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Memoir of John Barclay Biddle, M.D.

E. B. Gardette

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VERTICAL FILE

BIDDLE, J. B.

MEMOIR

OF

JOHN BARCLAY BIDDLE, M.D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF MATERIA MEDICA AND GENERAL THERAPEUTICS IN
"THE JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA."

BY

E. B. GARDETTE, M.D.

Read before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, June 4, 1879.

[Extracted from the Transactions, Third Series, Volume IV.]

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1879.

M E M O I R

OF

JOHN BARCLAY BIDDLE, M.D.

MR. PRESIDENT: I accepted with great diffidence your invitation to prepare and read to the College a memoir of the late Professor JOHN B. BIDDLE, M.D. But my mind and heart have united in at least making the effort to do justice to the grateful and complimentary task.

John Barclay Biddle was born in the city of Philadelphia on the 3d of January, 1815. He was the eldest son of Clement Cornell Biddle, and Mary, daughter of John Barclay. His paternal ancestor, William Biddle, had emigrated to America a little before William Penn arrived in his new province of Pennsylvania; and many members of this family have been known and distinguished in the subsequent history of the province, the commonwealth, and the country. It would be a grateful work to elaborate this fact, and follow out the lives of the most prominent among these progenitors down to the surviving representatives that are still worthy of them; but this duty may be out of place as belonging to other occasions and associations. Yet I may at least recall something

of Colonel Clement Cornell Biddle, the father of John B. Biddle, who is still well remembered as a gentleman of high character and position in this city.

During the war of 1812, and when Philadelphia was believed to be in danger, Colonel Biddle raised the military company of "State Fencibles," which, under his command as captain, marched to Camp Du Pont, at Marcus Hook. While there he was promoted to the rank of colonel; and the "State Fencibles," under various captains, continued for many years deservedly popular. Colonel Biddle was one of four gentlemen who devised and founded the "Philadelphia Saving Fund Society," and was for more than twenty-one years President of that still existing and sound institution. He lived to the age of seventy years, and from the records of the Society, after his death, August, 1855, I find resolutions expressive of the high respect and regard of every member of the Board. They say also: "To him the Institution, in a great measure, is indebted for the public confidence it has enjoyed, having been guided and governed in disastrous times by his caution, foresight, and good judgment, shown in the discharge of his duties." Colonel Biddle, in early life, had studied law in the office of Mr. John Sergeant, but his literary tendencies were not confined to that profession; he edited an able work on political economy, from the French of John B. Say, and wrote with force and judgment for some of the best journals and periodicals of the day.

The subject of this notice was, at an early age, sent to the school of Messrs. Wylie and Engles, well known instructors of boys in this city; and afterwards, for a short time, went to the "High School," then presided over by the late Walter R. Johnson. At the early age of fourteen years he was sent for the completion of his education to the Roman Catholic

College of "St. Mary's," at Baltimore. The ensuing four years of his life were spent there with marked advantage, he becoming remarkable for his proficiency in mathematics and the modern languages. Among the direct and happy results was the acquisition of a complete knowledge of the French and Spanish languages, the former of which he continued to speak well and fluently to the end of his life.

After graduating at St. Mary's College, young Biddle began the study of law under the instruction of Mr. Thomas Dunlap, but soon relinquished it for the study of medicine; from whatever cause this change of purpose may have originated, it must be regarded as a most fortunate circumstance for the thousands who have profited by his medical teachings in after life. The first step toward his choice of a new career was to enter the office, as a pupil, of Dr. Nathaniel Chapman, who was nearly related to him by marriage. But there was an unsuspected stronger tie or sympathy between that distinguished medical man and his pupil than that of accidental family connection—and this was the mutual attraction of gifted minds and noble natures.

As a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, young Biddle was faithful, intelligent, and attentive, and earned his diploma of M.D. at that venerable institution just after attaining his majority. That was the period at which its professorial chairs were filled by the great names of Physick, Chapman, Dorsey, Wood, Jackson, and others, whose unrivalled medical learning and teachings were the chief source for supplying good physicians to the whole of our country.

Almost immediately after graduating Dr. Biddle sailed for Europe, where he spent more than a year in continued efforts of study to improve in his profession. His familiar know-

ledge of the French language was undoubtedly of great advantage while following the lectures and clinics of the eminent men of that time in the medical schools of France.

On his return home the young doctor lost no time in adopting plans for professional occupation and consistent usefulness, and started, in connection with Dr. Meredith Clymer, now of New York, "The Medical Examiner," a fortnightly journal, published in the interests of the medical profession. The first number of this periodical, which continued to sustain a sound scientific reputation for more than eighteen years, was issued on the 3d of January, 1838, the birthday anniversary of Dr. Biddle, who had then completed his twenty-third year; he was even at that time praised for the special feature of furnishing full reports of the clinical lectures delivered in the hospitals of the city by the attending physicians and surgeons. This medical journal was almost an immediate success, and in September of its first year, the accomplished Dr. W. W. Gerhard was added to the editorial staff, with the design of making it a weekly periodical, which was soon its character. Shortly after this, the late justly esteemed Dr. Francis Gurney Smith came into the journal as co-editor with Dr. Biddle.

In examining the early numbers one cannot fail to be struck with the high professional tone, the wide grasp, and the good sense which characterized the editorials, as well as the admirable bibliographical notices with which the pages of the "Medical Examiner" were enriched. The editors, youthful as they were, gave proofs of being trained writers, and brought to their journal professional knowledge and vigor of intellect not often united in men of their age and supposed inexperience.

With regard to Dr. Biddle, the subject of this memoir, I

have heard it stated by those who knew him best, that even in his early boyhood he was remarkable for the ease and beauty of his style of writing. It seemed to flow from his pen, limpid, idiomatic, and finished, without effort; grace and force of diction were combined with that undefinable but well understood quality—good taste; no ornament oppressed, no vein of pleasantry lowered, and no fervor obscured the sense and harmony of the easy march with which it progressed. All was smooth, nervous, and well ordered; rising when the subject demanded a higher movement, but always clear and chastened in every modulation.

I have dwelt for a few moments on these characteristics of style, because they remained with Dr. Biddle until the close of his life; and much of the success to which he attained in the wider theatre upon which he moved during the last fifteen years of his professional career, I believe was due to the charm of his manner, and the dignity of his written and oral discourse.

Early in the year 1846, a number of young physicians, among them Dr. John B. Biddle, believing that there was room in this community for another medical school, obtained from the Legislature of Pennsylvania, a charter of incorporation under the name of "the Franklin Medical College of Philadelphia." The course of instruction began in October, 1846, the faculty consisting of Dr. James B. Rogers, Dr. Vanwick, Dr. David H. Tucker, Dr. Paul B. Goddard, Dr. Clymer, Dr. J. B. Biddle, and Dr. Joseph Leidy, Demonstrator of Anatomy. Dr. John B. Biddle assumed the duties of the same chair in that college which he has so recently left vacant in the Jefferson Medical College by his death. Many if not most of his associates of the Franklin Faculty became afterwards distinguished in their profession, either here or else-

where. That institution had not, however, a long existence, although it served to bring into notice the abilities of the gentlemen connected with it, after the college itself had ceased to be.

At this period of his life Dr. Biddle had acquired a considerable practice, to which he gave active attention. I do not know that he had a large or lucrative list of daily visits, demanding the wear and tear of horses and vehicles, but I do know that he possessed the full confidence and the grateful attachment of many patients of both high and low degree.

Dr. Biddle appeared before the medical world as a professional author in 1852, his first work being a "Review of the *Materia Medica*, for the use of Students; by John B. Biddle, M.D., formerly Professor of *Materia Medica* in Franklin Medical College." This modest book, of about 300 pages, was followed by a second edition, called for in 1865, when it was "revised and enlarged, and adapted to the last edition of the U. S. Pharmacopœia." Its title now was "*Materia Medica*, for the use of Students," and this has been permanently adopted for the eight editions of the work which have successively appeared from the same publishers, the demand for each of the new arising from the exhaustion of the previous edition. The last of these was published in 1878, containing 462 pages; and in the steady growth of the work from the first to the eighth edition, we seem to find a pleasant and pointed expression of the increased mental growth, maturity, and reputation, of the medical man of letters. He was now recognized authority on the great subject of *Materia Medica*; the real source and foundation upon which rests the practice of medicine—its inestimable material coming from

the vast and various gifts of nature, and its flora alone demanding the study of a whole life.

A criticism on Dr. Biddle's work, even were I able to give it, would not be in place here; the spirit that dictated "*Oh that mine adversary had written a book!*" has existed, probably, through all time, and in all climes, but I may, in these scientific halls, be thankful that my friend and "Fellow" of this College wrote *that* book, which must long remain a positive help to every medical student that seeks it, and be, in the profession he adorned, a monument to the memory of its author's ability.

During this interval Dr. Biddle had reached professorships in two additional medical schools of good standing and usefulness in this city. The first of these was "the Pennsylvania Medical College," a branch of the "Gettysburg College," where he again filled the chair of *Materia Medica*. The most active and original promoter, if not the founder of that College, was the late Dr. William Darrach, who filled the chair of Practice at its opening session, and continued in its Faculty until about the year 1852-3. The chief information I have been able to obtain about the Pennsylvania College, concerns its early existence, and is derived from the perusal of a few of the public addresses to the classes by the then gifted Professor of *Materia Medica*, Dr. Henry S. Patterson. The lectures and other writings of that member of the Faculty, elevate him to a very high rank of learning and eloquence; and it is from one of his beautiful introductions (October, 1851) that I discover it to have been in the *ninth* session of the "Pennsylvania College." In 1854 some changes took place in the Medical Faculty, on account of the withdrawal of Professor Wm. Darrach, who was succeeded by the present distinguished Professor of Theory and Practice in

the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Alfred Stillé, and Dr. Biddle soon after that became Professor of *Materia Medica*. Some time in 1859 this Faculty was dissolved, and the school went into other hands, to which we have no occasion to refer, as Dr. Biddle had then no connection with it. It has been difficult to obtain even these scanty facts, or records, from which to give anything like a fair or detailed account of the College, of which, however, I have the authority of the member of the Faculty already named, for saying, that "the Pennsylvania College did a good work while it lasted;" and I may assume that Prof. John B. Biddle, in the chair of *Materia Medica*, contributed his fair share toward the prosperity, the good work, and the good name of the institution.

In November, 1850, Dr. Biddle was married to Caroline, the youngest of six daughters of the late Mr. William Phillips; these, with four sons, constituting the children of that well-known citizen of Philadelphia. It seems almost unavoidable not to cross the threshold and somewhat enter the family circle, if we would speak of the true virtues that have adorned a life; and it will not be inappropriate here, I trust, to say a few words of Mrs. William Phillips, the mother of Mrs. Caroline Biddle. That venerable lady survived her husband by many years, and, although entirely blind before the birth of her last child (Caroline), was a remarkably good housekeeper and a great disciplinarian. She performed all her maternal duties, and ordered every department of her domestic affairs, with admirable judgment and propriety. Her ten children lived to reach mature age—some of them old age—and have ever united in their filial record of a refined and harmonious home, under the personal good guidance of that sightless mother who never saw her youngest daughter. Yet she lived to know of, and be present at, that

child's marriage to Dr. Biddle, and to give it the blessing of her hearty approbation. Nor was her fondness for the doctor misplaced, for his heart was open to a full estimate of such a mother-in-law; he had always shown it by the tender love and devotion toward his own excellent mother, who lived to the venerable age of eighty-nine years, and their constant intercourse and relations were always mutually of the most charming and affectionate kind. I well recall the great, honest sorrow of his heart at the time of the death of his mother, and also at that of her amiable sister, Miss Charlotte Barclay, his aunt, who died six months later, at an advanced age. Very recently the good, present rector¹ of St. Peter's Church, where the family burial-ground is, told me that he had never, in his long experience of funeral services, met with such touching and profound grief at the graveside, as that which he saw in Dr. Biddle on these two occasions.

Dr. Biddle leaves a widow and six children, two sons and four daughters; his parental love and solicitude for these was in keeping with his filial heart. He lived liberally and cordially amid those in sympathy with him by education and sentiments, was warm and steadfast in his friendships, though, as with most of us, he had his share of the shadows and disappointments that come with advancing years and increased responsibilities in life; and some of these leaving their bruises sore upon the heart.

"Then to our side with plaintive eye,
In place of hope came memory,
And murmured of the past, and told
Dear stories of the days of old,
Until its very dross seemed gold.

.

¹ Rev. Dr. Davies.

Preach not, O stern philosophy!
Nought we can have, and nought we see
Will ever be so pure, so glad,
So beautiful, as what we had.

Our steps are sad—our steps are slow;
Nothing is like the long ago.
Gone is the keen, intense delight,
The perfume faint and exquisite—
The glory and the effluence
That haloed the enraptured sense,
When faith and love were at our side,
And common life was deified.”¹

On the 29th of June, 1865, Dr. John B. Biddle was elected by the Board of Trustees of “The Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia,” to the chair of *Materia Medica* and general Therapeutics, made vacant by the death of Professor Thomas D. Mitchell, M.D.

I here approach the period when I can best speak from my own personal intercourse and observation of Dr. Biddle’s life and duties as a medical teacher. Our relations afforded me abundant opportunity, and soon became so grateful to me, that it is my sincere ambition to do him justice in this direction. Certainly at that time, fourteen years ago, before the gout or other trials, or overwork, had blanched a hair or twisted a finger, Dr. Biddle was still a handsome man; his appearance in the lecture-room was very prepossessing. His erect person and manly dignified presence, with an agreeable manner, combined to make him a graceful speaker who won the attention of all who listened to him. He was always clear and impressive, and not unfrequently, when warmed by his subject, eloquent; he has been termed, in a recent notice of him, “*a medical orator* ;” and those who were able and

¹ W. W. Story.

were afforded occasions to judge, will recognize the truth of that description; he deserved the application of the term. With an excellent voice, a fine presence, and an easy, fluent delivery, no one could truly deny that he was a forcible, an accomplished, and a captivating speaker. Hence Dr. Biddle was deservedly a favorite and very popular lecturer. The matter that came from his mind was always worthy of the excellent manner in which he conveyed it to his class, for he put forth sound theories, and advocated true principles in well arranged order, bringing a clear comprehension of his teachings, and securing their full acceptance by the minds of his pupils.

It was his habit to carefully prepare his lectures, with all the needful study, on the evenings previous to delivery; but he used no notes, or at least very rarely, in the lecture-room.

Dr. Biddle held strong opinions about the use of certain drugs, and these he seriously impressed upon his class, so that they should not be readily forgotten. Indeed, his learning and enthusiastic interest for his favorite branch of science were such, that he would hold up a specimen of its endless family from his table to the view of his class, expressively turning his eye from the one to the other—feeling the remedial value of the plant, or root, or mineral, and as if the dumb material itself would grasp the minds of his listeners to aid instruction.

There was perhaps the most positive realization of these impressions of Dr. Biddle, as he was in the chair of *Materia Medica*; for he was thought less successful as a clinical lecturer; though even there he did not fail to be instructive, and was always liked by the attending class.

As the presiding officer of the medical faculty, his colleagues ever held him in respect and admiration; they re-

cognized and spoke with grateful confidence of his admirable qualities in being ever apt and ready, courteous yet decided, without being dogmatic. With judicious executive abilities and parliamentary knowledge, he shaped and guided their deliberations in a safe and satisfactory manner. And these valuable qualities of mind, correct feelings and knowledge, were no less observed and needed in his difficult duties as Dean of the Faculty, not the least among which were the honorable settlement of difficulties incident to the assemblage of large bodies of young men of various habits and dispositions, away from their homes, and subject to the temptations of a large city, many of them, for the first time.

To win the respect and attachment of such a body of medical students, from year to year, with friendly, fatherly interest, was the means Dr. Biddle successfully used to exercise good influences upon their lives; in return they gave proofs of their confidence and esteem by their good conduct in the lecture-room, and also in privately seeking his advice whenever there was trouble or discord among them. The large class of 1878-9 (numbering 572) at the time of Professor Biddle's death and funeral services, gave touching evidence of their feelings here alluded to: they sought permission of the family of Dr. Biddle to take a last farewell of their honored teacher, as he lay upon his bier, and the entire class, one by one, passed before his solemn, pale countenance as it rested serene in death. They had sent, by way of memorial, a *vacant chair* made of flowers, as the gift of the class, which stood at the foot of the coffin in testimony of their affection, and of sorrow for their loss.

In the course of Dr. Biddle's official duties as Dean, he quietly settled or disposed of important and troublesome questions for the interest or prosperity of the Jefferson Col-

lege; few of these were generally known, but they displayed, to those acquainted with them, the prompt good sense with which he acted. I recall an instance when it was appropriate to give publicity to his action, and I quote the occurrence as told in his own words in his introductory to the class, in October, 1873.

"A few days ago, a young lady from a Western State, presented herself at the office of the Dean of the Jefferson Medical College, desiring to enroll her name in the college books as a matriculate. She was referred to the appropriate institution, and discussion of the reasons of her exclusion was declined. I have no wish, however, to avoid the woman question, and would say at once to those of the gentler sex who aspire to enter our ranks, that we cordially welcome them, and wish them all the success they deserve. We recognize their superior tenderness, their uniform patience, their courage, and their ability. But let me say to them also that it is no light thing to become physicians. If they are prepared to brave the difficulties that they must inevitably face to enter upon a career where the surroundings present so much that it is naturally distasteful to them, let them come on. But they must be willing to subordinate love and marriage to the stern requirements of the most exacting of avocations; to yield up the concessions, the deference, the amenities, which have heretofore been so willingly paid them. If they come into the arena, they must come as equals. If they want to fight the battle of life side by side with their brothers, they must be prepared to be struck down in the struggle. We would spare them the contest, not because we desire to exclude them from the prize, but because we know that, whatever their talent, whatever their perseverance, the inferiority of a feebler and more delicate physical organization is insurmountable.

"Woman is the best of nurses—

"When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel."

"If she be wise she will not revolt against the position which nature has assigned her. And I believe that the great majority of women do not desire change. The cry for new rights is loud, but it comes from the few. The many feel that the first of woman's rights is the love of man, as the best thing for a man is to love a woman. And the clatter of all the female men in the world cannot alter the laws of nature."

Thus spoke Professor Biddle to his class of 1873, and in six years the sequel seems to show, to some degree, that women have "come into the arena," in the recent wretched female exhibitions of pedestrianism in this city and elsewhere—sad, injurious, and demoralizing results of giving countenance to the wrong-minded agitators of this unsexing of woman.

In the summer of 1878 Dr. Biddle suffered from a protracted and obstinate diarrhœa, from the effects of which he never wholly recovered. In July, 1878, he sailed for Europe, though his gouty threatenings filled him with apprehensions which were realized by his having a severe attack during the passage across the ocean. On his arrival in England this had become somewhat mitigated, and he was enabled to travel up to London, and thence on the continent as far as the Rhine baths. This portion of his trip was, however, accomplished with much inconvenience, the gout having redeveloped to such an extent as materially to interfere with his ability to endure motion, or effort of any kind.

At the end of August, nevertheless, Dr. Biddle returned to Philadelphia, and entered upon the duties of his Dean-ship, and prepared for those of his chair, which he continued to discharge up to the Christmas season.

About this time, in paying a professional visit, on a stormy day, to one of the institutions of which he was the

medical adviser, he was greatly exposed and contracted a severe cold. He made light of this, however, regarding it as one of the evidences of the gouty bronchitis to which he had long been subject; and so anxious did he feel with regard to his professional obligations, that it was with some difficulty that his medical attendants could prevent him from leaving the house. At this time his trouble was of a pleuritic nature, affecting the right side, without any decided pneumonic complications. A prominent feature of his case was the extreme depression and weakness (*malaise*, he would persist in terming it) which continued to increase until the termination of his life.¹

I was daily at the bedside of Dr. Biddle during the greater part of his illness, there to see him surrounded by his wife and daughters, gently performing and interchanging the duties of nurses and comforters. An experienced man nurse became necessary only during the last few days, and it was during these that, by the doctor's request, his kinsman, the Rev. Wm. P. Lewis, administered to him the communion of his church. This was consistent with his faith and his practice as a member of St. Stephen's, where he attended with his family. His religion was in his life and heart, and not on his tongue; he did not make it the subject of argument, and the privileges which he claimed he also yielded to others.

On the 5th day of January, 1879, Dr. Biddle took to his bed; his acute pleuritic symptoms were now greatly alleviated, but it was evident that his vital powers were gradually weakening. Three days before his death he suddenly complained of an intense abdominal pain, which steadily increased while consciousness remained. It was evident that, from some cause, peritonitis had been lighted up, and he

¹ I obtain these details of symptoms from Dr. John H. Brinton.

became slowly but surely weaker and more exhausted until on Sunday, the 19th day of January, 1879, at 7½ P. M., he passed away. He had retained his consciousness until within two or three hours of his death, and at all times he exhibited the patient fortitude under suffering, and the sensitive unwillingness to cause others trouble, which were so characteristic of the man.

A few days before his death Dr. Biddle directed that a *post-mortem* examination should be made of his body, and named the anatomist whom he wished to conduct it. The autopsy showed pleuritic adhesions over the middle lobe of the right lung, with some effusion in the pleural cavity. In the peritoneal cavity acute peritonitis had occurred, and this was undoubtedly the proximal cause of his death. There was no typhoid ulceration proper of Peyer's patches, although in the cæcum an old indolent ulcer was detected, which evidently dated from the time of the diarrhœa of 1878. The small intestines offered no evidence of recent inflammation.¹

Dr. Biddle was chosen an attending physician of the "Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb," in January, 1841; his first colleagues there were the late Dr. George B. Wood, for so many years the president of this college, and now its benefactor by his will, and Dr. Joseph Pancoast, the renowned surgeon and anatomist. At a meeting of the Board of Directors of this Institution on the 5th of March, 1879, the following resolutions were introduced by Mr. Joseph Patterson, and unanimously adopted by the Board.

"Resolved, That the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, having lost, by the death of Dr. John B. Biddle, the valuable services of its capable and faithful physician, the directors

¹ I obtain the facts of the *post-mortem* examination from Dr. John H. Brinton, who was present.

desire to express, and record in the minutes of the Board, their sorrow for his death and respect for his memory.

"Resolved, That we mourn the death of Dr. Biddle, who, for more than thirty years, was the Medical Director of this Institution, not only as the loss of its accomplished physician, ever prompt and intelligent in the discharge of his official duties, but of a friend, whose attractive and commendable personal qualities secured our great respect and esteem.

"Resolved, That Dr. Biddle was faithful and honored in the schools of medicine, and for his cure and treatment of the sick, and in all other relations of a laborious and useful life he was distinguished by a high sense of honor, an unselfish fidelity to duty, ever exhibiting in his walk and conversation the graces of a thorough and dignified manhood, which received our respectful regard in his life, and now prompts this sincere expression of our sense of his virtues, and of our sorrow for his lamented death."

On introducing these warmly eloquent resolutions, Mr. Patterson prefaced them by such appropriate and appreciative remarks, that I cannot resist the wish to quote from them at least the following. He said:—

"I met Dr. Biddle in Homburg, in Germany, last August, whither he had gone, during a brief visit to Europe, in pursuit of health. His apparent feebleness of body was so manifest that I knew he was unfit to travel at that time, but, having secured his passage homeward for a date that would require him to leave Homburg in a few days for a fatiguing journey to Liverpool, I requested and urged him to postpone his departure for a month or more to obtain the required health and strength for his return journey and voyage; but so inflexibly stern and unselfish was his sense of duty that he refused, because, as he said, his delayed return would impose on his colleagues of the Jefferson Medical Faculty labors which should justly rest on him alone; and he re-

turned at the appointed time, and not many months after that came the solemn termination of his life."

In the year 1856, July 9, Dr. Biddle was elected Attending Physician to the Girard College for Orphans, which office he filled until his last and fatal illness. At a meeting of the Board of Directors, February 12, 1879, the following minute was adopted:—

"Since the last meeting of this Board, the Girard College has been deprived by death of the services of Dr. John B. Biddle, and it is fitting that that fact should be placed on record.

"During twenty-two years' employment as Visiting and Consulting Physician, he gave entire satisfaction to this Board, and performed his duties with signal ability, and it is

"*Resolved*, That the President of the Board be directed to convey to the members of his family their sympathy in the loss which has befallen them, and the assurance of their high esteem for his memory."

The Board of Inspectors of the Philadelphia County Prison, January 21, 1879, adopted the following:—

"*Resolved*, That in the death of Dr. John B. Biddle, the Board sustains the loss of a member who had at heart the true interests of the institution, whose leading director he was for more than twenty years; and that the success of the administration of the prison is greatly due to the care and solicitude with which he watched over its management.

"*Resolved*, That this Board feels especially the deprivation it has sustained in the loss of a presiding officer, whose deep interest in the affairs of the prison was beneficially displayed, and whose discrimination in appointments promoted the efficiency of the committees, and whose prompt, firm, and courteous decision

infused that harmony in discussion in the Board, and that concurrence of action in the committees, which distinguish the deliberations and labors of the members of the Board.

"*Resolved*, That the death of Dr. Biddle calls upon the members of the Board to mourn the loss of a dignified presiding officer, a genial companion, and a faithful friend—a man who, in position as an inspector of the prison, was most anxious to sustain the respectability of the administration, and jealous of every attempt to impair its usefulness.

"*Resolved*, That this Board will attend the funeral of its deceased President.

"*Resolved*, That the members of this Board sympathize with the family of Dr. Biddle in their irreparable loss, and offer them their hearty condolence.

(Signed)

JOS. R. CHANDLER,

Chairman.

EDMUND SMITH,

Secretary."

The Committee of the College of Physicians "on Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia," send me as follows:—

"*From the Minutes of February 1, 1879.*—Dr. Ruschenberger stated that Dr. John B. Biddle (born January 3, 1815, died January 19, 1879, aged 64 years) had been a member of the committee appointed by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia to revise the Pharmacopœia of the United States, since its formation, October, 1877. He had been punctual in attendance—never absent from its meetings when the condition of his health permitted him to be present. He was interested in the work confided to the committee, and performed his full share of it. His learning and good judgment were conspicuous, and enhanced the value of his labors.

"By the death of Dr. Biddle the Committee has lost a most

valuable member and a greatly esteemed companion. The Committee laments sincerely the loss of an eminent physician and philanthropic gentleman, and sympathizes with the profession in a common bereavement."

I cannot better terminate the list of well-merited and honorable tributes to the memory of the late Dr. Biddle, than by gratefully accepting this for my memoir, from the Committee of the College. It is composed of men above the small jealousies too common in medical life and its competitions, and their honest, eloquent praise furnishes occasion to remind their "Fellows" of this organization of their great and unremunerated services to the institution. Dr. Biddle was one of them, and few of his friends ever knew it until now.

Yet the revision of the United States Pharmacopœia is a task of serious labor and responsibility; its duties demand close and careful investigation, and the highest sense of justice, as well as impartiality, in regard to the authorities in this branch of science at home and abroad. The example of this Committee in faithful, unselfish devotion to the difficult work they perform, with no other compensation than that of conscious usefulness to their chosen profession, should stimulate in their Fellows similar industry and generous ambition.

I have given them, in this memoir, one such example, in whom we have seen these noble characteristics and their fruition, from the early age of twenty-three to the ripe one of sixty-four—forty-two years of a life spent at the post of duty, and never shrinking from any demands upon the physical or intellectual faculties which he believed were due to the service of his fellow-creatures.