

**An address on the life and professional character of Samuel A. Latta, M.D /  
by M.B. Wright.**

**Contributors**

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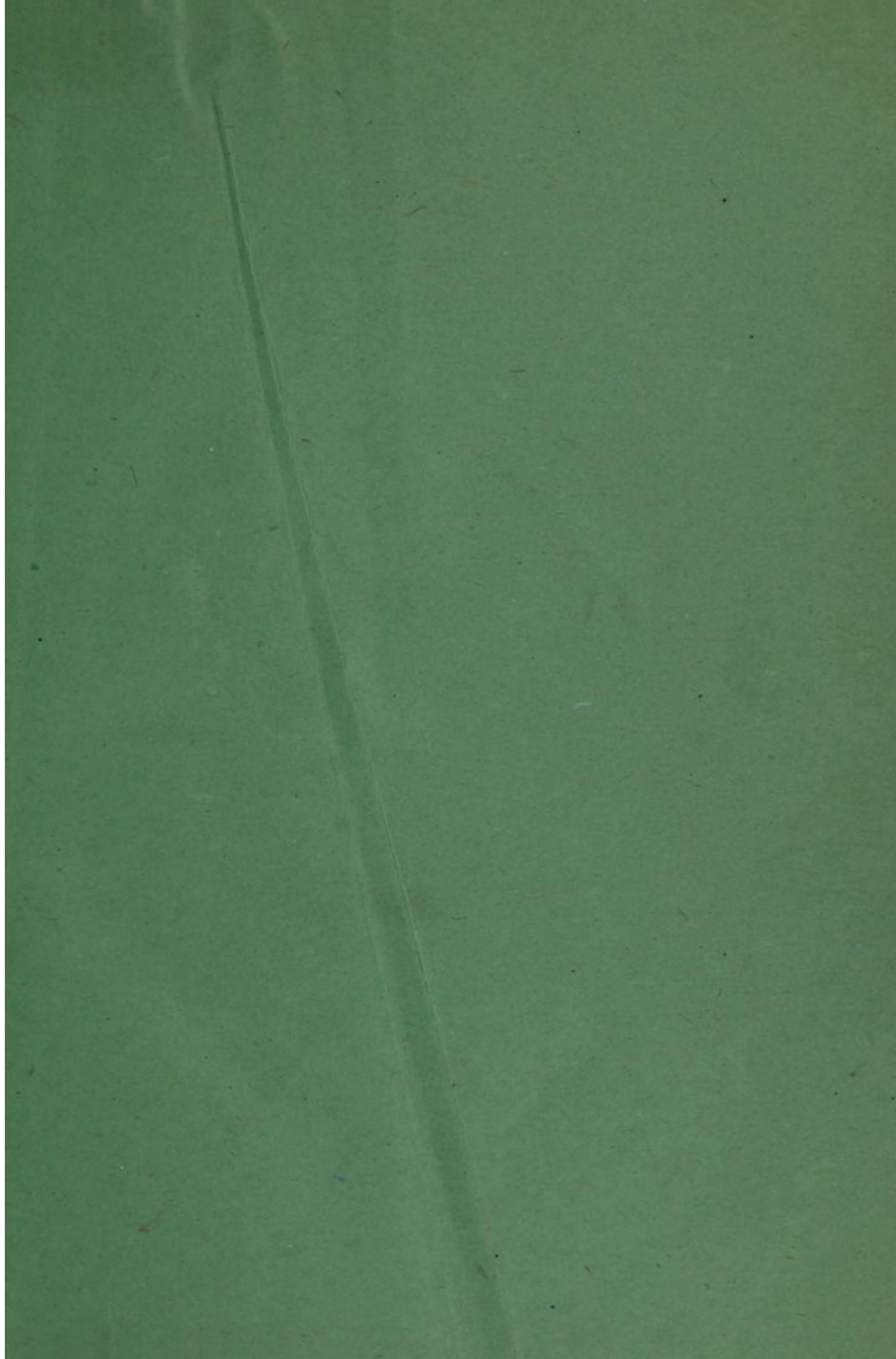


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AN  
ADDRESS  
ON THE  
LIFE AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER  
OF  
SAMUEL A. LATTA, M. D.  
BY  
M. B. WRIGHT, M. D.,  
LATE PROFESSOR IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO.

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Item 2

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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LOUISVILLE, KY., August 26, 1852.

DR. M. B. WRIGHT:

*Dear Sir,—*

Having heard with the deepest interest the very appropriate Address delivered by you, before the Medical Association of Cincinnati, in Soule Chapel, upon the Life and Professional Character of our late esteemed and lamented friend, Dr. Latta, I would respectfully, in behalf of his afflicted and bereaved family and his numerous friends, ask the same for publication.

It is known to you, that in the midst of his arduous labor and preparation for the next number of his Chain of Sacred Wonders, our friend was called away. How truly may we say of him, "He at once ceased to work and live." In the hour of transmitting to paper his views of God's Holy Word, "in thoughts that breathe and words that burn," the pen fell from his hand, and he passed to that better land, of which, from time to time, he has so truthfully spoken and written.

It is proposed to continue the publication, by publishing the two remaining numbers in one, to be composed of what the Doctor had himself prepared, by your Address, and a Biographical Sketch of Dr. Latta, to be written by myself.

I therefore, in accordance with the proposed plan, ask respectfully, your address for publication.



It is equally worthy of yourself and of your deceased associate, and will be eagerly sought after, and add great interest to the proposed volume; while your compliance will be gratefully received and properly appreciated by his bereaved family, the writer, and all the friends of the deceased. God bless you.

Yours, truly,

E. W. SEHON.

CINCINNATI, September 2, 1852.

REV. E. W. SEHON:

*My Dear Friend,—*

I have delayed answering your kind letter, asking for a copy of my Address on the life and professional character of the late Dr. S. A. Latta, for reasons not necessary at this time to enumerate. Since I had the pleasure of hearing from you, I received the following:

TO DR. M. B. WRIGHT:

*Dear Sir,—*

At a meeting of the stewards and leaders of Soule Chapel Charge, in this city, held August 30, 1852, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That a copy of the Address delivered in Soule Chapel by Dr. M. B. Wright, on the life and professional character of Dr. S. A. Latta, lately deceased, be, and is hereby requested for publication in the forthcoming number of the Chain of Sacred Wonders.

Signed

DANIEL H. MEARS,

*Recording Secretary.*

The Address was called for, and written out of respect to the memory of a departed associate and friend, and with the hope that it might extend a beneficial influence to the living. If a wider diffusion of the facts and reflections presented, will result

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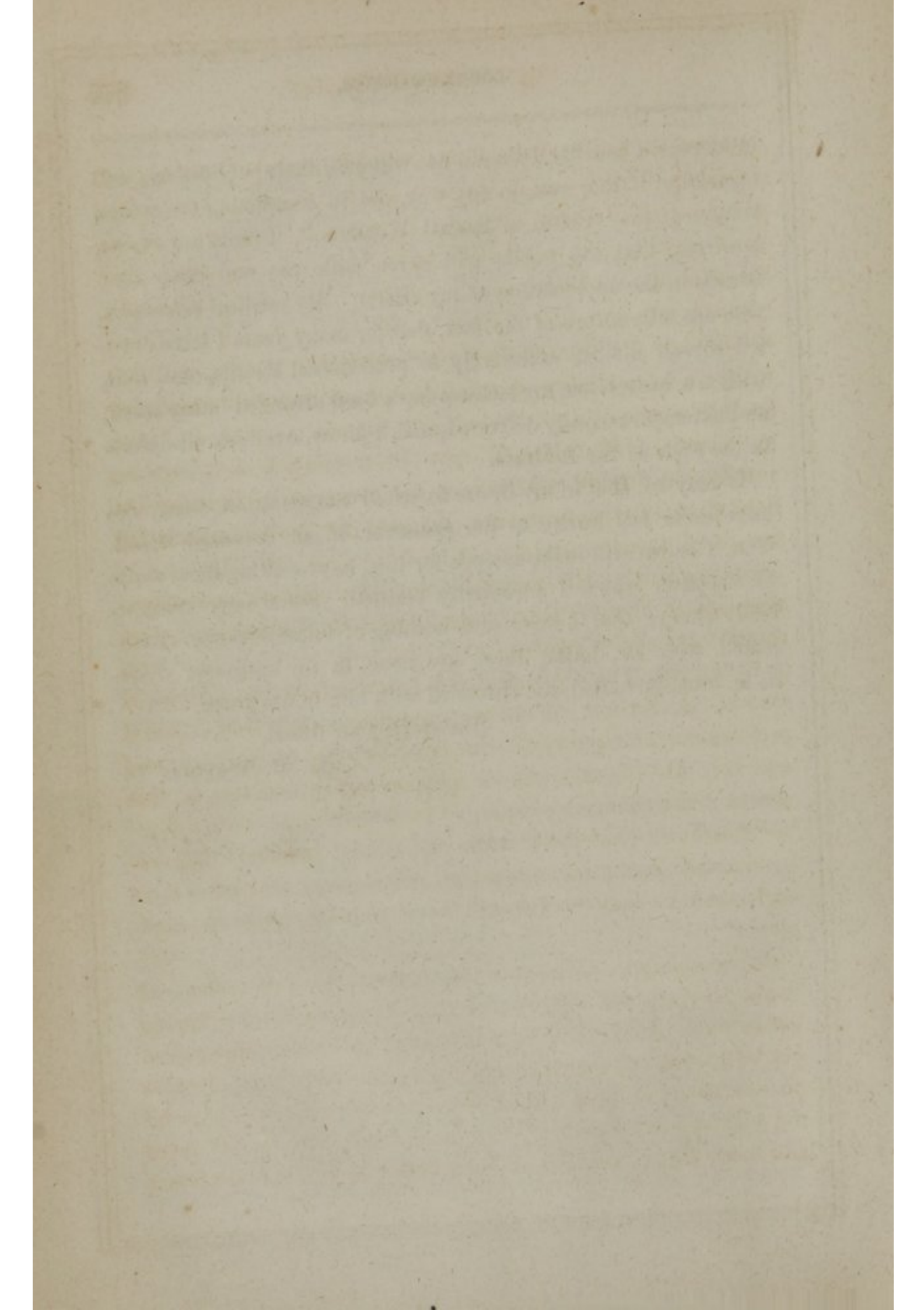
in increased benefits, I should not withhold their publication; and especially, if they can, in any way, aid in completing the second volume of the "Chain of Sacred Wonders." I must not expect, however, that the public will agree with you and other kind friends in the appreciation of my efforts. My medical associates, who are fully aware of the fact, that for many years I have devoted myself almost exclusively to professional details, and that, with few exceptions, my lectures have been arranged in my mind, and extemporaneously delivered, will, I know, overlook all defects in the style of the Address.

It may be, that in my desire to avoid exaggeration, I may not have done full justice to the character of our deceased friend. You, I know, will make amends for this, in presenting those traits of character which I necessarily omitted. Some may thoughtlessly charge, that I have said nothing of imperfections. Associated with Dr. Latta, there are none in my memory. Such as he must have had, are shrouded with him in his grave.

Sincerely, your friend,

M. B. WRIGHT.





## ADDRESS.

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*Members of the Cincinnati Medical Society:—*

At a recent meeting, you adopted with entire unanimity the following:

*“Resolved, That Dr. Wright be requested to deliver an address on the life and professional character of the late Dr. SAMUEL A. LATTA, before this Society, the profession, and the friends of the deceased.”*

Subsequently, the proceedings of the trustees and official members of Soule Chapel were placed in the hands of your committee. They read—

*“Whereas, The Cincinnati Medical Society has requested Dr. M. B. Wright to deliver an address upon the life and professional character of the late Dr. S. A. LATTA; and whereas, Dr. LATTA was a member and minister of this church: therefore,*

*“Resolved, That the trustees and official members do hereby request that said address be delivered in this church, at such time as may be selected by the committee of arrangements.”*

In compliance with your resolution, the proceedings at Soule Chapel, and the action of your committee, I appear before you. I accepted your invitation with cheerfulness, and yet with great doubt as to my ability to satisfy you, or to do justice to my subject. And since the evening you honored me with an expression of your confidence, I have felt more and more that it would have been better if you had bestowed



it upon some other member of the Society. Still, I have no apologies to offer. I took my place among you, with a fixed determination not to hesitate in the performance of any duty you might think proper to assign me. If I fail on this occasion, it will be far more afflicting to me than a disappointment to you; for I shall then feel that the claims of an abiding friendship have not been properly repaid.

If I understand the spirit of your resolution, and your individual sentiments, I am not called upon to pronounce an eulogy upon the entire life and character of our deceased brother; but, to present to your consideration a few points respecting his professional life, with such reflections as, in passing, may be naturally suggested.

Dr. SAMUEL A. LATTA was born in Muskingum county, Ohio; from which his parents removed when he was quite young, and settled on a farm near Urbana, Champaign county. A letter received recently from his medical preceptor, Dr. Adam Musgrove, of Urbana, contains the following information:—"Here, amid an intelligent and industrious community, in a country school-house, he received not only his preliminary, but all the early education he received with the assistance of a teacher. Up to the time he commenced the study of medicine, his education embraced only those elementary branches usually taught in the common-school. He acquired a knowledge of grammar by what was called a 'patent method.' To this he devoted sufficient attention to enable him to become a teacher."

A country school-house! How varied are the associations connected with the name! They come up irresistibly before us. The cut benches and tables, the broken windows and shutters, indicated a propensity in the young mind for change—even a destructive change. The rod, held in the teacher's



hand, contained a potency not duly appreciated, until, in after years, each one felt the rod of stern necessity or tireless ambition. The extended play-grounds, trodden bare by the young athlete, except here and there a green spot, represented the foreground of human life. Here the mind received its early nourishment, its laudable impulses. Hence have gone forth intellects, that have won the palm from more pretending rivals. And we think we present one of the most attractive points in the character of our deceased associate, when we say, that he left that country school-house with a strong intellect, a firm integrity, a fixedness of purpose — still ascending the hill of knowledge, and with an eye steadily directed toward its alluring summit. We may look over our Queen City, and applaud the spirit that prompted to the erection of such commanding edifices for the instruction of the young; yet Memory, true to herself, goes back with many, and lingers about the ruins of the early cabin, in which some of our best men were taught. When the hum of industry has ceased, and the perplexed mind is seeking repose, that country school-house, dilapidated and moss-grown by neglect and time, comes up and furnishes happy remembrances. As old men, it were unwise to forget the past — as young men, it will be madness to look forward to the future, without due attention to the present.

We must not go in advance, however, of one interesting fact, respecting his early education. He was not sent to a country school merely to get rid of his mischief, nor to prevent his becoming as wild as the fawn that occasionally passed near his dwelling, but to receive an addition to that instruction, which, during the first ten years of his life, had been imparted to him by his mother.

How fortunate that such a son should have had such a



mother — that one so apt to learn, should have had so willing and competent a teacher. She has been represented to us as possessing a strong, logical mind, well cultivated by reading and reflection. Thorough in a knowledge of the Scriptures, she is ever ready to discuss mooted questions, or able to sustain her own views. She required her son, after a certain age, to commit to memory chapter after chapter of the Bible, to which she gave additional interest by such explanations as his young mind could understand; and thus, in all probability, did his feelings receive that bent which they retained in future life.

We may, from sense of duty, or from goodness of heart, forget an injury; or from the weakness of our nature, we may forget a kindness; familiar scenes and sweet faces may fade from our memory; the noise of fierce elements and the tones of soft music, may be hushed. But there is one being ever present, drawing us from the path of waywardness by the cords of love,—dispelling sadness by her cheerful looks,—encouraging us to noble actions by her calm advice,—the being whom we were first taught to call *mother*. The cares, the troubles and the anxieties of life, combined with a feeling of self-sufficiency, may throw a shade over true filial affection; but it is soon dispelled, when disease brings upon us the dependence of early childhood. She of whom we would now speak; who watched over her son in health; who bathed his aching brow—who cooled his parched lips—who watched his quickened breath, and who responded in sympathy to every feeling of pain, when sickness came upon him; did not make impressions upon the young heart, lasting for the moment only, but which continued with him till life approached its close.

We have sat at the bedside of a criminal—we have seen



the damps of death gather upon his brow — we have gazed upon him when there was, seemingly, no evidence of vitality remaining, save an occasional gasp; and as the breath has been leaving his body, our ears have caught the sound of “Mother, moth-er—er!”

Oh, what a hallowed name! And if it is thus cherished by the murderer in his chains; if *his* heart turns to her who was always ready to forgive; if her angelic spirit was willing to visit so dark an abode, and calm the troubled soul; how natural was it, that Dr. Latta, with his goodness of heart, should have had such an earnest desire to embrace his mother once more, before the time of his final separation from her had come.

We have often thought, no agony could exceed that, implanted in the soul of the devoted mother by the disobedient and degenerate son. And yet, there is no mortal on earth, who, more than she, should feel encouraged to persevere in giving good advice or in continuing a good example. For the time will come, when that advice and that example will be remembered with gratitude, and repaid with true penitence.

In 1823, Dr. Latta commenced the study of medicine; and three years thereafter, was examined by a board of censors, and licensed to practice. At this early period, most of the young men in our state, ambitious to obtain professional honors, relied upon the instruction of office preceptors. Medical colleges on this side the Alleghany ridge were far less numerous than at present, and those in existence were not, at that time, as attractive to young men as might have been desired. Traveling East to obtain an education, was almost as formidable an undertaking as a pilgrimage to Mecca. Besides, the farmer lived, purchased land, increased his stock, and procured goods from the merchant, by an exchange of products; and the



idea of raising a sufficient amount of cash to secure to their sons an Eastern education, seemed preposterous, if not impossible.

To encourage growing talent, and to arrest the bold pretender in his destructive career, the legislature of Ohio passed a law regulating the practice of medicine and surgery. From a board of examiners organized under this law, young Latta received a certificate of qualification as a practitioner of medicine.

The law under consideration, did not, in any degree, aid in the arrest of quackery. Like the man whose arm was turned aside in the act of self-murder, the people were maddened by a fancied opposition to their interests, and the right to dispose of their lives in their own way. During the existence of the law, indeed, the most hideous medical monstrosities were introduced and fostered among us; and thus did the law fail to accomplish the good intended by its friends. True, as is the case with all medical errors, they came to an end; but theirs was that slow, lingering death, resulting from a change in public opinion.

In some respects, however, that law was advantageous. It stimulated young men, engaged earnestly and systematically in the study of medical science, to a constant and still more vigorous application of their intellectual powers. Although the student before us was surrounded by temptations to indolence and frivolity, he moved steadily onward in the pathway of duty. In the language of his preceptor, "he pursued his studies with a zeal and energy truly commendable."

The student of the present day, can not appreciate the difficulties in the way of those who were engaged in the study of medicine, during and anterior to what may be called the licentiate period. At this time, the facilities for teaching and



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acquiring medical knowledge are so extensive and convenient, that he who does not become a scientific physician, must either be censurably indolent, or pitiably stupid. During the former period, the student depended very much upon his own mechanical skill, for a supply of models and apparatus for illustration. Then, he performed experiments as best he could, with such chemicals as were, for the time being, in the office of his preceptor. Then, much reliance was placed upon industry, strength of memory, and accuracy of judgment; and when physical endurance was added to all these prerequisites, the physician came forth, in due time, well prepared to meet and overcome the diseases around him. And the astonishment is, that so many men of that time, under so great a weight of embarrassment, should have come down to the present day with such irresistible claims to our high regards. When, however, we take Dr. Latta as the representative of those who were his early medical cotemporaries, we can admit an approximation, at least, of skill, of the past with the present.

It is no uncommon thing to estimate the ability of medical men, by the kind of parchment they may have rolled up and carefully put away in japanned cases. In this respect, the graduate, with his extended Latin diploma, might justly claim superiority; but he should learn, what the licentiate knows to be true, that parchment is not always a correct representative of mind, and that silence in respect to the possession of a thing is not to be construed into ignorance. You value the cockade and epaulette, not because they have given an outside character to the fop, but in consequence of great minds and splendid achievements having given character to them. We did not depreciate the ability of Dr. Latta, when his license from a district medical society was the only printed evidence



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of his medical attainments; but we esteemed that license of great value, when we estimated the amount of mind he reflected upon it.

At the time Dr. Latta entered the profession, it was made up, in Ohio, of men possessing strong minds—men who could alike reason and execute. Cases of disease were numerous, but disease itself did not differ much in type. Their investigations, therefore, were limited; yet their habits and relations qualified them for any emergency. They were as familiar, from observation, with the diseases around them, as with household words; and, by reading, kept themselves in readiness to meet any new disease which might, from time to time, appear. In their hours of leisure, they could stop by the wayside, and examine the botanical characteristics of the innumerable medicinal plants that met the eye; but to their therapeutical relations they directed their most anxious inquiries. The early foe of the white man had retreated to less cultivated regions; but another had come among them, to deprive them of family and friends, even more insidious and implacable. Action—prompt, energetic action—was as necessary in the one case as in the other. And we deem it just to say, that the physicians of Ohio, taken as a body, who practiced under the licentiate law, were as successful in the treatment of disease, as it then appeared, as physicians of the present time are, in treating the different diseases which have been presented to them.

It is not a rare opinion, that the examiners, appointed by the district medical societies, conducted their examinations more out of form, than to test the ability of students to practice; that the examiners were not sufficiently qualified for a full discharge of their duty; and that less knowledge is required of the country than the city physician. All this is



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an error, and has tended to evil. A few remarks may not be out of place, in refutation of these charges.

The examiners, as a general thing, were selected, not only on account of their extended attainments, but because each had bestowed special attention upon some one department of medicine. The examinations were not limited, either in respect to time or subjects, and often they were continued with a single student hours in succession—the whole range of medical science having been brought to view.

Practitioners who have had experience can testify, that knowledge is as necessary to treat diseases successfully in the country as in the city. Indeed, at the present day, a more accurate and diversified knowledge is demanded in the former place than in the latter. The country physician must attend to cases arising in every practical department of the profession, and too often he is thrown entirely upon his own resources. In a city, the practice is more divided—one department, in a limited sense, being distinct from the other; and, in an emergency, efficient aid is always at command. The presumption is, that when Dr. Latta assumed the responsibilities of the profession, he was entitled to the confidence of his patrons.

His entrance upon professional life, was at a period sufficiently remote, to have enabled him to form a practical estimate of the progress of medical science. Twenty-five years ago, there was scarcely a cabin in Ohio, some of whose inmates were not visited, annually, by intermittent or remittent fever. To the parent, these types of disease are now only in the memory—to the child, they are known simply as a subject of fireside conversation, or as backwoods legends. Scarlet fever, small-pox, and even consumption—which is now slaying its thousands, not to speak of other diseases—



were seldom seen among us; and when they did appear, it seemed to be merely to add a little variety to the dull pathway of the practitioner. The so-called malaria, which came up from the newly cleared land—which mingled with the soil of our fertile prairies, and which frequented the borders of our streams—has given place, in a great degree, to other causes of disease, alike mysterious. Typhoid fever has assumed dominion, where, formerly, bilious diseases exercised almost exclusive sway. Article after article, and compound after compound, have been added to our list of remedial agents. With all the changes, however, which have been, and might be named, there is one power which captivates, astonishes, and controls alike at all times and in all places—the power of mystery. Although quinine was comparatively a new remedy, among the medical men of Ohio, when Dr. Latta was first called upon to use it, it had acquired considerable reputation as an antiperiodic; but there was an irresistible charm thrown around it, when it was administered in the form of little pills, under an assumed name.

In another respect, Dr. Latta stood between, and could estimate, the past and the present. He was practically acquainted with the fatigues and exposures incident to the duties of a physician in a new country, and he enjoyed the comparative pleasures of a city practice. I say *comparative* pleasures, for doubtless, of itself, a city practice is not without its toils, its self-sacrifices, its dangers, and unrequited services; but they are as nothing, by the side of those which the practitioner in a new and thinly populated district has, as his constant attendants. Is any one of our young brethren dissatisfied with the responsibilities resting upon him, and disheartened when he reflects upon his probation here—in our very midst? Then, let us present to him an illustration of



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many of the professional incidents in the early practice of Dr. Latta, and his cotemporaries.

Perhaps, the very first patient he was required to visit, resided fifteen or twenty miles distant. The messenger may not have called at his house until midnight; the weather being cold, the roads deep with mud, and the rain falling in torrents. He reaches the rude cabin of the new comer, surrounded by a small "patch" of cleared land. The heat and light of a large fire, which was a prominent source of enjoyment to the early settler, was so grateful to his feelings, that he was made sensible, for the first time, of the darkness, and dreariness, and dangers of the forest through which he had just passed. Around, were a few things scarcely bearing the name of furniture, and in a corner was a something miscalled a bed, upon which lay his patient. Her disease was violent, and far advanced, requiring good judgment and prompt action. His duty to his patient being carefully discharged, he retraced his lonely and fatiguing way. Time and again, he visited that gentle sufferer, through her protracted illness, supplying her with medicine, and such comfort as tended to expedite recovery. Not a murmur escaped his lips. He was a physician, possessing the means of cure — his patient was helpless, and her life was in his hands. This was enough.

Not forgetful of this period of professional life, Dr. Latta was competent to give a word of encouragement to his young and less courageous brethren, when complaining of the perplexities of a city practice. If by a calm, graphic description of the scenes that had passed before him, he could not inspire them with contentment and hope, he recommended them to the influences of a stern experience, as best calculated to add firmness and endurance to their manhood.

Have you ever reflected, in your quiet midnight watchings,



upon the occupations of other minds—their aspirations and intentions—their pains and pleasures? When darkness reigns, and the noise of busy, outward life is hushed, thought is silently active, feeling is quickened, conquest stretches her arm, and benevolence treads softly at the door of helplessness and haggard want. The muse of the poet, influenced by the softness and serenity of nature, touches with delicate fingers the chords of feeling, and from their vibrations emanate the most enchanting melody. The astronomer, with far-reaching vision, counts world after world, scattered throughout space, and watches with as much intensity of feeling for the first glimpse of a new planet, as if he expected to see through a sudden opening in the heavens the Great Throne itself. The mathematician, by a slow, abstract process of reasoning, solves some intricate problem, and by its subsequent announcement, startles the scholastic mind as by the appearance of an electrical phenomenon. The child in its orphanage—the mother in her widowhood—with loneliness and desolation stamped upon their features, invoke the coming of a brighter morrow, or a swift arrow from the quiver of death. The man of the world seizes his so-called pleasures, and thinks not for a single moment, that they are not as common and universal as sunbeams; and, for the time being, calls every one mad who is otherwise than joyous. The criminal is restless under the tortures of a bitter guilt, and the fears of an ignominious punishment. The Christian, with a bosom placid as the moonlight falling around him, sends his thoughts to the better world, where, in faith, he sees the bright and beautiful, and hears the sweet, rapturous voices of once familiar spirits. The brave commander plans his campaign and the order of battle, and then dreams of the glory which blood and carnage are to reflect upon him. The physician goes forth on his errands of mercy,



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exposes himself to many dangers, ministers to the relief of suffering humanity, and must be satisfied with an internal consciousness of having, to the best of his ability, fulfilled his trust.

In the appropriation of time to medical studies, Dr. Latta was methodical; and, during his leisure moments, he devoted himself to the examination of theological subjects. His preceptor says, in relation to his different studies, "Neither seemed to conflict with the other. With him there was a time for them all; and all were apparently easy for him to master."

After having practiced medicine about three years, circumstances induced him to enter the Ohio conference as a Methodist minister. A sense of religious obligation had already led his mind in that direction, and at the early age of sixteen he received license as an exhorter. His theological views had been early implanted, and he waited, only, for formal authority to engage in the labors of the pulpit.

The next year, after having endured the fatigues and exposures of a circuit preacher, in a new country, he was appointed agent of the American Colonization Society. The return of African descendants to the home of their forefathers, was a subject occupying the attention of some of our wisest and most distinguished statesmen, and a great number of the American people were alive to its importance. He whose tall and commanding figure was now and then seen among us, and which, in the cold embrace of death, only a few days ago, passed through our city on the way to the place of its final repose, lent the aid of his presence and official position to the cause. More than this, he gave of his means, and poured forth his matchless eloquence in favor of its rapid progress and final triumph.



In some instances, silence appeals most strongly for sympathy and support. The subject of African redemption involves such vital and immense interests, that it would seem not to demand any extraordinary efforts, to enlist in its behalf the entire American people. Yet the Colonization Society found ignorance, in respect to its plans and aims, where there should have been knowledge, indifference where there should have been lively sympathy, and inaction among those who should have been efficiently at work. It was deemed proper, therefore, to rouse the energies of the people, not only by a mere presentation of facts, but by a presentation of them in such a way, as to reach most directly and forcibly the mind and feelings. Dr. Latta was selected, as one of the individuals to whom was to be intrusted the execution of this great design. To know the man—his cast of mind, his delicate sensibilities, his powers of illustration, and his ready command of language—is to know that he executed his task well.

But his reflections and emotions had entwined themselves so closely around the ministry, and at such an early age, he felt that a longer separation from it would be doing violence to every tendril of his affectionate nature. He recognized obligations from that source, far exceeding any that could be imposed upon him by the Colonization Society. The emancipation of the slave from temporary bondage, although demanded, seemingly, by the dearest interests of the republic, was nothing, to the understanding of Dr. Latta, compared to the claims of his Great Master, and final redemption of the soul from the dominion of sin. He, therefore, returned to the performance of those duties, which he had associated with the ministerial character.

It would be pleasant to pause here and describe our deceased friend addressing his congregation from the pulpit.



Oh! what an immense responsibility rested upon him. How anxious he must have felt, when enforcing upon man his duties to his Maker, and portraying the brightness, and sweetness, and raptures of heaven, and at the same time keeping before him the overwhelming question, "what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" How doubly anxious he must have been, when descending that sacred stand, and mingling again with the busy world, he reflected upon the influence of example. As a man of observation, did he not know, that practice, manifesting the feelings of the heart, when opposed to professions, and the good advice given to others, was productive of great evil? But this is a subject which we must intrust to others—to those who have a more ready use of the pen, to those whose ministerial persuasions have fallen upon the ear of the sinner with soothing and irresistible melody, and to those who can both feel and understand the force of theological truth. Besides, you have not given me authority, if I possessed the ability, to enlarge upon subjects strictly religious in their nature.

From impairment of health, and particularly of voice, he found it necessary, in 1839, to withdraw from the active labors of the pulpit. The medical profession, he had continued to cherish as an object next dearest to his heart, and one inseparably connected with the welfare of man. It was natural, then, that he should return to it with redoubled fondness. The poisoned arrows which sin had sent into the hearts of men, he could no longer aid in extracting, to any extent; but he could still alleviate the afflictions of the body. And with a view to his health, and a permanent connection with our profession, he took up his abode among us.

A short time previous to this, however, he renewed his connection with the profession, in part, as a druggist. While



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engaged in this capacity, he compounded and sold a remedy, as efficacious in certain forms of dyspepsia.

The making and vending of nostrums have been, and doubtless will be, condemned, by those who view correctly the manifold differences in disease, and the varied action of remedies upon it. In addition to this, the medical man, imbued with the spirit of an honorable emulation, and estimating aright the nature of his obligations, will not conceal the composition of a remedy, and clothe it in attractive mystery, for the sake of pecuniary gain. He claims the right to know, and use, every new remedy, as common property, as belonging alike to all. Such was the fixed, and often expressed opinion of our deceased associate. Although he did not deem it necessary, as an apothecary, to make known the composition of his medicine, to all who might purchase it, he never retained it as a secret from his medical brethren. Nor, are we aware, that he extended its use after he engaged regularly in the practice of medicine.

Dr. Latta did not continue long as a mere applicant for patronage. His calm, deliberative judgment, his prompt yet cautious administration of remedies, the close attention and kindness bestowed upon his patients, and, withal, his success in the management of disease, secured for him a good and still increasing practice. But his health, by and by, became more impaired, and he was obliged to divide his labors between those of the profession and of authorship—the latter requiring a fixed attention of mind, but less fatigue of body.

Some men are so deeply immersed in business, allowing themselves no time for relaxation or social enjoyment, counting their gains to a farthing, and every farthing of interest upon those gains, that they might be charged, very justly, with indifference to every other object than that of self. He



who refuses to visit any other than the mansions of wealth, of luxury, of refinement, performs but a small part of his professional obligations, and manifests a cold indifference to the wants of the indigent and lowly. But the active benevolence, which was conspicuous in the every-day life of Dr. Latta, was convincing evidence of the innate goodness of his heart. While he was not insensible to the approbation of the multitude, and the open thank-offerings of his friends, he was always ready to bestow benefits, even when there was no eye upon him save the wakeful eye of Omnipotence, and no tongue to utter praises but that of the lowly, dying sufferer. Often, and often, has he risen from his couch, feeble in body, and suffering from disease, and gone at midnight to prescribe for the occupant of some filthy, ill-ventilated hovel, looking for no remuneration in this life, except the approbation of his own conscience. How little does the world know—how little do we know ourselves—of the immense amount of good conferred by the truly noble, self-sacrificing physician!

We do not wish to be understood as saying, that Dr. Latta was not ambitious. But his was a holy ambition—an ambition to acquire knowledge, to secure the right, and to excel, or at least to equal, his co-laborers in good deeds.

No man placed a higher or more correct estimate upon professional reputation than Dr. Latta. While, therefore, he was ever watchful and jealous of his own honor, he was careful not to detract from the merits of others. The principles of the politician may be grossly assailed, his acts bitterly denounced, and he may be deprived of office; yet, his personal character remaining unscathed, he may return to the bosom of a confiding constituency, and hold intimate fellowship with the intelligent and just. But once blur the fair standing of a medical man, and the jealous are turned into



persecutors, the degenerate into manufacturers of defamation, and plotters of individual downfall. Hence, such a man as he, who is now in our mind's eye, could not, intentionally, use language, much less commit an act, injurious to the fair standing of a professional brother.

The characteristic firmness of Dr. Latta was manifested on many trying occasions. And the ability with which he sustained his positions, in the controversies in which he may have been engaged, affords just reason for the belief, that his firmness arose from an enlightened conviction, rather than from blind unbelief. While he acknowledged obedience to authority, upon all medical subjects, which he had no opportunity to investigate or observe, he was a man to think and act for himself. For success, he relied much upon his own powers. His hopes of the future were not erected upon the anticipated ruin of another. Nor did he depend upon borrowed reputation to maintain his own standing. He practiced self-reliance; yet he never supposed that he could uproot the oak by sitting upon his staff, nor was his arm so puny that he could not wield that staff, until he had braced himself against that oak. He had faith in God, and the power which man derives from that high source when actively and constantly exercised.

We have before us, ample evidence of the capability of Dr. Latta in the use of the pen. As the editor of a weekly paper, devoted to the secular, as well as spiritual interests of an extensive division of the church, his versatility was manifest. He was argumentative and clear, in his defined positions. His facts were rendered attractive, by the peculiar fitness and condensation of his language. His declarations, sometimes, may have had the appearance of unpardonable boldness; but it was only because the thing in his mind had a revolting aspect, requiring strong words to represent its true character. If, at



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times, he allowed his pen to run into sarcasm, it was the sarcasm of language and of thought, not of ill feeling. If in his earnestness to defend the truth, he brought an individual in person before him, it was to reprove, rather than to injure.

In the miscellaneous department of his paper, better suited for the general reader, he evinced a cultivated taste and much knowledge of the diversified casts of the human mind. Science was there, with its deep, anxious researches, and its brilliant discoveries. History was there, defaced by the breath of time; penciled and softened with the rainbow hues of the present. Art was there, with its ponderous machinery, and its magnificent, varied and useful structures. Suffering and want were there, appealing, and not always in vain, for succor. The grief of the heart was there, teaching kindness. Ruin was there, representing the instability of all things. Cruelty and mercy were there, contrasting the extremes of human feeling. Eloquence was there, swaying the passions of the multitude, and rousing them to good deeds. Poetry was there, softening the feelings, and presenting them with the sweets and beauties of nature. And there, conspicuous amid them all, was the spirit of Religion, arresting the inattentive ear of man by her melodious accents, and acting upon his sinful heart by her softening, and soothing, and regenerating influence.

Dr. Latta commenced, and continued until the time of his death, a quarterly publication, entitled, "Chain of Sacred Wonders." This is esteemed a highly meritorious production, as well from its style, as the clear elucidation of its subjects. It is true, there is a difference of opinion respecting the value, or even propriety, of clothing scripture incidents in any other than the language of scripture. No one can doubt the efficacy of the doctrines contained in the Bible, when properly directed to the hearts and judgments of men. But



there is not, perhaps, a just discrimination between the reading and study of the scriptures. The New Testament, and sometimes the Old, is introduced as one of the earliest of our school-books. If read by the scholar in a loud tone of voice, without miscalling words, and running sentences together, his lesson is finished. Its facts and its spirit still remain within the leaves of the book. When the mind becomes sufficiently matured to "search the scriptures" for itself, and it engages in this solemn duty, it finds before it those old chapters and verses, which long since had been laid aside, for more advanced lessons in reading. At this point, by their attractive, and if I may use the term, *fresh* language, by presenting strong, isolated points of history, and by revealing prominently the foundation of the Christian's faith, such works as the "Chain of Sacred Wonders," may be happily introduced to supply the deficiency in biblical teaching. We must confess, with all our confidence in the ability of Dr. Latta, we were surprised, that in the midst of so much bodily suffering, he could have produced a work of so much merit.

If he had cultivated a taste for medical writing, the profession would have been under strong obligations to thank him for his labors. True, soon after he commenced the practice of medicine in this city, he compiled a small work upon certain diseases. He engaged in the compilation as an agreeable pastime, and it was intended rather for domestic than professional use.

The good and evil of medical books, designed as a sort of maternal guide, have been freely discussed. On the one hand, it has been claimed, that many medicines can be given with entire safety by intelligent females; and that by their timely administration, disease might often be speedily arrested. That in the absence of a physician, or in an emergency, reference



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to a work adapted to their understandings, might result in great good, and, perhaps, save life. On the other hand, it is contended, that life is too precious, and disease too fatal in its tendency, to be intrusted to any, except those who possess a full knowledge of medicine, and that scientific works intended as guides to the practitioner, should not be restricted in their list of remedial agents. Dr. Latta coincided in opinion with the former; yet he gives, and reiterates the instruction, not to anticipate entire safety without the aid of a physician.

A few years ago, the qualifications of Dr. Latta to fill a professorship, were presented to the consideration of the trustees of one of the medical schools of a neighboring state. Strong testimonials were forwarded in his behalf, setting forth, that from his habits of study, powers of investigation, readiness as a writer, fluency and self-possession as a speaker, his conciliatory manners, and kindness of disposition, he was competent to fill the chair then vacant, with profit to the student and satisfaction to the friends of the institution. But he was not a graduate, and it seemed to be an unalterable requisition in all established schools, that he who would confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine, should have first obtained it for himself.

We do not know that the selection of another, occasioned with Dr. Latta, the least chagrin; but we do know, that it saved him from much toil, self-sacrifice, and disquietude of mind. One disposed, as he was, to cherish kindly feelings toward all mankind, should not be in a situation to feel the force of envy, treachery and ingratitude. Why so many young men should struggle to obtain professorships, and at such immense cost, although not entirely beyond comprehension, is not very easy to explain. They may aspire to reach the mountain top from considerations of applause and pecuniary gain; but they will find it at a dizzy height, and its



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ascent toilsome and hazardous. They will find the vale, with half the effort, far more productive, and the streams of kindness more numerous and fertilizing.

Failing to obtain such an appointment could not have depressed a man like Dr. Latta. It was, indeed, calculated to excite anew the energies within him. He resolved to secure every requisite evidence of his professional attainments. He entered the Medical College of Ohio as a student, and in the spring received its honors. A diploma was obtained, not so much to secure a professorship in the future, as to be on terms of equality with the best of his brethren.

As a mark of appreciation, he received the degree of Master of Arts from the Transylvania University, at a time, I think, when the Rev. Dr. Bascom was its president. And I have often associated these two men in my mind. Why, I can not say. It may have been owing to an indescribable resemblance in their outline of body, or fullness and complexion of face. The one becoming an exhorter, the other a preacher at the same immature age, may have impressed the double image upon my mind, as indelibly as the rose and the bud, growing closely from the same stem. Perhaps they are inseparable from my thoughts, in consequence of each "relying upon his own energy and application, as the means and warrant of improvement and usefulness." Again, I may have been running parallel lines in tracing out their self-made pathway to eminence. It must be admitted, however, that although both were men of mark, each possessed his own distinctive traits of character. Let us consider them for a moment.

The corporeal movements of Dr. Bascom, if we can judge correctly from having seen him only a very few times, were quick, elastic, and seemingly impatient of restraint. In Dr. Latta, there was no surplus nervous energy to exhaust, and



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his limbs moved regularly, as if conscious of the amount of weight they had to carry, and of their ability to reach in due time the place to which they were tending. The face of the one, glowed and flushed alternately under the influence of an ardent intellect; while upon the face of the other, reposed calm and steady thought. The eye of the one was restless, and shone like agitated brilliants—the eye of the other was steadfast and evenly clear.

In his writing, Dr. Latta selected such words as were most expressive of nature as he found her; Dr. Bascom claimed the right to originate phrases to decorate nature as he would like to have her. The former loved the sweetness and beauty of the landscape—the other admired its variety and magnificence. The former dwelt upon the gentleness, persuasiveness and promises of the gospel—the other became so overwhelmed in his contemplations of its immensity, that he was compelled to say, “in describing the heavenly state, the celestial world of light and life, thought language and images all fail us. It is a theme too high for contemplation, too grand for description, too sacred—too ineffably sacred—to admit of comparison. The grandeur of nature and the glory of art, the dreams of fancy and the creations of poetry, all fade in the vision.”

In addressing an audience, Dr. Latta proceeded slowly and cautiously, until the entire range of his subjects was brought clearly to view, and free from all embarrassments; while Dr. Bascom moved off rapidly, regardless of obstructions, and if he happened to find them across his pathway, he hurled them off as with the arms of a giant, and continued on majestically to the end. The one was enlivened by the attractions, and invigorated by the importance of his theme—to the other, the sound of the first word was as full of stimulus and meaning as the last. The ideas of the one came on with such a



gradual increase of pressure, that his strength became exhausted rather than overpowered — while upon the other, they rushed with such impetuosity as to shake every fiber of his manly frame. The eloquence of the one, directed and led the mind and feelings to a satisfactory contemplation of a happy future. The eloquence of the other, after soaring aloft, and holding its captives for a time in breathless suspense, would come down as with the swoop of the eagle, and embracing some wounded, fluttering spirit, would again ascend with its precious burden, to a region where all was brightness and peace.

To go forward, nobly and fearlessly, in the discharge of a public duty, was, perhaps, with Dr. Latta a characteristic. A great number had been deluded into the belief, that cholera could be cured by a certain plan of treatment. His observations and experiments had led him to view the statements in respect to the action of medicine, infinitesimally administered, as selfish exaggerations. He could not brook so great an insult to common understanding, and he issued a pamphlet, designed to disabuse the public mind. He lived long enough after this, to observe, in the editorials of leading homœopathic journals, arguments in favor of leaving the administration of medicine, in large or small doses, to the discretion of individual practitioners. This doctrine had been practically recognized before the issuing of Dr. Latta's pamphlet, and if it had been openly avowed, the time spent in writing, might have been appropriated to some other purpose. When sober reason is brought to acknowledge, that the bud should be engrafted upon the vine, and not the vine upon the bud, then will it see the true relations between homœopathy and medical science.

He who assumes a position against any cherished doctrine of the day, is apt to be misunderstood, or misrepresented. In discussing the merits of homœopathy, Dr. Latta suffered from



both these causes. He did not, either in word or sentiment, object to the so-called homœopathy as a thing, but, as a pretension. He could not have objected to homœopathic medicines, for they constitute a part of our own *materia medica*. He was indifferent as to the manner in which medicines acted *theoretically*, provided they contributed to the desired object *practically*. He was indeed a homœopathist, of the present day; that is, he gave his remedies in small doses, when they gave promise of good — in large doses, or what is pretty much the same, small doses frequently repeated, when required. He was not willing to add to the little pills an extensive use of cold water, tablespoonful doses of various oils, large doses of quinine and other remedies; the application of cups, and leeches, and blisters; and embrace all under the name of homœopathy. Not that he objected to the mere *name*, but to the deception it carried with it. He would compromise with a homœopathist as with his tailor. If his coat could be improved by patching, he was ready to say, patch it. But, he was not willing to throw away the coat, and retain the patch. And I take it, that a man would present a sorry appearance, strutting, with nothing but a patch on his back, and yet, fancying it a new, complete and attractive garment.

In connection with this subject, we must bear in mind the fact, that great medical errors have always received more or less the sanction of public opinion, and that the time necessary for their correction, will be in proportion to their magnitude.

Credulity is not excited from a want of confidence in the integrity of medical men; the judgment is not alone concerned; there is no exclusive desire to enrich the pretender; but passion is predominant, and in the exercise of full sway. And in respect to its intensity, it is like the passion of which



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the great delineator of human character speaks in his tragedy of Macbeth, when he forces him to inquire —

“Who can be amaz’d, temperate and furious,  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment?”

The prevalence of epidemics is acknowledged, although their laws may not be understood. And, there are epidemic distempers of the mind, as well as the body. It is true, and no less curious than true, that during the continuance of these epidemics, the influence of the mind is greatly curative of corporeal diseases. What does Shakspeare say again in the tragedy to which we have already alluded? —

“*Malcolm.* Comes the king forth, I pray you?

*Doctor.* Ay, sir. There are a crew of wretched souls  
That stay his cure; their malady convinces  
The great assay of art. But at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath heaven given in his hand,  
They presently amend.

*Malcolm.* I thank you, Doctor.

*Macduff.* What’s the disease he means?

*Malcolm.* ’T is called the evil;  
A most miraculous work in this good king,  
Which often since my here remain in England  
I’ve seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
Himself best knows; but strangely visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers; and ’tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction.”



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This is not all fiction. Diseases did disappear after the royal touch. But were they by this touch removed? No. It was merely a means of concentration of nervous energy upon the diseased organ. While the mysterious epidemic influence continued, the mind and body were in special sympathy. After this sympathy ceased, there was a cessation of cures. And so of other epidemics in which the mind is intimately concerned.

The acts of a man, constitute before the world, his character. Doubtless this character would be often modified, if the world could understand clearly, the prompting of the heart, the motive. An act however beneficial, receives little commendation, comparatively, when it is the result of a selfish purpose. An unfortunate end is greatly excusable, when associated with good intentions. But when meritorious conduct springs from noble impulses, we should not hesitate to express a full tribute of praise.

While Napoleon occupied a throne, empires trembled at his nod, his name was a tower of strength, and his commands were as readily obeyed as if issued in a voice of enchantment. A wave of his hand, made brave men forgetful of danger, and to the ambitious, a touch of his pen secured renown. Science sought the shade of his patronizing arm, in which to make her calculations and discoveries, and history stood impatiently at the desk for events to fill her pages.

By and by, the mighty one steps down from his lofty seat; the spirit of conquest proclaims victory from another standard, and "the man of destiny" is doomed to perpetual bondage.

And now, let me ask, who are most entitled to the free homage of our hearts; those who shone in his beams, when the sun of his glory had reached its meridian, or those who accompanied him in his exile after that sun had descended into thick darkness?



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Had Dr. Latta a chosen friend, and had that friend been unjustly traduced, stricken with the rod of power, and threatened with destruction,—then that friend knew where to find him. On no occasion, indeed, did he loom up as the representative of a true man, so much, as when, regardless of danger to himself, he stepped forward in defense of innocence against envy and malice. He had no unjust compromises to offer. He would not acknowledge the commission of one wrong, for the mere sake of securing an acquittal from another. He would not consent to even mild punishment, when none was deserved. With him, honor and shame were at too great extremes, ever to receive a midway greeting. Falsehood, uttered by an unfaltering tongue, was no less falsehood; and truth, denied all opportunity for defense, was still truth.

Although for many years Dr. Latta resided in the midst of a city, it was not from choice. Its rapid growth, the extent and character of its improvements, the diversity and range of its business, the busy movements within doors, and running to and fro without, were undeniable evidences of the ingenuity and energy of man. But his heart yearned for a country cottage home, through which circulated the pure, balmy air of heaven; from which his vision could range over nature's own bright and beautiful landscape; from which he could listen to the carol of the free, light-winged songsters; from which he could view the bow of promise, reflected from liquid drops, arching the heavens, or be reminded of it by its scattered tints upon the leaf, the bud and the flower; from which he could see the undimmed twinkling of the star, and feel its soothing influence, as if looking into the persuasive eye of a dear friend in heaven.

The sabbath of the city he loved. After the labors and perplexities of the week, to see whole communities assembling,



and at the same time, offering up thanksgiving to heaven for its protection and goodness, affords the thoughtful, occasion for rejoicing. Upon his soul, the spirit of that sabbath rested, as the break of morn after the subsidence of a storm, upon a troubled sea. But he could associate more closely with the sabbath of the country, that charmed silence, that holy rest, which he hoped to realize in heaven.

In the general character of his writing, which expresses his deep and intense feeling, and thoughts, true to nature, we see the impress of the poet. To him, versification was easy, and on this account, perhaps, many of his poems were carelessly thrown aside. Some of those which were fortunately published, we have recently re-read, and we have taken a few extracts from one, found in a number of the Ladies' Repository. It is in four parts, and entitled,

### THE MOTHER AND HER BABE.

#### MOTHER'S WELCOME.

Hail, beautiful babe ! thou art welcome here,  
To the bounding heart, and the joyful tear ;  
To the heaving breast, the maternal charms,  
To a banquet sweet in a mother's arms.

. . . . .

#### MOTHER'S LAMENT.

Thou art sick, my babe, and doomed to fade,  
Like flowers when cut by the mower's blade —  
Like a meteor gleaming swiftly by,  
Thou wilt soon escape from mortal eye.

. . . . .

Thou art gone, my babe, thou hast fled away,  
Like mists of the night, at the dawn of day :  
Thy flesh is cold, and thy heart as still  
As the frozen drops of the ice-bound rill.



## MOTHER'S INQUIRY.

But tell me, sweet angel, where art thou ; and why  
Is thy spirit so fully concealed from my eye ?  
I seek thee at noontide — I seek thee at night,  
Where earth is all quiet, and stars shining bright ;  
At day-dawn I seek thee, when all things are still ;  
I seek thee at twilight, o'er valley and hill.

· · · · ·  
Come, then, gentle spirit, the secret make known,  
Describe the strange land where thy spirit hath flown.

## CHILD'S RESPONSE.

Dear mother, I hasten the story to tell :  
With me all is heaven — with me all is well.  
Thou saw'st when I left thee my body was cold :  
'T was then the last billows of Jordan had rolled,  
And I was set free from the cumbrous clod,  
And pinioned with angels, ascended to God.

· · · · ·  
No longer, dear mother, shed tears for thy child,  
Nor let the cold grave-yard, or solitude wild,  
Beguile thee to seek me, for I am not there :  
My home is in heaven : to meet me prepare.

We are all aware that strong impressions are made, upon both mind and body, through the medium of the senses. We have not only witnessed, but felt the power of music. It has charmed the warrior into fierce battle, and encouraged him until it was lost in the louder shouts of victory. It has softened fierce anger, and changed the sadness of the heart into joy. It has allayed suffering, and given gentleness to the voice of death. But, on this occasion we wish merely to speak of its influence upon the mind and feelings of Dr. Latta during his protracted indisposition.



For some time he retired to bed early, from fatigue and bodily suffering. Often and often, however, retirement failed to secure him repose. Then he would send to his daughter a request, that she would play upon the piano one of her favorite tunes. Soon his restlessness would cease, his mind become composed, and his eyelids close in a gentle sleep.

Again, when the printer was in wait for copy, during the progress of his "Chain," and his mind seemed too inactive to connect the links strongly and smoothly together, he would say, "Daughter, a sweet tune;" and the music of his soul soon responded through his pen, to the harmonious tones of the instrument. Oh, may he now be listening, with unbounded rapture, to music from harps of angels!

In Dr. Latta the Christian and physician were intimately combined, and at the same time visibly distinct. To what extent the former should modify the active duties of the latter, is a question which some have held in doubt, but which is worthy the serious consideration of all.

It has been said that the mind of the physician is so full of disquietude—so listless from abstract reflection—so intently engaged in the examination of disease and the means of cure, it is unfitted for that calm thought, that tranquillity of feeling necessary to guide the soul to a hopeful contemplation of eternity. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that science and piety are in no way incompatible: that while the mind is enriched and strengthened with tangible things, the heart may be adorned and softened with heavenly affection, and all become harmoniously blended. It is not our province to settle, or even discuss so fruitful and delicate a subject. It may not be out of place, however, to express one or two ideas.

It matters not how much a man may have sinned when his



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energies were all strong and buoyant ; he is shocked with the coarse manner and boisterous language of the blasphemer, when those energies are sinking more and more under the weight of disease. If the physician can apply the balm of consolation to a conscience-stricken spirit, as well as a healing agent to the afflicted body, how much more acceptable than the former must his presence be to the truly Christian or moral man. We have often thought, and shuddered at the thought, that he who would utter curses in the ear of a fellow-mortal, poised, as it were, between time and eternity, would rob the angels in paradise of their bliss, and mock the agonies of the damned in hell.

How often have we seen the stranger die — die with no kindred near — die, it may be, an outcast — die with a soul bursting with remorse ; and how often have we seen him heave the last sigh, without one beam of hope being shed on his dark future ! At this very moment such a case comes up vividly before our mind.

During the prevalence of cholera, years gone by, we were frequently interrogated by an individual, respecting the chances of his escape from the dread pestilence. He was inclined to be alone, to speak but little to his comrades, and his eye was as restless as if looking for an advancing foe. We endeavored to allay his fears. The various sounds which had issued from the workshops were all hushed. Silence had not been wont to reign, at such an hour, in such a place ; and even this was to him as appalling as the repose of death. The crimes of this man were arrayed prominently before him, and his vision, which had been bounded for years by the walls of a prison, now reached that dungeon of agony beyond the grave. He was seized by the relentless scourge, and for the first time, perhaps, in a long life, was prompted to implore



forgiveness of his Maker. With a look, such only as a dying man can give, he asked us to aid him in obtaining mercy. Alas! how little did he know to what an attenuated thread he was fastening his hopes of safety. What did we do? We stood abashed, rebuked, before a dying fellow-sinner, and the Majesty of Heaven, and ere we could control our feelings sufficiently to send one fervent aspiration to the Source of Forgiveness, a spirit had taken its everlasting flight. O God! if we could have directed one ray of divine light across the vista of that troubled soul, and did not, forgive us for so great an omission.

Not only was Dr. Latta a Christian, but a teacher of Christianity—a minister of the gospel. We mention this, simply to express our admiration of the manner in which he sustained both the character of the physician and the divine, without the one interfering in any way with the other. As Doctor Latta, he never dictated the form of prayer to be expressed by Minister Latta; nor did the latter suggest the remedies to be employed in the treatment of disease by the former. Each acted independently, but not in opposition. The one, devoted himself to the ills of the body; the other, to the griefs of the spirit. Each moved within his own orbit; yet mutual sympathy and action were necessary, to preserve the integrity of a system intended for man's happiness.

In the formation of this Society, we all know that our departed brother felt a lively interest, although his impaired health prevented his regular attendance upon its meetings, and active participation in its affairs. He believed that it might be so organized and conducted, as to assist greatly in the accumulation and dissemination of medical knowledge. He felt, as every man has felt, that notwithstanding individual efforts are necessary to sustain individual interests, combined



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knowledge and action are just as essential to secure any great public good. To render this Society permanent, it is only necessary to remember that mutual confidence and aid will result in mutual benefits.

Not only did he assist in the organization of this Society, for scientific improvement, but for social enjoyment. Where are we to look for the cultivation of good feeling, if not among brethren of the same faith and practice? The isolated oak, drawing nourishment from a rich and extended soil, spreads wide its branches, and sends its top to the clouds; but when the tempest comes, it stands without protection or support, and must, alone, be shivered by the lightning's flash. When a medical man withdraws from all communion with his brethren, he assumes a position surrounded with danger—he stands out, as it were, a prominent, unprotected mark for the arrows of envy and detraction.

No man, perhaps, estimated more highly the relations of friendship than Dr. Latta; and none had a keener relish for free, fireside conversation. While he could feel deeply at the recital of suffering and want, as witnessed in professional life, he could sketch ludicrous scenes with a graphic pencil, and be merry over the innocent jest.

Duly estimating the pleasures of reciprocal kindness, and the value of a conciliatory spirit among medical men, Dr. Latta was, at all times, ready to aid in the reconciliation of those who had become estranged. The twilight of his own existence was fast approaching, and he was anxious that the older members of the profession should reflect a good example over the pathway of those who were yet to encounter the trials of active life. He knew that difficulties had existed among prominent and highly esteemed members of the profession; and, at the beginning of the present year, he united



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with a few others in bringing together those who, from considerations of professional good, and personal gratification, not to say interests, were required to be friends. The object was accomplished—explanation followed explanation, feeling blended with feeling, satisfaction responded to satisfaction, and all united as one man.

The deceased had seen various grades in the society of men, and was familiar with their passions and incitements. Low in the scale of civilization, he saw wrangling, and denunciation, and violence, springing naturally, as it were, like weeds from an uncultivated soil. But higher up, among those of a true refinement, these passions were rarely exhibited, and were to be considered as transplantations of noxious exotics, or as coming from seeds blown from the deadly upas; but, whether from natural or forced growth, they were alike offensive and destructive. The great antidotes were confidence, honesty, open-heartedness, good will.

There are principles deeply imprinted on the whole face of nature—growth and decay. The commingling of the old and young, the experienced and inexperienced, is essential to the existence and welfare of our race. This necessity may be seen and felt, in every department of life. What would the young men of our profession be, if they had not been preceded by the old? And what would the old man be, but for the knowledge acquired when young? The unity of the profession, Dr. Latta considered the life of the profession—the existence of the one, the perpetuity of the other. Unite the profession, link after link, into one great chain, and its vibrations will be felt from one extremity to the other; but separate that first old, from that last new link, and you sever the dearest interests of medical science.

It has already been intimated, that Dr. Latta was among



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the earliest members of this Society. He was the very first to leave it, never to return. His name is still upon our records, to be erased, I hope, only by the hand of time.

He was born April 8th, 1804, and died June 28th, 1852. His demise was not sudden, nor wholly unexpected. For some years, he had been afflicted, and, at times, dangerously. During the last year, he suffered from a dropsical affection, and with severe paroxysms of neuralgia; so much so, that it required great effort to discharge his professional duties, or to attend to even a part of his practice. From day to day, during the latter period of his life, his weakness increased, and established, in his own mind, a belief, that his days were already numbered. On the 23d day of June, feeling unusually sick, he went to bed and took medicine. Early next morning we were requested to visit him, in great haste. We found him partially recovering from an apoplectic seizure, nine of which occurred in a few hours. It was soon apparent, that a disease of the brain, which, for some time, had been increasing, had been aggravated beyond all hope of recovery. In the treatment of the case, we had the advice and assistance of Drs. Woodward, Buckner, Taliaferro, and Webb. Our anxious and constant efforts were unavailing. The life of our associate and friend left us, as quietly as the shadow of a dream—his spirit departed, to hold communion with the Spirit of that sabbath which had just passed.

He was born, and died! How much is contained in that short sentence! And none are more competent to appreciate and feel its full force than ourselves. Daily, and almost hourly, are we called upon to testify how unalterable are these two great truths. We stand as present, living witnesses, of the manner in which Death executes his designs—fulfills his awful mission.



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When he has come in his wrath, he has slain, as it were, with one blow, his hundreds and thousands. In dismay we have gazed upon his countless ruins. And after nature has heaved her involuntary sigh, we have gone back into the midst of busy life, to renew our efforts, and to banish, as far as may be, the agonies of the past.

We have seen the parent fall, and his tender offspring deprived of their only reliable support. We have asked, Will the cold world deal kindly with them? We have been unwilling to turn a listening ear to the answer; but we have placed our hand upon the head of the active, bright-eyed boy, and we have said to him, Be of good cheer; be honest, industrious and courageous, and you will surmount the obstacles now being seen in the dim future. We have been attracted by the sweet face, and gentle actions of the bereaved daughter, and we have told her to be kind, and loving, and good; and we have left them with a cheerful hope that the one would be successful in all his laudable undertakings, and that the other would be tenderly loved and always happy.

We have sat by the side of that anxious, watchful mother — we have seen the face of her child grow pale, and its eyes become dim; and when the angel said softly to its little fluttering heart, Peace, be still! how we have sympathized with that mother. When with a bosom full of painful emotion she has exclaimed, "What shall I do without my babe?" how we have tried to share with her in that deep grief. But, after a moment of silence has intervened, and with her eyes upturned to heaven, she has said, calmly, "My babe is with the angels," we too have felt happy under the influence of this glowing thought.

When the scythe falls, and cuts down one in our midst — by our very side — we tremblingly inquire who is to be the



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next victim? And with that weapon suspended above us,  
may we not now profitably ask, Who next?

Dr. Samuel A. Latta is dead.

Fresh grow the sod o'er his tomb,  
And still be his greenwood repose;  
Around may sweet flowers bloom,  
And light be the step of his foes.

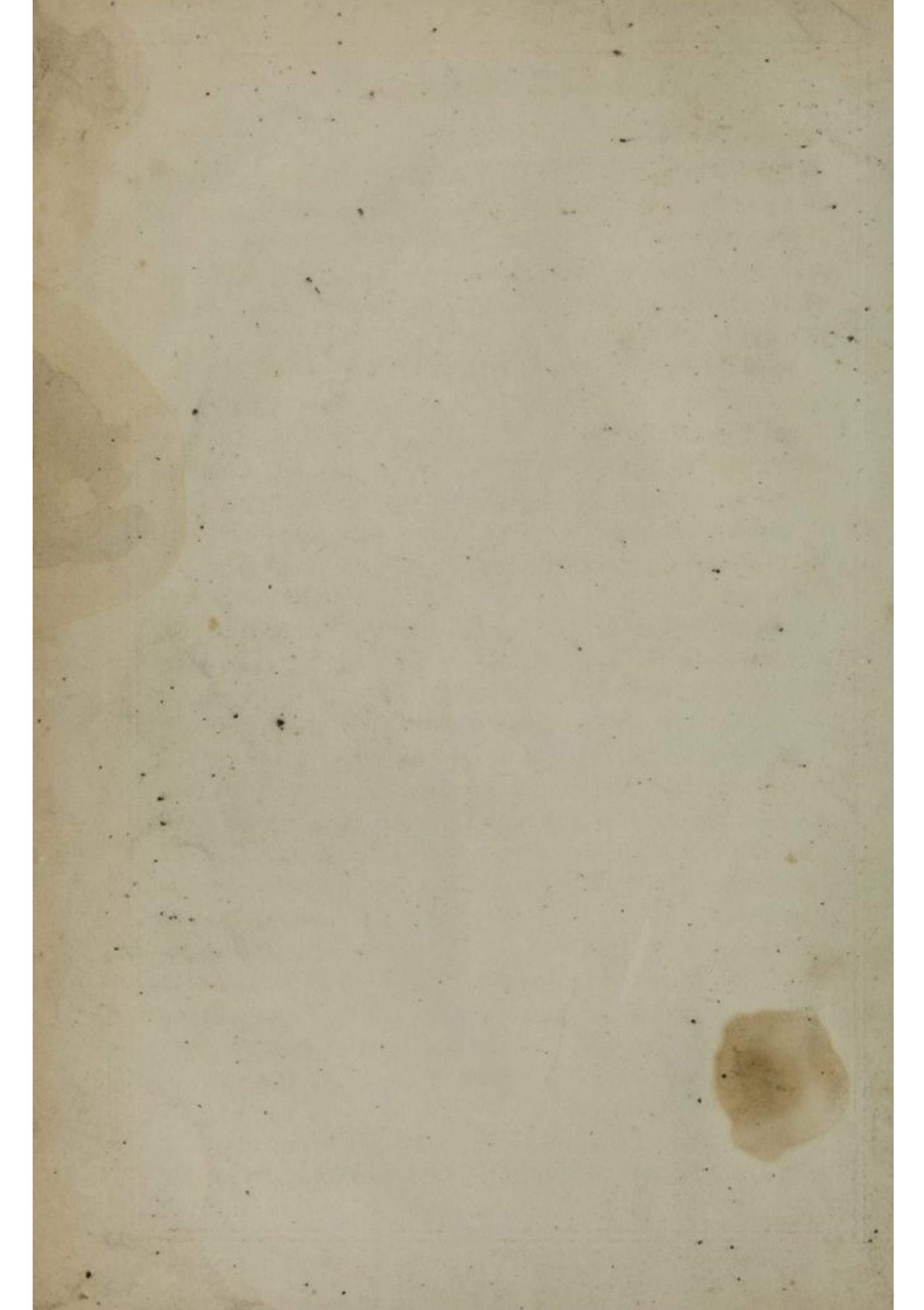
Onward and ever be blest,  
That spot to our memory dear;  
And bright, like gems in his crest,  
May each of his virtues appear.

List! feel'st thou air from the wings  
Of dread Death as he passeth by?  
List! ere thy harp and its strings  
Shall all broken and tuneless lie.















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