.

Dr. Mott was the first to tie successfully the primitive iliac artery for aneurism. He has tied the common carotid artery forty-six times; cut for stone one hundred and sixty-five times, and amputated nearly one thousand limbs. He early introduced his original operation for immobility of the lower jaw in 1822, and succeeded after many eminent surgeons had been consulted and failed. It was his custom invariably to experiment upon the dead body previous to performing any grave operation upon a living subject.

In 1821 he performed the first operation for osteosarcoma of the lower jaw. He is the first surgeon who removed the lower jaw for necrosis; and, even in his advanced age, continued to fulfil the duties of a lecturer and practitioner with a vigour and clearness as astonishing as his reputation is deservedly great. Truly might Sir Astley Cooper exclaim, "He has performed more of the great operations than any man living, or that ever did live."

One afternoon, when Dr. Mott held his clinic for the benefit of poor patients, thousands of whom were accustomed to flock to the University for the purpose of deriving benefit from his experienced skill, being at the time a member of his surgical staff, I witnessed a most amusing scene.

A mother brought into the amphitheatre a very dirty, sickly, emaciated, miserable apology for a child, and asked Dr. Mott if he deemed it necessary to remove a tumor which was causing much distress and anxiety. A portion of the clothing was taken off, the better to bare the parts to the class who sat around. But one ambitious student, prompted by an impertinent curiosity, jumped over into the little cock-pit, where we were assisting, and walking coolly up to the patient, began to examine for himself. In the mean time, Dr. Mott, unconscious of his intrusion, had been telling the woman that he would not operate without her husband's consent, and innocently looking up he quietly said to "Paul Pry:"

"Are you the father of this child?"

The effect was electrical. It brought down the house. The crestfallen student, flushed with rage, took his seat amid the applause and hisses of his rejoicing associates. The expression of Dr. Mott's countenance at this time was truly a study. The eloquent twinkle of his bright eyes, combined with a sort of sympathetic feeling of sorrow for the mistaken rebuke, in no slight degree contributed to add interest to a scene not easily to be forgotten.

On another occasion a little baby was brought in

by its mother, who seemed very anxious to have its "tongue cut."

"My good woman," said Dr. Mott, "what is the matter?"

"My child is tongue-tied, sir, and I want you to operate."

"Is it a boy or girl?"

"A girl, sir."

"Then I shan't operate. There'll be no necessity for it. When she grows up she'll find her voice soon enough."

On Dr. Mott's return from an official visit, in company with other surgeons, to the starved Northern prisoners, a report of which has been published by the United States Government, I paid him an evening call. The subject of conversation soon turned to his recent examination of the dying soldiers.

I asked the Doctor if the newspaper reports were exaggerated or not as regards their appearance.

"My dear boy!" he exclaimed, with emphatic horror, "you can form no idea of the poor, shrivelled, wasted victims. In the whole course of my surgical experience, not excepting the most painful operations or deformed limbs, I have never suffered as much in my life at the sight of anything; I care not what it is. It unnerved me. I felt sick."

In 1835, overcome by the fatigues of his pursuits, Dr. Mott visited Europe for his health, and travelled extensively through England, the Continent, and the East; visiting places of interest and scenes of a classical value rarely frequented by Americans in that day.

It was at this time that Dr. Mott tied both the carotids of a rooster in the valley of Æsculapius, and sacrificed him to the memory of the great philosopher. (See "Mott's Travels.") On his return he published the result of his tour, in octavo form, a volume which found many admirers, and instructed the unenlightened. Its style more resembles a phonographed conversation or the pleasing fireside narrative of interesting adventures than the cold statement of historical facts. At times Dr. Mott seems to forget that perusers are not always friends, and, lost in the details of a fascinating experience, he seeks but to unfold the truth. Unfortunately for those who have handled with severity this emanation from a genial mind, they seem to have confounded the conceit of their own ignorance with the simplicity of his genius.

There is a popular prejudice that a surgeon always cuts if there is a chance for any operation. But this is not so; for I have heard Dr. Mott express his disapprobation of the conduct of many Frenchmen, who only ask "Is it justifiable?" not "Is it necessary?" As a case in point of no little moment, an anecdote bearing directly on the present subject, may not be amiss. During one of his sojourns in Paris, Dr. Mott called on a celebrated surgeon, who received him most cordially, and proposed a visit to his particular hospital. He asked Dr. Mott if he would like to see him perform his original operation. The Doctor replied that nothing could afford him more pleasure. On reflection, however, the Frenchman informed him that, now he thought of it, there was no patient in any of the

wards affected with the infirmity for the removal of which his operation was designed. But, said the Gallic butcher, that makes no difference, my dear friend, there's a poor devil in Ward No. —, who is of no use to himself or any one, and if you'll come at such a time, I will operate beautifully on him! * * *

It is needless to remark that the noble American peremptorily refused to aid or abet in any way so unfeeling, and, in fact, villanous a proceeding.

At this time Dr. Mott did not confine himself to surgery and pathological anatomy alone, but visited many persons for medical treatment, and, particularly, during a series of years, was he the favorite accoucheur in the city of New York.

It is all important for the young student of medicine to bear in mind the fact that Professor Mott, up to the last ten years, that is, for more than forty years of his surgical experience, was obliged to perform operations of the most painful and dangerous character upon young and old, without the aid of any anæsthetic agent.

Though at the present time the most excruciating sufferings of patients are dispensed with, and one and all lie gently sleeping while limbs and nerves are removed from their trunks: in Dr. Mott's early days stout arms held down the writhing man; firm violence was requisite to keep proportionably quiet the shrieking child, while her neck, swollen with convulsive efforts, presented but a warning obstacle to relative anatomy, and yet the trachea must be cut to save her life. What nerve, what firmness, what determination

were the attributes of him whose heart did ever beat with kindness for a fellow sufferer, and whose sympathy never had been hardened by the cold philosophy of ambitious eagerness!

As another evidence of the calmness of an operative faculty, Dr. Mott has often couched for cataract at arm's length, with the same facility with which it can be done by the closest attention.

In the winter of 1860, I was attending one of the lectures of Professor Mott, in the University Medical College. It was near the close of the session, and as was Dr. Mott's custom, before ending the term, he performed all the operations that could be executed on the cadaver. This afternoon he was explaining to the students the various methods of amputating the finger, and removed several at different joints. But, unfortunately, the subject was rather superannuated and shrivelled, consequently the skin had dried and hardened, so that much difficulty was experienced in cutting through the integument. It was necessary to employ more than ordinary power. Dr. Mott did so, but though the part was severed correctly, the scalpel slipped, and a portion of his own finger was cut off and fell on the table. A cut at best is very painful, but when it comes from a "dissecting wound" anxiety and apprehension are not only excusable but admissible. Here was an opportunity to study character and watch the countenance of him who lectured. Perhaps now he who had so often never flinched when those around were groaning under operations, might speedily become unnerved, retire to his room, dismiss

the class and look to self. Not so; instantly putting his finger in his mouth, he sucked the wound, then wrapped it in his handkerchief, shrugged his shoulders, elevating his eyebrows in that manner peculiarly his own, and went on operating on the cadaver and lecturing till the gong sounded. I had my eye on that piece of surgical flesh which had been severed from the father trunk, but being detained to assist in bandaging the professor's finger, a brother doctor slipped into the lecture-room and secured the prize. He now can boast of Dr. Mott in alcohol. Fortunately the copious bleeding that followed the wound prevented the absorption of the deadly virus, and after festering for several days the finger healed. But for months neuralgia caused great pain.

One characteristic needs special mention, for it is as rare as it is excellent; namely, the doctor's punctuality. Like Dr. Johnson of old, after Dr. Mott had made an engagement he considered the time not his own, and fulfilled the appointment with remarkable precision. Whether for the purpose of holding a consultation, meeting a visitor, or sitting for his portrait,* it made no difference; so certain was his appearance at the right moment that one might set his watch on the Doctor's bow and keep accurate time.

There is a another point pleasing indeed to dwell on, for it recalls genial memories of a lasting nature.

* A. H. Wenzler, a truthful artist of conscientious skill, has painted the best portrait in existence of Dr. Mott. It is in possession of the family, and, by its anatomical faithfulness and beauty of coloring, must prove of great assistance in recalling the past and sustaining the future.

The uniform politeness of the subject of this sketch is as fresh in the minds of those who saw but little of him as it is with his own immediate relatives.

He gave a beggar fifty cents with the same gentleness of bearing and dignified courtesy with which he would receive a thousand dollar check, for one of his serious operations, from the most distinguished citizen in the metropolis.

During a grave operation, while arteries were necessarily severed and extremities bleeding copiously, when he asked for some new instrument, instead of seizing it in an excited manner, he thanked the assistant, and with a graceful inclination of the head, proceeded with his important duty.

Not long since, while residing at Newport, I addressed a letter to Dr. Mott, reminding him of a promise to send me a list, over his own signature, of all of his original operations, together with the original papers on operations, diseases, etc., connected with his professional career. The masterly treatment of the "Marsh Rosemary," a thesis written for the degree of doctor of medicine, and bringing before the public at large a remedy rarely employed before, seemed to foretell a zeal in other departments than those of botany, of which Dr. Mott was not only enamored but qualified in many respects to be professor.

Soon after mailing my letter I received several from Dr. Mott, containing the desired information. Extracts from two of them, with verbatim copies of his own list of operations and papers, I now put in print for the first time. For future reference this list will prove of lasting interest.

“NEW YORK, May 14th, 1863.

“MY DEAR FRIEND: At your kind request I have enclosed a list of most of my original operations. They were all performed without my ever having heard or read of their being done by any one before. This you now have from my own pen, and I declare this before all men.

“Men who have never done anything themselves have attempted to rob me of some of them, but I stand on the firm and immovable rock of truth, and none of them make me afraid. * * *

“*Original Operations.*

“Tying the arteria innominata.

“Tying the primitive iliac.

“Exsection of the clavicle. This is the most important and difficult operation that can be performed by man.

“Exsection of the lower jaw in different portions.

“Immobility of the lower jaw.

“Cutting out two inches of the deep jugular vein inseparably imbedded in a tumor, and tying both ends of the vein.

“Closing with a fine ligature, wounds of large veins of a longitudinal or transverse kind, and even when an *olive-sliced piece* has been cut out.

“These I have seen, and by pinching up the wound with forceps and applying a small ligature, the wound has healed without obliterating the canal of the vein. In this way I treated successfully the great axillary and the deep jugular. * * * *

“Your attached friend,

“V. MOTT.

“DR. S. W. FRANCIS.”

As an additional proof that Dr. Mott retained his self-possession, skill, and ability as a surgeon up to the last moment, I have from direct authority the interesting fact that he operated this winter four times for immobility of the lower jaw. He also operated on a patient

only seven days before his death, and had made an engagement to remove an enlarged cancer of the breast the very week he died.

"NEW YORK, May 20th, 1863.

"DEAR DOCTOR: I have enclosed for you most of my little doings in the way of writing. * * * *

"No one has had from me such papers (a list of original operations and papers), and perhaps they may be of use to some one hereafter.

"*Papers Published.*

"Relative anatomy of the subclavian arteries within the scaleni muscles.

"Memoirs on injuries of the skull and brain, illustrated by cases.

"Essay on pulsation in epigastrio.

"Memoirs on tying the arteria innominata.

"Several papers on exsection of the lower jaw in various portions and articulation on one side: with plates.

"Cases illustrating the utility of tying the common carotid for the safe removal of large tumors, and starving malignant diseases which cannot be extirpated.

"Removal of thyroid body which weighed four pounds, with entire success.

"Nasal operation with plates. Original. Successful.

"Distal—anticardial or brasdorean operation on the right carotid for aneurism of the innominata. Successful.

"Amputation at the hip joint. Successful. Plates.

"Papers on ligature of carotids, subclavians, external and internal iliacs.

"Exsection of clavicle for enormous osteo-sarcoma, ulcerated and bleeding. Successful.

"Essay on the treatment of ununited fractures. Illustrated by cases.

"Memoir on a peculiar tumor of the skin, which we have named *Pachadermatoccele*. Illustrated by drawings and cases.

"Paper on laceration of the corpus cavernosum, with cases.

"Memoirs on the removal of enormous tumors of the neck of small children, with cases and drawings. In one of the cases more than two inches of the internal jugular were removed, being imbedded in the tumor. Vein tied above and below. Recovered.

"Paper on tying the left subclavian under the scalenus anticus, attended with peculiar circumstances. Recovered.

"Letter to Amussat on the effects of admission of air in the veins in surgical operations.

"Letter to Liston, claiming originality in lower jaw operation. (See his last editions.)

"Paper on the malignant pneumonia which prevailed at Newtown, Long Island, more than fifty years since. Dr. Jos. M. Smith quoted it in his book on climate. * * *

"Truly your friend,

"V. MOTT.

"Dr. S. W. FRANCIS."

To this list may be added Case of Diabetes.

Sketch of the Life of Wright Post, M. D.

Mott's Velpeau, 4 vols., 8vo., New York, Illustrated.

Anniversary Discourse before the Graduates of the University of New York (1860).

And Mott's Cliniques (1860), a series of bedside lectures on practical surgery, which it was my privilege to report.

Dr. Mott has also written within the past few years, Discourse before the Binghamton (New York) State Inebriate Asylum.

Eulogy on John W. Francis, M. D., before New York Academy of Medicine.

Pain and Anæsthesia. Printed by the Sanitary Commission.

Hemorrhage from Wounds and their Arrest. do.

The variety of the subjects, the condensed facts, and the *pars magna fui* statements contained in them are sufficient evidences of a versatile mind, combined with the education of experience. The young write words ; as they advance in mind they deal in thoughts ; but the old in knowledge treat of facts. Dr. Mott, himself, is a fixed fact.

Dr. Mott's museum is the largest ever possessed by one surgeon without the aid of any society or the co-operation of an association. Weeks could be profitably passed in the close investigation of relative anatomy, as found in practical reality, systematically arranged on the numerous shelves.

In 1863, at the conclusion of his lecture, an elderly gentleman waited on Professor Mott, and informed him that he had just listened to his skilful treatment of a subject in anatomy ; and, comparing it with the one he had heard exactly *fifty years* before, he could not help expressing his profound astonishment at the freshness of the expounder, the interest of statements, and the distinct enunciation of his words. Can any other professor bring forth a living student who attended his lecture half a century ago ? Is there not much in this for reflection of the pleasantest character ?

Erect and of a commanding though benignant presence, Professor Mott pursued his daily round of duty with a calm philosophy. On his black suit no speck of white, and on his white shirt no speck of black. This is neatness.

Patriotic, he was Union to the last. On being asked,

at the commencement of this great rebellion, what his prognosis was, his answer may be well remembered as the best that even *now*, four years after, could be made: "Sir, I grant you that the body politic has been severely lacerated, and I doubt not that the wound will heal eventually, but it will be by the second intention. There will always be a scar to mark the union of dissevered parts."

Any account of the interesting subject of this biography, though brief in its comprehensiveness, would be incomplete were not some allusion made to "honors."

Dr. Mott was not only graduated doctor of medicine from Columbia College, but subsequently his degree of M. D. was confirmed in Edinburgh, Scotland. Later in life, when his many excellent qualities were more fully appreciated, the regents of the University of the State of New York conferred upon him LL.D. He was moreover Emeritus Professor of Operative Surgery in the University of New York; Ex-President of the Faculty; Ex-President of the New York Academy of Medicine; Fellow of the Medical Societies of Louisiana, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and President of the New York State Inebriate Asylum, and has been the recipient of honors from abroad rarely bestowed upon any American. Not long after several of his most successful and original operations, he was elected Fellow of the Imperial Academy of Paris; of the Chirurgical Society of Paris; and Fellow of the Medical and Chirurgical Societies of London and Brussels.

King and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland, which institution has elected but twenty new members in the last two hundred years, saw fit to fill the vacancy of a deceased member by creating Dr. Mott an Honorary Fellow. This is the greatest compliment yet paid to the genius of American surgery. In this democratic age, when those most worthy of merit avoid display, it may not be amiss for one without the pale of relationship to state that the order of Knight of Medjidechi of Constantinople was conferred upon Professor Mott when abroad, by the Sultan. With but a slight deviation from its former meaning may we say,

"One kingdom claims his birth,
Two hemispheres pronounce his worth."

Nothing would seem more appropriate as a testimonial from the loving hearts of his professional brethren throughout this country, than to raise a memorial fund for the purpose of erecting a bronze statue of Dr. Valentine Mott, the great surgeon of the nineteenth century, to be placed in the city of New York.

As a lecturer Dr. Mott combined interest with truth, and illustrated the necessary steps of an operation by the forcible example of not only how to do, but how not to do it. Full of anecdote, replete with experience, he flowed on with easy strides till the hour found him fresh, the student interested, and just so many important facts or axioms impressed upon the mind. It was exceedingly delicious to hear him state

that in such a case an operation *might* be performed, then look up in a genial and facetious way, and say, "Well, gentlemen, you may do so, but *I* am afraid."

As regards his general health, Professor Mott enjoyed more than the apportioned share of man. Well and strong, with a good appetite, as a boy, he developed into a finely proportioned man, and with the exception of occasional weakness, the result of an over-taxed constitution, his days of illness have been few. During the last six years, however, gastric neuralgia and angina pectoris proved the source of much suffering of a most distressing nature. But a careful diet and freedom from excitement preserved unto us for years, one whom it was a pleasure to love, honor and respect. Married in early life, and surrounded by a numerous family, Dr. Mott has been amply qualified to appreciate the influences of the domestic circle. And now but one more *fact* remains to be brought forth. Dr. Mott was a Christian, and believed in the regenerating influences of a Saviour's death. It was his firm conviction that to grow old gracefully one must be religious.

I have been informed by Dr. Mott's immediate family that he never recovered from the sudden intelligence of President Lincoln's base assassination. His barber, while shaving him on the morning of the 15th April, told the sad story to him; when he immediately sought his wife, in an adjoining apartment, exclaiming: "My dear, I have received such a shock, President Lincoln has been murdered"—and sitting down with a countenance deadly pale, he looked up

in great pain, and said feebly, "Oh, my back." From this time he gradually subsided, as it were, but was not materially affected till about Saturday night, when he complained of great pain in his left leg. Every attention that a devoted and appreciative family could pay him was bestowed. Dr. Austin Flint was called in, in accordance with Dr. Mott's wishes, and subsequently in consultation with Drs. A. H. Stevens, Joseph M. Smith, and Vanderpool, quinine, tonics, nourishment, and every suitable remedy were administered. His zealous son Alexander, however, watched with gloomy forebodings the progress of the disease, a typho-malarial fever and gangrene of the left leg, resulting from occlusion of the arteries of that lower extremity; and at length, Wednesday night, April 26th, 1865, at twenty minutes past ten, he expired.* "My daughter" were the last words uttered by the dear Doctor. They were addressed to Mrs. Isaac Bell.

* How touchingly beautiful is the following emanation, from one whose simplicity is only equalled by his skill, penned as it was after Dr. Mott's spirit had soared to more congenial spheres of purity and happiness.

PHILADELPHIA, April 27th, 1865.

DEAR DOCTOR MOTT: The younger Pancoast, who has just returned from New York, brings me the sad tidings of your illness. I pray God that you may soon be restored to health and happiness. We cannot yet afford to part with you. The American profession would be lost without its great and honored head. I trust the Lord may grant His servant at least fourscore years and ten.

I write in great haste. It would afford me great pleasure to receive a line in reply to this note, informing me of your condition.

God bless you.

Ever truly your friend,

PROFESSOR MOTT.

S. D. GROSS.

And even when sitting at the foot of his deathbed, while nature and disease were battling for the mastery, though he was unconscious of surroundings at the time, I could not but observe the benignity of his countenance, and look with the fondest love and admiration on the peaceful exit of a noble man.

DR. MOTT was buried Sunday, April 30th, 1865, from the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, in East 29th street, N. Y., of which Rev. G. H. Houghton is the Rector. The impressive ceremonies performed by Right Rev. Horatio Potter, Rev. Sam'l. Cook, Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, Rev. T. H. Eaton, Rector of St. Clement's Church, and Rev. Dr. Houghton, added solemnity to sadness. Throughout the funeral train of devoted followers might be seen the steady steps of military friends, worthies of established fame and aged men of highest rank.

The Pall-bearers were

Lieut.-General WINFIELD SCOTT.	GOVERNEUR BIBBY, Esq.
GEORGE BANCROFT, Esq.	J. W. DRAPER, M. D.
MARTYN PAINE, M. D.	ALFRED C. POST, M. D.
I. WOOD, M. D.	A. T. STEWART, Esq.
GEORGE OPDYKE, Esq.	GEORGE T. ELLIOT, Esq.
Rev. JAS. M. MATHEWS.	H. DE B. ROUTH, Esq.

The hymn sung on this sad occasion was the 124th, commencing :

“Hear what the voice from Heaven declares
To those in Christ who die.”

Rev. Dr. Houghton, his own pastor, who adminis-

tered to his spiritual wants in his last moments, then delivered an eloquent and feeling address on the religious character of Professor Mott. I extract the following as important in establishing a recorded fact :

“Bear me witness then to him this day, here as he lies before us in death, as one who recognized his own and the universal need of a Saviour ; who was a meek and humble and faithful follower of Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom only did he look for health and salvation ; and as one who gladly and gratefully availed himself of every means of grace which God has mercifully provided for our comfort and assistance.” *

How gratifying must it be to the bereaved family to recall his last communion, only two weeks before, on Easter festival. Flowers, in rich beauty and number, variegated in color, sweet in perfume, forming crosses, anchors, wreaths, &c., filled the chancel, covered the altars, and surrounded the coffin, on which most appropriately was placed a mammoth crown, composed of japonicas, as a fitting symbol of excelling merit and acknowledged fame. The thronging multitudes could not find even standing room sufficient for one last, long, mournful sight of his remains. And when his body was borne toward the

* A few lines from the pen of the beloved physician, found, after his death, attached to some of his private papers, will serve as additional testimony to what has been already said :

“If my life shall be taken suddenly, as I have a belief that it will, my family may know that my implicit faith and hope are in a merciful Redeemer, Who is the resurrection and the life. Amen—Amen.

“V. MOTT.”

entrance of the vault, in Greenwood Cemetery, a chilling reality of our separation thrilled through the frame as the suggestive words, suspended by some sympathetic friend, "Welcome, dear father," and "Grandpa's come," stood forth to view, as though the sainted spirits of two blest in God had been permitted to descend from Heaven, and with angelic accents welcome him to the silent tomb. Comforting is it to feel that death is but the winter of the soul.

Difficult, indeed, would it be to determine which were the more fitting title, for one who inspired respect throughout his eventful life: The GREAT Dr. Mott, or Dr. Mott the GOOD!

