

**Memoir of Moreton Stillé, M. D : read before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, April 2, 1858 / by Samuel L. Hollingsworth.**

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Hollingsworth (S.L.)

Memor of  
Moreton Stille, M.D.

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*Moreton Shille.*

# MEMOIR

OF

## MORETON STILLÉ, M. D.

READ BEFORE THE

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF PHILADELPHIA,

APRIL 2, 1858.

BY

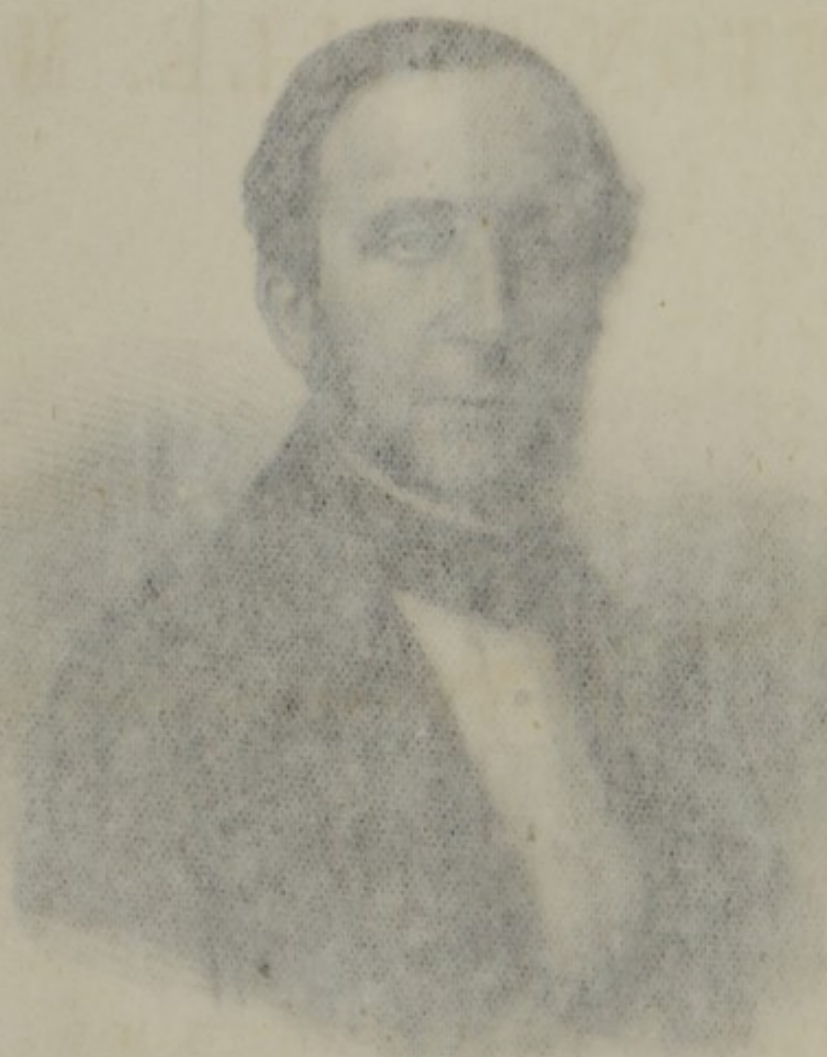
SAMUEL L. HOLLINGSWORTH, M. D.

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PHILADELPHIA.

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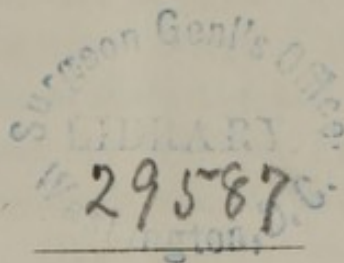
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MORETON STILLE, M.D.

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF PHILADELPHIA

APRIL 2 1888

SAMUEL J. HOLLINGSWORTH, M.D.

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

1888

## MEMOIR.

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MORETON STILLÉ, the youngest son of John and Maria Stillé, was born in the city of Philadelphia, on the 27th of October, 1822. Upon his father's side the family was of Swedish origin, its earliest member, of whom anything positively is known, being Olof Person Stillé, who emigrated to this country, it is supposed, with the *first* Swedish Colony in the year 1638, under a passport or letter of recommendation from Eric Bielke, Lord of Peningby and Nyñas, in Upland, Sweden. Shortly after their landing on the banks of the Delaware, the Swedes established numerous settlements, principally on the western banks of the river, then considered a part of Virginia. Some of these settlements were places of considerable note in their day, and on one of them, Pasayung, afterwards purchased by William Penn from the sons of the Commander Sven, commonly called the Swansons, now stands the city of Philadelphia. Olof Stillé's place of residence, marked on Lindstrom's map as "Stillé's land," was situated on what is at present termed "the neck," and is the only homestead, Mr. Watson informs us, now known of any of the Swedish families whose names are on the list taken in the year 1693, for the information of William Penn. Its Indian name was *Techoherassi*, "being a place on the Schuylkill River, surrounded with water like an



island." It is again spoken of as a small plantation built by free-men, and much frequented by the Indians, who gave Mr. Stillé the name of the "man with the black beard."

Another Stillé, probably a son of Olof, is honorably mentioned by the late venerable Mr. Duponceau, as present among the number assembled to greet the proprietary William Penn, on his memorable landing at New Castle, in the year 1682. The tombstones of many members of the family still exist in the burying ground of Gloria Dei Church, in Philadelphia, or the Swedes' Church, as it is commonly called.

The early historians represent the Swedes as a quiet, industrious people, who chiefly occupied themselves with agriculture. Their respect for religion is evinced by the fact that they had three churches erected when Penn arrived, the ministers of which were regularly supplied them by their bishops in Sweden. It is to their credit, also, that although the title to the lands on which they settled was ceded to them by the unfortunate Charles the 1st, they still thought proper to purchase them from the Indians who dwelt upon them.

On the maternal side, Moreton was descended from the family of the Wagners, one of whom came over to this country and settled as a clergyman in Reading, Pennsylvania, in the year 1759. Mr. Wagner's father and grandfather were both of them clergymen, also; his great-grandfather was Tobias Wagner, Chancellor of the University of Tübingen in 1662. In the *Biographie Universelle*, vol. 1. p. 26, he is described as "un des Théologiens les plus habiles et les plus féconds du dix septième siècle," one of the most skilful and fertile theologians of the seventeenth century. Few Americans can look back to a longer line of ancestry, settled in this country, than the family to which our late colleague belonged; and the tenacity with which they have clung to the spot where their first ancestor settled, is, in our country at least, somewhat remarkable.

Moreton Stillé began his school education with the Rev. Mr. Steel, at Abingdon, in 1831. In the following year, he was placed at Edge Hill Seminary, Princeton, under the care of Mr. Patton, who was afterwards succeeded by Mr. Wines, and at this institution, he remained until the year 1836. His industry and



capacity for learning, judging from his teacher's reports, some of which still remain, were considerable, and secured him a high place in his class. On leaving Edge Hill, he became a pupil of Mr. Hurlbut's school, in Philadelphia, where he continued until 1838, when he entered the Sophomore class of the University of Pennsylvania. During the whole period of his collegiate course he bore an excellent character, and was much respected by his fellow students for his gentlemanly bearing and conduct; but although a good student and finally carrying off an honor, he took in reality more interest in the proceedings of the Literary Society to which he belonged, the Philomathean, than in his proper collegiate duties. In 1841, he received his degree of Bachelor of Arts, on which occasion he delivered an oration upon Ancient Mexico.

Having chosen the profession of Medicine as most congenial to his tastes, on the 17th of July, 1841, he began its study with his brother, Dr. Alfred Stillé. How admirably Dr Stillé was qualified for the duties of a teacher, and how faithfully he performed them, it may not be proper in me to speak of, on this occasion; it is but justice to remark, however, that the even more than fraternal affection with which Moreton regarded him in after years, was greatly due to the feeling he conceived for him when his pupil. How strong this feeling was, must have been apparent to all who knew him, and is very warmly evidenced in all his letters from abroad, to which I have had access.

In the following October, Moreton matriculated in the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania. During the whole course of his attendance upon lectures, he was an attentive and even zealous student; the profitable manner in which his studies were pursued, is evinced in the admirable Thesis he presented for his degree, which received the highest compliment that can be paid to a student's effort, the unanimous request of the faculty for its publication. He obtained his degree of M. D. in the Spring of 1844.

In the month of October of the same year, he embarked for Liverpool, with the intention of remaining three years abroad. It may not be uninteresting to observe with what serious, and, at the same time, elevated sentiments, he commenced the journey



which was to occupy a period in many respects the most eventful and important in his history. In the month of August, he thus writes to his brother Charles, who was then in Europe:—

“ I feel as if I were just commencing life in earnest ; as if I were just now setting out upon its untried sea ; as if I had yet to buffet its storms or feel its prosperous breezes. Indifferent to the present, I live only for the future ; upon it my most earnest gaze is fixed, and I strive to enter its ever receding portals, to grasp its cloudy phantoms, its beckoning illusions. But, for all this, I am no dreamer. I would not with closed eyes lie upon the stream, and, the sport of its uncertain waves, be carried hither and thither. ‘ Conduct is fate,’ and every man may make his future if he will. I go abroad with the determination, made neither hastily nor without reflection, to be ‘ up and doing,’ and to profit by the privilege I enjoy to the utmost. If I know myself, I shall not be content with a place in the crowded middle ranks of the profession.”

His plans were to pass some time first in Dublin, that he might avail himself of the numerous advantages it then offered to the medical student, but more especially to improve himself in physical diagnosis, for the cultivation of which many of its teachers were justly celebrated. The remainder of his time abroad, he expected to pass principally in Paris. Unforeseen circumstances, as will be shown hereafter, caused him to modify his plans, as his last winter was spent in Vienna. During his absence he regularly corresponded with his brother Alfred, and as his letters afford an excellent insight into his character, as well as exhibit the manner in which his time was occupied whilst in Europe, I shall quote from them somewhat largely. It should be remembered that at this period he was just entering his twenty-third year, and when the age at which they were written is considered, their good sense, easy, clear expression, and precision of thought, must command the admiration of all who read them.

Under date of December 1st, 1844, having been in Dublin about a month, he writes as follows:—

“ In my last letter I mentioned that I had commenced my visits to the Meath Hospital. When Dr. Graves was attached to it, his clinical system was carried out with the greatest minuteness and care. Every



patient was carefully examined first by the pupil, and then by the physician, who explained and corrected the mistakes of the other, supplied his omissions, and drew his attention to different points of diagnosis. The pupil was then obliged to write out the history of the case, and paste it on a board at the head of the bed, noting on it the progress from day to day. These notes formed the theme of the lectures, and in their preparation, from the patient being constantly under the eye of the physician, the pupil had to be extremely accurate. Dr. Stokes does not do this. His examinations are more directed to finding out what the disease is, in the shortest way, and in noting the *curiosities* of it, than to a patient study of its phenomena." "When he gets a case that presents some striking features, or about which there is a good deal of obscurity, his admirable powers of diagnosis and discriminating judgment show to the greatest advantage. His lectures are delivered twice in the week, and are extremely interesting and instructive. These lectures I would not miss for a great deal; I always take notes of them, and write them out as fully as I can when I go home. Sometimes when examining a patient, an interesting point will present itself, and Dr. Stokes will thereupon take a pinch of snuff very thoughtfully, take me by the arm, and walk over to the fireplace and commence forthwith a long talk about the case. On these occasions I resign myself very contentedly to listen, and rather prefer to ask questions than to originate ideas. I have felt rather awkwardly at times at being asked my opinion about what, alas! from my want of practical knowledge, I could say but little, but have generally managed to get off very well, by saying what I knew and no more."

"I have been actively engaged since the beginning of my attendance, in examining cases for myself, accustoming my ear to auscultatory sounds, and my fingers to percussion and exploration, and familiarizing myself with the mode of inquiring into the history of the progress of diseases. I have now under my care four beds, and will increase the number as soon as any interesting cases come in." Again he observes: "Phthisis, pneumonia, rheumatism and diabetes are the diseases I have now under my care, and of which I have notes. I do not, however, confine myself to these, but, when I have time, observe others. I believe, however, as you have often told me, that there is more to be learned by careful examination of a few cases than by a superficial observation of a larger number." "Besides the Meath, I have taken the ticket of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital, the most extensive institution of the kind in the city. It contains 140 beds, and has fifteen of them appropriated to diseases of the uterus, &c. I am on duty there.



once a week, and as I do not wish to let anything interfere with my hours at the Meath, selected the night time; so I remain at my post from 9 P. M. to 9 A. M. Women are coming in at all times of the night and day, and there are about 2500 delivered *per annum*.

"I shall avail myself of the lectures which are generally delivered in the afternoon at the medical schools. Of these Dr. Harrison on anatomy, with constant reference to comparative anatomy, Corrigan on practice, and Montgomery on midwifery, are those which I would care most to hear. But after all, I can go but irregularly, as I would rather devote much of this time to reading. Then my German lessons come three times a week, and I find that without very careful study and practice, I shall get on but slowly. My hours are arranged thus: Rise at half past 7, which is with the sun, and will soon be before it; breakfast at 8; *Meath Hospital* from  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to 10 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and from  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to  $11\frac{1}{2}$  on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; *Lying-in Hospital* from  $10\frac{1}{4}$  to  $11\frac{1}{2}$  on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; *writing notes*  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 12 to 1 o'clock, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; *study, lectures* and visiting  $11\frac{1}{2}$  to 5, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; *German*  $1\frac{1}{4}$  and  $2\frac{1}{4}$ , Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; *study, &c.*,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  to 5, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; dinner, from 5 to 6; medical and miscellaneous reading, German exercises, *cup of tea* and musing on absent friends or writing to them till bed-time, from which, till Kitty knocks at the door in the morning, the sole occupation is *sleep*. Thus, my dear brother, you have my distribution of time. You see the morning's occupations are strictly fixed; those of the latter part of the day are not so, but I try to make the most of it."

Dec. 31. "The circle in which I visit is but a small, although a very agreeable one, but the truth is, I find but little time for visiting without neglecting other duties which I cannot afford to pass over. I attend to my duties every morning at the Meath, and am usually the first on the ground, examining my patients long before Dr. Stokes makes his appearance. I have now gained some familiarity with the ordinary run of pneumonia, phthisis, bronchitis and typhus, and have also some patients in the chronic ward." (In a subsequent part of the same letter, he says): "The attendance upon these different institutions," alluding to the Meath, the Lying-in Hospital, and the Pitt St. Dispensary for Diseases of Children, "the necessary reading to enable me to profit by what I see, and a faithful study of my German lessons, occupy my time fully." "I forgot to mention that I also attend regularly the weekly meetings of the Pathological Society, where all the interesting cases that die in the hospitals are recounted, and the speci-



mens explained by the most eminent men in the profession, such as Stokes, Corrigan, Law, O'Ferrall, &c. The Obstetrical and Surgical societies meet once every two weeks ; to these Dr. Churchill has taken me, and I expect to attend them regularly."

In his next letter, dated January 15th, he gives a very particular and interesting account of the system adopted for supporting the poor in Ireland, and describes his visits to two of the *Unions*.

"I went a few evenings ago," he adds, "to the meeting of the Surgical Society at the Royal College of Surgeons, and had the pleasure of hearing, among other interesting communications, an account from Sir Philip Crampton of Amussat's operation for artificial anus, which he witnessed when in Paris. Sir Philip is nearly 70 years of age, but straight as a young man, hale and hearty. He is very active, and, it is said, hunts three days in the week. He dwelt a long while upon the admirable manner in which the operation was performed by M. Amussat, and inculcated strongly his opinion of its feasibility and propriety. He said he could never forgive himself for having allowed certain cases of stricture of the colon, which had fallen under his observation, to die without having first attempted the operation."

Towards the latter end of February, Dr. Stillé left Dublin for London. His time had been so profitably and pleasantly spent whilst in Dublin, where he had been stationary for nearly four months, that he left it with much regret. The circle of society into which he was admitted was not only refined and intellectual, but for one constituted as he was, possessed even a higher attraction in the ease and informality of its intercourse. He had also become acquainted with several of its most distinguished physicians, among whom were Drs. Stokes, Graves, Churchill, Hamilton, Law and McDonnell, from all of whom he received many civilities and attentions. He was, in particular, treated with marked kindness by Dr. Stokes, who evidently appreciated his good sense, and the earnestness with which he devoted himself to his studies. In his last letter from Dublin, he mentions with pride that for two of his most precious and flattering letters of introduction, to Dr. Todd, of London, and M. Louis, of Paris, he was indebted to that gentleman. His letters warmly and grate-



fully acknowledge all these attentions, the more valued and felt undoubtedly by him from his being a stranger there. To Dr. Stokes, into whose society he was much thrown, from his daily attendance at the hospital, he had become much attached, and his correspondence gives frequent utterance of the enthusiastic admiration in which he held that great physician's character.

"The more I see of him," he says, on one occasion, "the greater is my respect for his opinions and esteem for his character. In him the quick perceptions of genius are moderated by a wise discretion; if he has to pronounce an unfavorable prognosis, his voice is tender with regret, and the hand that detects so surely the fatal and lurking disease is just as ready to extend comfort to the sufferer and surround the dying couch with all that can make the patient's downward path less dreary and painful."

His next letter is dated London, March 2d, whence he thus writes:—

"I regret that I shall not be able in this, to give you an account of the manner in which my time here will be occupied. I have wished in the first place to look around me, to see in what direction I should pursue my studies. Wherever it shall be, they must of course be of a less steady character than in Dublin, but I think that by seeing the practice of the most eminent men in the different hospitals, attending their clinical lectures, learning their opinions in conversation, visiting the various museums and extensive collections of specimens of morbid structure, my time will not be unprofitably spent. I shall also visit particularly the London Fever Hospital, and will endeavor to get a systematic history of a few cases of the disease. I hoped to have been able to study urinary diseases as a specialty here, but am afraid the opportunity is not so good as I had been led to expect."

The remainder of the letter is taken up with an account of the doctrines held in Dublin, regarding the cause of the first sound of the heart; after stating which, he says:—

"The opinion in Dublin is, as I have said, universal, that the first sound and impulse occur during the systole of the heart, the second during its diastole. As to the physical cause of the sounds, there probably exists some difference of opinion. Dr. Stokes believes the first sound to be due 'wholly and entirely' to the muscular contraction of the ven-



tricles—for the reason that exactly the same sound can be heard by placing the stethoscope on any other muscle during contraction.”

*April 2.* “I soon saw, after my arrival here, that it would not be possible to undertake any systematic course of study ; it is the fag-end of the season, and energy seems to have forsaken every one connected with the hospitals.”

The reception he met with from some of the London physicians was discouraging in the extreme.

“How it may be of Englishmen generally,” he says, “I know not, but certainly a letter of introduction to a London physician is not sufficient to melt the ice that encases his heart, and warm him to a manifestation of even common courtesy. In Dublin a man has only to let it be known that he is a stranger, to be welcomed with outstretched hands and made an honorable guest at many a hospitable board. In London he is looked upon almost as an intruder, is coldly scanned from top to toe, and even the external seeming of politeness is disregarded.”

There were several exceptions, however, to this want of courtesy, as the following extract will show.

“My letters to Drs. Todd, Murphy, and Marshall Hall,” the latter kindly given him by Dr. Shattuck, of Boston, “I have delivered. I can only say at present, that I have been delighted with the reception they have given me, and with the disposition they have shown to further my plans. I shall try to see a great deal of Dr. Todd ; he has been very kind to me ; I have been round his hospital, and heard him lecture, and am anxious to see more of him.”

Of Dr. Hall's kindness to him, in particular, he frequently speaks:—

“He is always,” he remarks on one occasion, “wanting to know what he can do for me. He gave me, among other things, an introduction to the meetings of the London Medico-Chirurgical Society, which are held every fortnight, and where I have an opportunity of seeing most of the eminent men of London, and hearing their views on important points which arise in the discussion which follows the reading of a paper. Last Tuesday a paper was read upon the minute structure of the lung, and the pathology of tubercle ; this gave rise to an animated debate in which Drs. Williams, Hodgkin, Golding Bird, and others whose names I did not know, took part. In this way I get a very useful epitome of the



current opinions of the day, as well as of those held by the speakers themselves. I asked Marshall Hall for an introduction to Sir Alexander Morrison, who is physician of the Bethlehem Lunatic Asylum, as I wished to see that famous establishment. He gave it to me most willingly, and I went over the whole institution with Sir Alexander, who took great pains to show me everything interesting about it. There is a criminal department in it, where those persons are confined who have escaped the penalty of their crimes on the plea of insanity."

Among the many visits he made to the institutions of London was one to the Smallpox Hospital in company with Dr. Gregory. He appears to have been a good deal surprised at what he heard from that gentleman, particularly as regards the mortality of smallpox after vaccination. His remarks are entirely too extended to extract; the omission of them is of little consequence, however, as Dr. Gregory's views of the superior advantages of inoculation over vaccination are well known to you all through his publications.

Early in May, Dr. Stillé left London and made a trip to the West of England and Wales, revisited Dublin, and returned to London, passing through Glasgow, Edinburgh and York by the way. During the summer he travelled through Holland, the Rhineland, and Switzerland, arriving at Paris in the middle of September. Of his movements there, he thus writes his brother:—

"To-day I called on M. Barth, as the person from whom I would be apt to derive the most correct information and the best advice, and presented your letter to him. Much to my regret, I learned from him that M. Louis merely visited the wards of Beaujon, without giving any bedside lectures, and that the law of which I spoke to you last summer, prohibiting the *internes* from giving courses was still strictly enforced. The present time is moreover vacation, and there is but little doing."  
 "M. Barth commences in a few days a course of demonstrations in Pathological Anatomy: the *interne* at St. Louis, who has been there a long while, leaves on the 1st of January, to make room for a new hand, and Ricord's *interne* does the same. I will probably, therefore, at least commence with these three, in order that I may have something to do. To tell the truth, I seem to have been, for the last few days, thrown entirely off my balance, and there is nothing I so strongly desire as to have my mind occupied in something that will make it think."



*Sept. 30.* "I have now much less time at my disposal than when I last wrote, and I feel a pleasure in saying so that can only be understood by one who has like myself remitted for so long a time any regular employment. I have a certain enjoyment in counting over my hours and in saying to myself, such and such are usefully occupied."

"The Hôpital du Midi and St. Louis are, as you know, wide enough apart, and it would be hard to find a situation convenient to both. I go to the first, three times a week, at 7 A. M., to the other at 11 A. M., five times in the week. Besides these, I have Barth on Pathological Anatomy at the Ecole Pratique, three times a week, at 2 P. M., and Ribail on Bandages every day at 4 P. M. All these courses will be finished before the cold weather sets in, and allow me in the winter to devote myself to the hospitals in the neighborhood. M. Valleix tells me it is probable Louis will be recalled to Hôtel Dieu in January, a consummation devoutly to be wished. The two *internes* at Ricord's Hospital and St. Louis are both excellent fellows, well versed in their respective subjects, and capable of giving admirable courses."

*Oct. 28.* "I have not yet finished the courses I began when I started here; but they will probably terminate in a fortnight. I shall then commence my attendance upon one or more of the hospitals, and enter more seriously upon the study of General Pathology. In addition, a course with Sichel or with the *interne* of the Hôpital des Enfants Malades will give me enough to do till January. Towards the close of the year I will be able to know more definitely whether or not I may expect M. Louis to be transferred to Hôtel Dieu. If he is not, I can always, according to your advice, move to the neighborhood of Beaujon, and devote myself exclusively to its wards."

*November 30.* "I am attending Chomel's Clinical Lectures, and Trousseau at the Hôpital Necker. I find it impossible from the number of students, however, to study individual cases in Chomel's wards, and am obliged to content myself with his lectures."

He mentions, also, that he was taking a second course on Pathological Anatomy with M. Barth.

In answer to a letter of his brother, who requested him to procure a copy of a memoir presented by himself to the Medical Society of Observation in 1837, he writes:—

"I am glad to have had the opportunity of seeing this comparative table of the fevers, especially as it confirms my own observations made last winter in Dublin. I saw some 15 cases at the Meath Hospital of



typhus in persons of all ages, but no case of what we would call typhoid at home. The only difference that strikes me at present between your observations and mine, is, that the eruption of petechiæ was the exception, and that it was equally well marked in the mild or severe cases, whenever it occurred. Dr. Stokes does not consider it an unfavorable sign. I do not know whether you are aware of Dr. Stokes' investigations regarding the heart in typhus. He calls it *typhoid softening*; it is not constant. The color is livid, cohesion very much impaired and the muscular structure homogeneous and infiltrated with matter, which for want of a better name he calls *gelatinous* or *viscous*. No traces of inflammation of either pericardium or endocardium are to be found."

The rest of his letter is almost exclusively taken up with a description of the diagnostic signs by which this condition of the heart may be recognized. They are very clearly and accurately described, but, as their recapitulation would occupy more space than I can well afford at present, I am obliged to omit it. The subject, moreover, is fully treated of in Chapter VII. of Dr. Stokes' admirable treatise on the "Diseases of the Heart and the Aorta," under the head of "The Condition of the Heart in Typhus Fever."

"I have already told you," he continues, "that I was not as actively engaged as I could wish in medical study for the last month. I have been limited to attendance upon Louis's visit and Chomel's lectures. Admittance at any other time than the visit has been impossible; they are vastly more strict than when you were here. In consequence of this, I have made no attempt to become a member of the Medical Society of Observation—as without the privilege of making observations, of course I could not have fitted myself for that honor."

Finding that he could not pursue his studies to as much advantage in Paris as he had anticipated, Dr. Stillé left that city in March, 1846, with the determination of passing the next winter in Vienna. The intervening time was employed in travelling through Italy, Germany, and Sweden. From Copenhagen he writes thus:—

"During my passage through Germany, I visited the hospitals of Munich, Nuremburg, and Hamburg, and also Meckel's anatomical museum at Halle. This last disappointed me very much. It contains a



very good collection of comparative anatomy, but the whole of it is crowded, dirty and neglected. In the midst of the bones and macerating preparations, I found the prosector, Dr. Mauthner, a pupil of the late Meckel, who interested himself very actively in showing me everything. Among the curiosities he exhibited and drew from its bottle that I might inspect it, was the heart of a former professor of the University, containing an opening between the ventricles fully an inch in all its diameters. No morbus ceruleus—but subject to palpitations which ceded to the use of vinous stimulants. The skeleton of the elder Meckel is preserved (according to his own wish), in a separate closed case."

Dr. Stillé reached Vienna on the 1st of October, and immediately commenced his attendance upon the daily *post-mortem* examinations at the hospital.

"Within a few days," he remarks, "Rokitansky commenced his private course on Pathological Anatomy. The manner of conducting it is thus: We take turns in making a *post-mortem* examination every morning, and the one who makes it describes everything as he proceeds under the direction of the professor. The most remarkable specimens that have been taken from the bodies opened are then exhibited and described by Rokitansky, after which we adjourn to the museum and hear from him a systematic course on Pathological Anatomy, illustrated by the morbid specimens therein contained. I can only remark here in passing that the instruction is the most complete and thorough I have yet witnessed."

Nov. 7. "I rise at 7, and take my breakfast in my room—after breakfast I go at once to the hospital—a walk of some 10 minutes—and arrive there in time to attend Skoda's clinic, which begins at 8 and lasts until 10. After the clinic I go to the dead house and am engaged with Rokitansky till 12. I then return to my room or to the Medical Reading Room, and until 2 o'clock read on medicine. \* \* \* The medical clinic of Skoda is entirely separate from the general wards of the hospital. It is in a separate building in two large rooms, and contains 28 beds, into which the most interesting cases are brought. I cannot express too highly my gratification with the manner in which this clinic is conducted. It is in fact the *beau-idéal* of clinical instruction. Each patient is placed under the care of an advanced student (*ordinarius*)—the *ordinarius* writes on the black-board, at the head of the bed, the name, sex, age, profession, &c., of the patient, the diet and the number of evacuations, alvine and urinary. He is obliged also to write out on printed sheets under appropriate heads, the previous history of the



case, and all the subjective and objective symptoms at the time of entry, and the medical and surgical treatment, the prescriptions being written out at length. After the diagnosis has been made out by the Professor, the name of the disease is written in large characters in the middle of the black-board, so that one on entering the ward can at once see what cases are to be found there, and if he wishes to investigate any one, can do so without addressing a word to the patient, for the whole history and diurnal phases of the disease are there already written out for him with the greatest precision. At the visit of the professor, the *ordinarius* stands opposite to him at the head of the bed, and he must be a man of no little tact and acquirement who can answer readily and satisfactorily the searching examination he is bound to undergo. He may not reply negligently or vaguely, but must show how much or how little he knows. All the remarks that the student writes on the paper at the head of the bed are in Latin, and the conversation between the professor and him is carried on in the same language. This I found difficult at first to understand, chiefly on account of the German pronunciation, but I can now make it out very well. In attending this clinic and Rokitansky's demonstrations and lectures, I enjoy advantages that I have yet nowhere found, and which I believe are to be found in no other European school whatever."

Nov. 22. "I sent you by the last steamer an account of my medical occupations—they continue still the same as before, with the addition of an auscultatory course with Skoda's assistant. I have plenty of employment cut out for the winter, and feel confident of deriving more benefit from my residence here in a medical point of view than I have obtained either in Paris or Dublin. In one respect the clinic offers peculiar advantages for studying disease, as Skoda's *Therapeia* is very limited. At present, for example, there are in this clinic, two cases of pneumonia, three of pleurisy, one of puerperal peritonitis, and several cases of typhus, the treatment in all of which, we at home would call perfectly nugatory, for neither venesection, cupping, blistering, or calomel were employed in any one, nor any heroic remedies. A few Dover's powders, decoction of althæa, oleaginous mixture, and in the typhus cases, sulphuric acid, constituted the whole pharmacopœia. Such is Skoda's habitual treatment in acute diseases, and he is very successful." "If we find that patients may recover as well and even better from many grave diseases without the employment of active medicines and painful applications, or in other words, that nature is capable, unassisted, of retracing the steps of a morbid progress, it is certainly irrational for the physician to volunteer his officious aid, which after all may only harass and indeed arrest her march. The great question then



is, when is his interference called for, and to what extent is it authorized? and this can only be obtained by an impartial retrospect of the action of his remedies and a careful study of those cases where nature has herself sufficed in the restoration of the sick man to health. It is in ordinary practice so difficult to distinguish the effect from the sequence, that when one has the rare opportunity of witnessing the unaided and unimpeded restorative efforts of the system, it is an occasion not to be slighted. I have, therefore, undertaken to preserve notes of the graver cases of disease which are to be found in the medical clinic as a reminder to me hereafter, of when and where it is proper to interfere—for I take it to be a fundamental rule, in our present ignorance of the *mode of action* of remedies, that all active interference is, to say the least, superfluous, unless a well tested experience has found it indispensable. I see now the value of the numerical system in the appreciation of the value of therapeutic agents, and, although I see its difficulties, acknowledge the possibility of its employment."

*January 21.* "I have lately entered upon a course of chemical and microscopical observation of the secretions, and have learned much that is new and interesting to me both in a scientific and practical point of view. There are only one or two beside myself taking the course, and we have every opportunity, therefore, of familiarizing ourselves with the actual performance of analyses, a knowledge of which will be in future of the greatest value to me. My chief object in leaving Dublin for London was the study of urinary diseases, and you know already I was disappointed in finding there the facilities I had anticipated. I am, therefore, particularly rejoiced at having now the opportunity of acquiring here a familiarity with the chief means of their diagnosis. Pathological and microscopical chemistry is in itself a most interesting pursuit, and will serve hereafter to occupy the leisure time of which I shall doubtless have sufficient in the outset of my professional career.

I still continue to attend regularly every morning in the dead house to witness the dissections, and take particular interest in those which are conducted under the supervision of Rokitansky and the professor of legal medicine, viz: the judicial dissections, so called. I do not know that I have before spoken particularly of these. Every case which, in our country and England, falls within the jurisdiction of the coroner, must here be taken at once to the Hospital—an order is sent from the police directed to the professor of Pathological Anatomy (who receives yearly a salary of 600 florins for the duty), requesting him to report the examination of the body and the cause of death—a commissioner of the police, who is also a medical man, must be present at the autopsy, and the professor of legal medicine with his students. The examination



is also open to all, *i. e.*, to all medical men. This is certainly a rare opportunity, and I avail myself of it often in preference to the ordinary examinations where the death is from disease. Thus, for instance, I have seen several cases of suicide by hanging, and by throat cutting, cases of criminal abortion, and one of a gentleman who in a drunken frolic fell out of the window of his hotel and fractured his skull. The report, as you may suppose, is in all such cases most precise, and is of advantage to the bystanders from being dictated by the person making the examination."

Feb. 19, 1847. "A few words about Skoda's clinic. I always strive against the too hasty formation of opinions, and if I remember rightly, expressed the belief which had been communicated to me that the average mortality of the graver diseases in Skoda's ward was, if anything, less than in others where more active treatment was employed. I have at present no reliable means of ascertaining if such be really the case, and to what extent; but I would say from my personal observation in the clinic, that the cases of pneumonia and pleurisy seemed to me to convalesce more slowly than I have seen them do elsewhere. I was led to abandon my project of taking notes with a view of getting a natural history of disease, chiefly because Skoda began to employ more active agents than he had previously done, *as bleeding in excessive dyspnœa* in pneumonia, strong injections of nitrate of silver in dysentery; and also because I thought I could employ the same time more advantageously in the anatomical room. The course of Rokitansky's assistant, Laudner, is exceedingly valuable, as he is not only capable in the highest degree, but takes the greatest pains to satisfy all our inquiries and give us thorough instruction. Rokitansky is hardly ever to be seen in the anatomical rooms without his meerschaum or cigar in his mouth; most of the class follow the example of their professor, whether as a preservative against the bad air or not, I do not know.

Of late the whole medical world here has been occupied with the discovery of the insusceptibility to pain of persons under the influence of sulphuric ether. Many trials have been made with it in the hospital, and within a short time also, in private practice, all of which, as far as I can learn, have perfectly succeeded. I witnessed myself an amputation of the thigh and a resection of part of the lower jaw performed upon patients under its influence. The latter operation lasted *one hour and a quarter*, and the ether was inspired at intervals so as to keep the patient (a woman of 25 years of age) under its influence. Both operations were consummated without the least manifestation by the patient of suffering. As yet I have heard of no untoward consequences following any of the operations which can in any degree detract from this inap-



preciable benefit, which I feel proud to think was conferred upon humanity by an American. I am this moment writing under the somewhat relaxing consequences of an experiment I made upon myself this morning with the ether. The sensation I experienced was merely an agreeable intoxication accompanied with a feeling of fulness and tingling in the capillary vessels and nerves upon the surface of the body and inside of the head. It lasted about a minute, during which, however, I preserved entire consciousness and command of the voluntary muscles, although I felt inclined to commit all kinds of extravagances."

*March 10.* "You will observe that the date at the head of this letter is earlier than usual. The reason for this is, that I expect in a few days (the 15th) to break up from my winter quarters upon my proposed journey to the *Morgenland*, as the Orient is poetically termed by the Germans. Instead, however, of going down the Danube, I have reversed the route and go from here to Trieste, and thence over Greece to Constantinople, this alteration being made in consequence of the necessity of making a quarantine of seven days between Constantinople and Athens at Syra, if I had adhered to the first plan. By the other route, however, there are no quarantines, except a day or so on the Austrian frontier, and there is the additional advantage, also, of being sooner in a warm climate. I shall have a most agreeable and instructive companion on the journey in Mr. Stiles, the American Chargé here. I have seen a great deal of him during the winter, and have received a great deal of hospitality at the hands of himself and lady, and acquired a great friendship and esteem for him. We will probably be on the journey some six or seven weeks, and thus return to Vienna in the most beautiful season of the year."

Dr. Stillé left Vienna with many regrets, and after making his proposed tour through Turkey and Greece, returned to Vienna about the latter end of May, whence he proceeded by the way of Linz, Salzburg, Insbrück, and Frankfort to Paris. His last letter to his brother, marked *ultima*, was from that city. In it he says:—

"Six weeks of idleness even in the gay city of Paris, have taught me that contentment and conscientious labor go hand in hand, and I am not sorry soon to have in view a life devoted to earnest and profitable study. The time I have wasted I hope to redeem, and that which I have well employed, will, I trust, bring forth good fruit."

On the 9th of August, 1847, he embarked from Liverpool for



home, bringing with him besides a collection of medical works, chiefly German, a variety of anatomical models, mostly selected from Thibert's series of *Pathologie Interne*.

It may possibly appear to many of you that I have devoted entirely too much space to these letters of our late colleague, and that a general statement of the various courses he attended while abroad, and where and under whom they were conducted, would have been sufficient. I have acted purposely, however, in the matter, satisfied, from various reasons, that the story of his life, during the three years of his residence in Europe, was best told in his own language, and without any comments. My chief regret, in truth, has been that the limits usually allowed to such papers in the *Transactions* would not permit me to extract even more largely, as the whole course of his conduct while abroad exhibits, as it is depicted in them, a most instructive example of unwearied industry and self-denial.

From the great stress I have laid upon his attention to his medical pursuits while abroad, it would be incorrect, however, to imagine that study, though his chief, was his only occupation there. His views and tastes were far more expansive and generous. Impelled by a strong desire to see those places and objects which are renowned in the world's history, or famous as the creations of man's genius, he visited, during the summer vacations, nearly all the countries of Europe. In many of his letters, he describes, *con amore*, the genuine gratification he felt on these occasions; in fact, of all his recollections of foreign life, such seasons of delight were most treasured by him, nor can it be doubted that they exerted a very happy influence upon his character.

Shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia, he took an office with the intention of devoting himself to the practice of his profession. For this, I need hardly say, he was in every respect well prepared; his steady industry and large opportunities having given him much more experience than usually falls to the lot of commencing practitioners. During the year that intervened between this period and the following July, with the exception of several reviews written by him, I have no record of the manner in which he passed his time. Early in July, 1848, he was elected one of the resident physicians of the Pennsylvania Hospital, for the unexpired



term of the late Dr. Morgan. He remained at the hospital till March the 28th, 1849, nearly nine months, receiving from its managers, at the close of his term, a certificate commendatory of his attention and good conduct.

Towards the latter end of June of the same year, malignant cholera, then epidemic throughout our whole country, broke out in its most virulent form in the Philadelphia Almshouse, Blockley. The care of the patients was at first undertaken by the Resident Physicians, but the number of the sick so rapidly increased that their duties became too arduous for them, and a separate cholera service was instituted by the Board of Guardians; to this Dr. Stillé and Dr. Edward R. Mayer were appointed physicians, in connection with a Medical Board, consisting of the Chief Resident Physician, Dr. Benedict, and the consulting Surgeon and Physician of the Hospital, Dr. Page and Dr. Clymer. The excessive malignity and rapid spread of the disease are shown by the fact that, out of a population of about 1400 persons residing in the house, the cases admitted into the Cholera Hospital from its opening on the 7th of July, until its closure on the 4th of August, numbered 222, of whom 192 died. The services rendered by the Medical Board and their assistants, during this period, were not only harassing and laborious, but involved in their discharge, as may be supposed, great personal risk. So poisonous, indeed, was the miasma, that the health of several of them soon became seriously affected, and two of them, Mr. T. M. Flint, of Philadelphia, and Mr. J. Warren White, of Mississippi, gentlemen who had nobly offered their gratuitous services to the sick, fell martyrs to it, dying in the city, a few days after their removal from the Hospital.\* Ten days after the commencement of his duties, Dr. Stillé was himself attacked with cholera and narrowly escaped with his life. It took him a long while to recover from it, even as it was, so shattered was his constitution by the disease.

On the 10th of October, 1850, Dr. Stillé was married to Miss Heloise Destouet, daughter of S. Destouet, Esq., of Philadelphia. The union was, in every respect, a happy one, leaving him, in

\* See "History of the Epidemic of Cholera, at the Philada. Almshouse, Blockley, &c.," in the November No., 1849, of the Medical Examiner.



his domestic relations, nothing to wish for. A few days after his marriage, he again sailed for Europe, accompanied by his wife and his brother, Dr. Alfred Stillé. The first part of his time while abroad was passed in Italy, and the latter portion in Paris, where his eldest daughter was born. He returned to Philadelphia in the month of April, 1852, and resumed the practice of his profession. During the years which intervened between this period and his death, he endeavored to reap from the pursuit of his profession some reward for his long and conscientious studies; but the measure of his employment did not satisfy his expectations, or reconcile him to the truth that success in the attainment of practice, is more frequently won by uninterrupted devotion to its daily duties, than either by native talent or by proficiency in the science upon which it is based. Like many others who had enjoyed advantages similar to his own, he was impatient to succeed, and did not rest satisfied with the attachment and respect of the comparatively small number whom his devotion and skill had made his debtors. He forgot, in fact, that the years of his absence were, as regards professional practice, lost years, although so rich to him in all the fruits of knowledge. Yet, had he lived to obtain what he desired so anxiously, it may be questioned whether he would not have looked back to those very years as among the happiest of his life, and perhaps expended many a sigh upon their not unprofitable tranquillity. It was during this period, I may mention, that he devoted himself to the experimental study of chemical analysis, and acquired a knowledge of it, which proved of essential service to him in the preparation of his work on *Medical Jurisprudence*.

A year before his death, a circumstance occurred which entirely changed the current of his thoughts and feelings, as it was about that period that the idea was first suggested to him by his friend Francis Wharton, Esq., of writing a work on Medical Jurisprudence, Mr. Wharton offering to undertake the legal part of it, should the project meet with his views. The proposition came at an auspicious moment, when the want of some steady employment was, as we have just seen, being daily felt by him, and in itself afforded so excellent an opportunity for the exercise of his various powers, that he almost immediately acceded to it. Of the intensity of his application, as well as of the conscientious spirit



which actuated him in his labors, during the year which followed, his colleague, Mr. Wharton, in the just and touching tribute to his memory, contained in the preface to their joint work, thus speaks: "It was a year of patient and severe research, marked to an extent of which the annals of science afford few parallels, by the most self-denying industry, as well as by a rigorous and almost fastidious conscientiousness in the pursuit, not only of truth, but of the most appropriate terms by which that truth could be expressed."

In the month of March, 1855, he was appointed Lecturer on the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Philadelphia Association for Medical Instruction. The previous incumbents had been his brother, Dr. Alfred Stillé, and his friend, Dr. J. Forsyth Meigs, and the circumstance that he had been thought worthy to succeed such men, was both gratifying and inciting to him. I have understood that he had but two weeks to prepare himself for his post, and when it is considered that his lectures were written ones, and that at the same time he labored without intermission upon his Medical Jurisprudence, a good idea may be formed of the fatigue he must have undergone during this period. Yet he never once was absent from his post, nor spared any pains to render his instructions useful by procuring recent specimens of diseased structure, and employing in their demonstration, the knowledge he had gained with Barth, Engel, Rokitansky, and others, as well as by his own dissections, and an extensive literary acquaintance with pathological anatomy. His lectures were listened to with interest and satisfaction, and the resolutions adopted by his class at his death, testify both their high appreciation of his ability as a teacher, and his qualities as a man. With the beginning of June his lectures terminated for the summer, and at the same time the last sheets of his posthumous work were passing through the press.

And thus, the bright prospect of future eminence and renown lay seemingly fair and open before him, and it only appeared needful for him to press onward with diligence and judgment to be able to reach the goal with both safety and honor. But these hopeful anticipations were never to be realized. With every faculty of his mind intently engaged upon his labors, he either did not notice, or disregarded the gradually wasting and exhausting



effects which such intellectual efforts, in conjunction with his sedentary habits, were producing upon a frame naturally delicate, and the unconsciousness continued, until he was suddenly made aware that his health was disordered; nor did he even then attribute it to the right cause, nor consider it of serious import. A trip to the sea-shore, he imagined, would speedily restore him to health, and enable him to return to his work with renewed vigor. With this view, he went to Cape May, intending to pass two or three weeks at the sea-side. The change of air was at first beneficial, as there was a manifest improvement in all his symptoms. Most unfortunately he was shortly afterwards attacked with pleurisy, brought on by imprudently sleeping in a draught, after bathing. The attack was seemingly slight, but in his enfeebled condition, it greatly depressed and weakened him. Finding that he did not improve at the sea-shore, he returned to Philadelphia, and in a few days afterwards, accompanied by his wife and other members of his family, set out for Saratoga, which he reached, completely prostrated by his journey, which it had taken him several days to accomplish. And there, on the 20th of August, one short week after his arrival, soothed and ministered to by the affectionate care of those who were dearest to him on earth, his wife and mother and brother, he expired, in the 33d year of his age.

“ Oh ! What a noble heart was here undone,  
 When science' self destroyed her favorite son !  
 Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,  
 She sowed the seeds, but death has reaped the fruit.  
 T'was thine own genius gave the final blow,  
 And help'd to plant the wound that laid thee low :  
 So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,  
 No more through rolling clouds to soar again,  
 Viewed his own feather in the fatal dart,  
 And wing'd the shaft that quivered in his heart ;  
 Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel  
 He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel.”

Such was the life of our late colleague—too short, alas ! for his own fame, yet long enough to leave a bright remembrance behind him, the radiance of which will not soon pass away.

The character of Dr. Stillé may be said to have been distin-



guished rather by a combination of several excellent qualities than by any very marked or conspicuous one. No one faculty, either intellectual or moral, dwarfed and weakened by its overgrowth, the rest of his nature. He possessed a good intellect, a high sense of duty, and a resolute, decisive will. Of these, the last faculty appeared to be the most striking feature of his character. Whatever he undertook, he applied himself to with a quiet determination from which no obstacle or allurements ever diverted him for a moment. This steady, unwavering perseverance in the pursuit of objects was observed even in his early boyhood, and contributed, undoubtedly, more than any other quality he possessed to make him what he was. In its exhibitions, however, it was always subordinated to his judgment, and both guided and regulated by what he conceived to be his duty. His standard in this latter respect was ever of the highest, and what is rarer and more commendable, he lived up to it. Thus, in the very heyday of his blood, he visited Europe alone, and though not compelled by necessity, the incentive that so many require to urge them onwards, to devote himself as ardently as he did to science, his sense of duty as a responsible and moral being was so much stronger than his youthful impulses, that neither the dissipations of Paris, nor the gayeties of light-hearted Vienna could often wean him from the quiet of his chamber by night, or withdraw him from the duties of the hospital or the class-room by day. When he wished to relieve his mind from the severity of his studies, he did so; but his companions were men of sense and distinction, and his relaxation tended to the refinement of his taste and his improvement in general knowledge. The same conscientious spirit distinguished his course through life, and it deserves to be ranked among the highest virtues of his character.

His moral nature, besides the qualities I have indicated, was marked by integrity, truthfulness, and a contempt of everything mean or dishonorable. His views of right and wrong, of duplicity and plain dealing, were positive and uncompromising; nor was he one who was ever "ashamed to avow what he believed to be true, or afraid to practice what he knew to be right." There was a steadiness and consistency of action and opinion in him in all these respects, which showed that his conduct was guided by



principle rather than by impulse, and his whole course through life was strongly illustrative of it.

Another feature of his character, so personal to him that no one who knew him could fail to mark it in him, was his modesty, or rather his absence of pretension. To anything like display or self-parade, no one could ever be more averse, and it was largely owing to this trait, I imagine, that so few, even of his friends, were acquainted with the extent of his acquirements, as he very seldom spoke either of himself or his labors. Not that he was an unambitious man; on the contrary, "that last infirmity of noble minds" was a strong and even powerful element of his character. It was a high and worthy passion in him, however, that never seduced him from his principles, and was aimed at respect and honorable standing, not at notoriety or even popularity.

His attachments to his friends and family were strong and not easily shaken; in all the relations of life, in fact, he exhibited a bright pattern of excellence. He was a dutiful son, an affectionate husband, a kind brother, and a true and steadfast friend.

That he had his failings and shortcomings there can be no reason to doubt, as they belong in greater or lesser degree to every one. No one acquainted with him, however, can fail to acknowledge that his moral nature was of a high order, as well as that no blot or blemish ever sullied his conduct in life, or can tarnish the fair name he has left behind him. In truth, he had that "chastity of honor," as Mr. Burke has happily termed it, that would have felt a stain like a wound, so sensitive and heightened was his estimate of an unspotted reputation.

The following extract from a letter, written after his death by one of his oldest and most intimate friends to another who equally loved and respected him, conveys so just a view of him, that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it:—

"The death of no one," says the writer, "unconnected with me, could have affected me more sensibly. Young, happily married, with an interesting family, friends that loved and admired him for his candor, sincerity and manliness, with a well stored mind, eager for knowledge, ambitious of distinction obtained by all worthy means, full of gentleness and genius, it is a most mournful thing that his life should have been so soon terminated. We had been intimately acquainted for



many years, and if the University where I made his acquaintance, and contracted a friendship which has been uninterrupted by time and separation, had done nothing else for me, I would have cause to remember it with gratitude, for having given such a friend to me. He had a noble disdain of all meanness and sham, professional or private, and would never descend to seek a praiseworthy end by unworthy means; indeed he was one of the truest gentlemen in his sentiments and conduct I ever knew; had he been less nice in his feelings, and hoodwinked his perceptions of truth and honor, he would doubtless have been better known and more widely, but not so truly and profoundly lamented."

Throughout a good part of his life, Dr. Stillé was a methodical and industrious student; and though he could not be properly termed a learned man, his acquirements were various, and far above the average. Thus, besides being an excellent classical scholar, he spoke and wrote both the French and German languages with ease and fluency, read the Italian, and soon acquired sufficient facility, whilst in Vienna, to enable him to understand Latin, the language then used by the professors in their clinics. Of his knowledge of medicine sufficient has already been shown, and I shall merely remark that it was especially large in the departments of general pathology and pathological anatomy.

His memory was retentive, and his intellect acute, clear, and well-balanced. Never led astray by the false colorings of imagination, he saw things in their true light, not as he might have wished them to be. Perhaps he was rather deficient in the imaginative faculty, and a larger development of it, by making him more hopeful, and enabling him to live more in the future, would certainly have added to his happiness.

In his intercourse with society, his bearing, though somewhat formal and reserved, was manly, courteous, and dignified. Everything about him, in fact, indicated the gentleman; a nice sense of propriety always marking his manner and conduct. His temperament was serious and contemplative, his inclination, even when young, being rather for reading and study than for the usual pursuits of youth. He was not accustomed, openly at least, to look far forward for enjoyment, and was, perhaps, more apt to take a desponding than a cheerful view of the future and the present. No doubt the reflection that his studies and toils had



not brought him a corresponding professional employment, tended to render his estimate of life sometimes a very low one, and to make him regret that he had not turned his attention to some other pursuit, in which the rewards of merit are earlier attained, as well as more valuable. Of this feeling he seldom spoke plainly, but he certainly entertained it, especially before the commencement of his Medical Jurisprudence. His labor on that work was a delight to him, and he evidently saw in it the beginning of a career of useful and agreeable occupation. The trait I have mentioned was, nevertheless, far from rendering him gloomy; on the contrary he was always cheerful, though seldom gay. This mood, no doubt, his happy domestic relations tended to encourage. In his home, he found all the social happiness he sought, and it was only from a sense of what the rules of courtesy required, that he sometimes entered into society. His domestic circle, a few friends, and his studies, filled his affections and his mind.

His acquaintance with books was not confined to medicine, even in its largest signification. The German was the language he preferred, and his knowledge of it rendered its literature a perfectly accessible source of pleasure. He sympathized deeply with the earnest tone and solid structure of the German mind, but had much less in common with the versatile genius of the French, or the fanciful mannerisms of Italian literature, yet occasionally he read them all; and from all he drew what fashioned his own mind to a singular degree of acuteness in matters of literary and artistic taste, cultivated as it had been in respect to the latter by long familiarity with European art.

No one can be more conscious than myself, that the sketch I have just given of our late colleague but feebly expresses either the beauty or strength of his character. His conduct through life and in all its relations constitutes after all that might be said of him, however, his best and truest eulogium, and it needs no coloring whatever to make it a beautiful one.

Dr. Stillé's writings consist of his thesis upon Cyanosis or Morbus Cœruleus, of numerous scattered articles in the medical journals of our city, including both reviews and original papers, and of his *Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence*. It is not too much, I think, to say of all of them, that they are marked by good



sense, information, and an easy flow of language. His style, in most respects, is a faithful reflection of his character. It is methodical, accurate, and dignified. As he never wrote upon subjects he had not studied and did not understand, his own ideas were distinct and well defined, and he communicates them clearly and without confusion to his readers. It may not be uninteresting to mention, also, that he wrote rapidly and easily, and that his manuscript was singularly free from erasures and interlineations. Composition, in fact, was no labor to him, as he was naturally endowed with a great mastery and facility of expression, and he found no difficulty in clothing his thoughts in appropriate language.

His thesis was published in the July No., 1844, of the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, and occupies eighteen of its pages. The phenomena of cyanosis, it may be briefly stated, were previously referred to one or other, and occasionally to both of the following causes: 1. Obstruction to the return of the venous blood to the lungs. 2. Presence of the venous blood in the general arterial system. Louis, Berard, Bertin, Ferrus and others adopted the first explanation. Morgagni, Senac, Corvisart, Caillot, Labat, Bouillaud, and particularly Gintrac, of Bordeaux, who had written an excellent treatise upon the subject, based upon a consideration of 53 cases, advocated the latter view. This last theory is critically examined by Dr. Stillé, and is shown to be untenable by the fact that in several cases mentioned by him where the characteristic discoloration of the skin and other phenomena of the disease were present during life, the autopsy revealed neither an open foramen ovale or a defective ventricular septum, nor did there exist any abnormal disposition of the principal vascular trunks, by which the arterial and venous blood could commingle. Hence, he arrives at the deduction that cyanosis may exist without admixture of the two sorts of blood. By similar evidence he shows, secondly, that there is no proportion between cyanosis, and the degree in which the blood is mixed; thirdly, that complete admixture of the blood may take place without cyanosis; and fourthly, that the variation in the extent, depth, and duration of the discoloration is inexplicable by the doctrine of the mixture of the blood.

Having thus disposed of the popular theory which referred



cyanosis to a mixture of arterial and venous blood, as its cause, he then examines the remaining doctrine, which ascribes its phenomena to "obstruction to the return of the venous blood to the lungs," in other words, "to a congestion of the general venous system, resulting from some obstruction in the right side of the heart, or in the pulmonary artery, impeding the return of its blood to the lungs." If this latter theory be true, the structural lesion which it assumes to exist, he states must meet the three following indications:—

1st. That it shall account satisfactorily for the discoloration of the skin and the dyspnoea.

2dly. That it shall be found in every case of cyanosis, or if not, there shall exist in its place some cause acting upon similar principles.

And 3dly. That it shall never be found without the concurrence of cyanosis, or if it is, that a satisfactory explanation of the exception shall be given.

The limits of this paper will not allow me to enter into any particulars regarding his proofs of these propositions. I will only state, therefore, that of 62 cases, all that he could find recorded, in which the condition of the pulmonary artery was observed, it was either contracted, obstructed, or impervious in 53; while in the remaining 9 cases, in which this condition did not exist, there were found much more important structural alterations, either of the heart or great vessels arising from it, and acting in the same manner upon the circulation.

The conclusions at which he arrives from a consideration of all the facts, are, that the essential characteristics of cyanosis are constituted by general venous congestion; that there is no *one* lesion which is entitled to be considered as its anatomical character; but that it depends upon any cause (contraction of the pulmonary artery being the most common), which acting at the centre of the circulation, produces a stasis of venous blood in the capillary system.

The variety of lesions found in the heart and great vessels of persons affected with cyanosis was the chief obstacle, it may be remarked, in the way of the previous inquiries, and it required the most careful classification and analysis of all the facts connected with it, to arrive at any definite result in regard to its pa-



thology. In both of these respects, the paper is a model one; it is clearly written, thorough in its sifting of evidence, and evinces high powers of reasoning—and although twelve years have passed since it was written, its results still remain uncontroverted. Abroad, it has attracted the attention of all investigators of the subject. One of the most thorough among them, Dr. Norman Cheevers, says, in a paper published in 1847 (*Lond. Med. Gazette*, March, 1847, and *Am. Journ. of Med. Sciences*, July, 1847, p. 207): “The opinion that cyanosis is exclusively due to the circulation of the venous blood through the arterial system, has been satisfactorily disproved by Dr. Stillé, who adduces ample evidence in proof of his conclusions”—and then adds, “The results of my own investigations are almost entirely confirmatory of Dr. Stillé’s inferences.”

Dr. Stillé’s contributions to the Journals, will be principally found in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, between the years 1848 and 1855, inclusive. All of them give evidence of ability; they are exceedingly well written, also, and many of them may be read with interest and instruction even now. For specimens of his critical powers, style and mode of treating his subject, I may refer you to his review of Dr. Addison’s\* *Experimental and Practical Researches*, and to his notices of Chomel’s† *Elements of General Pathology*, and of Dr. Stokes’s‡ *Treatise on the Diseases of the Heart and the Aorta*.

His paper on “The Psychical effects of Ether,” published in the *Philadelphia Med. Examiner*, for Dec. 1854, is well deserving of notice, also, as a valuable contribution to our knowledge upon a question of much interest. The subject is carefully and candidly discussed, and the conclusions arrived at may be fairly considered to be established.

The treatise on Medical Jurisprudence was, as previously stated, the joint production of Mr. Wharton and himself. Their object in writing a new work upon a subject that had been previously so ably handled by others was, as stated in the preface, twofold: “First, the incorporation in its pages of the results of late continental, and particularly French and German research; and secondly, the bringing together stereoscopically of the legal and medical points of view, so that the information required by each

\* October, 1849.

† April, 1849.

‡ July, 1854.



profession might be collected and viewed at the same time and within the same compass." The share assigned to Dr. Stillé in its composition, consisted of the 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th books, on the Fœtus and New-born Child, on Sexual Relations, on Identity, and on the Causes of Death. Of the manner in which this portion of the work was executed, I only reiterate the unanimous sentiment of the profession, so far at least as it has been expressed in the numerous reviews that have been written upon it, in saying that it is considered by all to be a most valuable addition to our medical literature. It certainly occupies a position in advance of all previous works upon the same subject, for much of its information, owing to its being gathered from sources almost entirely unexplored before, is positively novel. Almost every page in it testifies by its numerous references to the extended research of the writer in these exotic regions. The large experience thus obtained, I need hardly say, was of great use to him, as it not only enabled him to establish more absolutely what had been previously affirmed by others, but in some instances to arrive at new and valuable results. The style is clear, easy, and appropriate to the subject, and indicates throughout a practiced writer. Equal skill and judgment are, also, shown in the selection and arrangement of the materials collected, and these qualities, united to its legal attractions, deservedly entitle it, I think, to all the praise that has been bestowed upon it.

Such, Mr. President, is the history of the life and labors of our late colleague, and as I have already trespassed more largely upon your indulgence than I expected, I shall confine myself to a single remark upon each of them. The most impressive lesson his life inculcates and exemplifies, it appears to me, is the importance of the early formation of good habits. By his exemplary conduct, untiring industry, and the singleness of purpose with which he devoted himself to his studies, when *young*, he not only strengthened his intellect, and furnished his mind with materials for future thought and comparison, but what was of even more moment, he formed those habits of moral and mental discipline, which were their own best rewards in after life, and without which no man was ever yet eminent in his profession. In this respect, the moral of his life is a most instructive one to all who come after him.



Of his writings, the results in every instance of previous study and preparation, I have spoken sufficiently already. When all their varied and solid excellences are considered, however, his premature death cannot but be regarded as a great misfortune to the cause of our medical literature. The rich promises of his youth were only in part fulfilled by the publication of what he has left us. Had a longer summer been allowed him to ripen his faculties to a still higher state of cultivation, his final position would in all probability have been a most distinguished one. For there can be little doubt that he would have continued his literary efforts. His thorough mastery and facility of expression, his large knowledge and honorable desire for distinction were the very qualifications necessary to place and establish him in the position he had determined to reach. If we add to these, that none of the common obstructions to such a pursuit existed in his case, that his means were ample, and the claims of professional business upon his time but slight, my assumption will appear even more probable.

But why should I prolong these vain regrets? Why grieve that one whose morning seemed to herald so bright and sunny a future, should have entered, ere its meridian, into the shadow of the dark valley? Brief as his life was, he lived not in vain. Within the circle of his peaceful years, all was gentleness, industry, and devotion to duty. Every step was a step of power, and higher culture, and more perfect attainment. Who can estimate the moral uses, the determining influence of such a character! Like the gentle rain from heaven, it sheds its benign blessings on all around it, and the seeds which it nourishes contain within themselves the germs of harvests that shall bloom, here and in the world to come, forever.







Lina Fitcher M. D.  
with the respects of the  
Surgeon General.



