

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES JEWETT, A.M., M.D., ScD.
1839-1910.

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Brooklyn, N. Y.

CHARLES JEWETT was born in Bath, Maine, September 27, 1839; both his father, George Jewett, and his mother, Sarah Jewett, *née* Hall, were residents of Maine. He received his early education at the Bath High School, and later attended Bowdoin College, being graduated from that institution with high honors in 1864, taking the degree of A.B. Three years later he received his A.M. Bowdoin has since honored him in 1894 by conferring upon him the degree of Sc.D.

He began the study of medicine under the preceptorship of Hiram Lathrop, M.D., of Cooperstown, N. Y., in 1867. In 1869 he continued his medical studies by taking his first course of lectures at the Long Island College Hospital; from there he went to the University Medical College in New York. His third year was spent at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, from which he received the degree of "Doctor of Medicine" in 1871. After his graduation he settled in Brooklyn, N. Y., where he practised general medicine for about eight years. His early experience as a teacher began in the Adelphi Academy of Brooklyn, as Professor of Physical Science.

In 1868 Dr. Jewett had married Miss Abbie E. Flagg, of New Hampshire. Two children were born of this union—Harold F. Jewett, M.D., and Alice Hall Jewett, who is now the

wife of John Theodore Schwarte, and resides at Saratoga Springs, N. Y. Mrs. Jewett died at the birth of her second child, from a puerperal complication, due to the faulty obstetrical methods of the times. This sorrow so affected Dr. Jewett that he determined to devote his life to the improvement of obstetrical conditions and technique, and thus, through the unfortunate sacrifice of one woman, Dr. Jewett became the saviour of many.

In 1880 he was appointed Professor of Obstetrics in the Long Island College Hospital, which chair he held until 1898, when, upon the death of the late A. J. C. Skene, M.D., in 1899, he became Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the same institution, a position which he held until the time of his death.

During his years of activity in his special field, he was connected at one time or another, as Attending or Consulting Surgeon, with many of the large hospitals of Brooklyn. During the last few years of his life his time was given to the Long Island College Hospital, to which he was attached as Obstetrician and Gynecological Surgeon. At the time of his death he was Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist to the Kings County Hospital, the Bushwick Hospital, the Swedish Hospital, the German Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, and St. Christopher's Hospital.

Throughout his entire life Dr. Jewett was prominent in the medical politics of the county, State, and nation. He was one of the few men who recognized that his membership in a society was an obligation which could only be acquitted by his presence and participation in the proceedings of that society.

At the time of his death he was a member of the Medical Society of the County of Kings, which Society he served successively as Censor, Trustee, Vice-President, and was its President during the years of 1880, 1881, and 1882; the Brooklyn Anatomical and Surgical Society, the Brooklyn Pathological Society, the Brooklyn Gynecological Society, which honored him in 1893 and 1894 with its Presidency; the Brooklyn Medical Society, the Associated Physicians of Long Island, the Medical Association of Greater New York, the New York Academy of Medicine, and the New York Obstetrical Society. In the latter he was honored with its Presidency in 1894.

As a figure in State politics, we find that he was a member of the New York State Medical Society from 1886 to 1910. In the latter year he was elected President and was serving in that capacity to the time of his death. In 1891 and 1893 he was Vice-President of the Physicians' Mutual Aid Association. In 1900 he served as President of the American Gynecological Society. Besides being a member of this National Association, he was for many years a member of the American Academy of Medicine, the American Medical Association, the British Gynecological Society, and the Detroit Gynecological Society. When the Pan-American Medical Congress was organized his international reputation was recognized by making him an Honorary President. He was one of the founders of the International Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

As a writer, Dr. Jewett's life was a busy one; his publications were numerous and valuable. In 1891 he published his *Manual of Child Bed Nursing*, one of the most helpful little guides to the nurse and mother.

In 1894 he brought out the first edition of *The Outlines of Obstetrics*, which has since appeared under the title of *The Essentials of Obstetrics*. This work is a lasting example of Dr. Jewett's power to select the important from the unimportant, and to briefly summarize to the student everything authoritative upon the subject of obstetrics, in such a way as to enable him to comprehend its importance.

In 1898 he edited a *System of Obstetrics by American Teachers*, which has run through three editions, the last of which appeared in 1907. Besides these three books, he was a frequent collaborator, contributing to the *American Text-book of Obstetrics*, the *Hamilton System of Legal Medicine*, Keating's *Gynecology*, and Foster's *Handbook of Therapeutics*. He was also a frequent contributor to medical journals.

Some forty papers, all of which bear the stamp of authority, were the products of Dr. Jewett's pen. Although best known as an obstetrician and gynecologist, yet his interest in medicine was general. As a consultant, his diagnostic powers and wide clinical knowledge, his ability to quote to us the very latest advances in any subject under discussion, made his counsel invaluable to the younger men. He died after a very brief

illness, from the effects of a cerebral hemorrhage, August 6, 1910, at the age of seventy-one years. He was a diligent and thoughtful student all his life.

In the death of Charles Jewett the American Gynecological Society has lost one of its most prominent members. As a teacher of obstetrics he had no peer. In Europe, as in America, his opinions were authoritative.

Dr. Jewett was a figure among men, courteous, commanding, honest, forceful, and fearless, sure of his premises, clear in his deductions, powerful in his presentations, conservative in his practice, embodying the requisites of a great teacher.



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LIFE is a contest, the round world a battlefield, nor are the sharpest wounds those which are received amidst smoke and fire and swift flying death. The bloodless battles waged between the conflicting forces of civilization claim more victims than the red god of war, and in this conflict there are no truces. The warfare is unceasing. Into it is ushered every child born of woman, and we lay down our arms but once, and then forever. Happy and honored the man who dies sword in hand and face to his foe, whether that be disease or injustice or bitter wrong of other sort of which the world is full.

Charles Jewett, President of the Medical Society of the State of New York, died at his residence in Brooklyn on August 6, 1910. The day before his last and brief illness he was busily engaged in the practice of his profession and performed his final operation at the Long Island College Hospital August 5th. The work might well have been left to his assistants, both able and willing, but although oppressed by the heat of an August day Dr. Jewett did the operation himself. He seemed fatigued and looked worn. He left the hospital for his home.

The following day he intended to leave for Saratoga to visit his dearly loved daughter and spend a month in well earned rest. He lay down that night to his repose and passed from out the ivory gate of dreams through the chill and cloud-encircled portals of death, to a larger liberty, a fuller life and the fruition of human hopes. His last mission on earth was a mission of mercy. His whole life had been devoted to a struggle with disease. His last day was a battle. He fought a good fight to the very end, and then came rest.

Dr. Jewett was born in Bath, Maine, September 27, 1839, and had therefor nearly completed his seventy-first year.

He graduated at Bowdoin College, Maine, in 1864, with the degree of A.B. In 1867 he received from the same institution the degree of A.M., and in 1894 that of Sc.D. He moved to Brooklyn in 1867, having married Miss Abbie E. Flagg the preceding year. For a time he attended lectures at the Long Island College Hospital and then entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where he graduated in 1871.

Preceding and during the earlier years of his practice Dr. Jewett taught the physical sciences at the Adelphi Institute, but the increasing demands of his chosen profession soon obliged him to resign his professorship there and devote himself exclusively to the practice of medicine.

Of broad education, his trained intellect soon brought him to the front and in 1880 he received the appointment of professor of obstetrics in the Long Island College Hospital. In 1899 he was elected professor of gynecology, both of which positions he held at the time of his death. He was a vigorous and lucid teacher, a pioneer in the application of the modern principles of asepsis to obstetrics and gynecology.

He was widely and deeply learned. His was no narrow mind. He astonished those who knew him intimately with the breadth and scope of his knowledge, nor were the years after three score barren or decadent. His most fruitful decade was his last. He not only kept abreast of modern science, but was ever a leader among leaders and was so recognized by his peers.

He had not many peers, and of him it might most truthfully be said that he was "Primus inter pares." No man in his profession has ever brought greater honor to the city of his choice, the scene of his labors and life work. He was truly a great man but modest withal and of a gentle spirit.

There were no honors which the profession of his city and of the state could confer on

him which had not been his. He was president of the Medical Society of the County of Kings quite early in his career, an honor which he thrice enjoyed.

At the time of his death he was the President of the Medical Society of the State of New York, which honored itself in honoring him. He was the first of the long line of presidents to die in office.

Dr. Jewett was president of the New York Obstetrical Society in 1894, of the American Gynecological Society in 1900.

He was an honorary member of the British Gynecological Society, of the Detroit Gynecological Society and Honorary President of the Obstetrical Section of the Pan American Medical Congress in 1893. He was a member and founder of the International Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics. The professional appointments which he held in Brooklyn were numerous, although he devoted most of his time and energy, apart from a large private practice, to his teaching and hospital work in the Long Island College Hospital. His advice was eagerly sought, however, by many other institutions. He was consulting obstetrician to the Kings County Hospital, consulting gynecologist to the Bushwick Hospital, consulting physician to St. Mary's Hospital, to the Swedish Hospital, German Hospital and St. Christopher's Hospital.

He was a voluminous writer, but when he wrote he always had something to communicate to his brethren which was worth while. He was perhaps best known as editor and contributor of Jewett's System of Obstetrics, which reached three editions.

His contributions to various journals were many and varied.

His latest paper was a masterly and philosophical disquisition in the principles which should govern repair of the pelvic floor and outlet for uterine and vesical prolapse.

Dr. Jewett was not only a great obstetrician and gynecologist, but a highly accomplished physician as well. He was versed in modern methods, whether of diagnosis or treatment, and never took a backward or laggard step.

He will be greatly missed in the community which he blessed with his presence.

There is no gap in life which time does not bridge, no man so important or so necessary to a community that one must say his loss is irreparable. Art is long indeed and time is fleeting, but we shall not soon again see in our midst a man so well rounded or informed in all branches of learning, so eminent in one. Charles Jewett died in the fulness of years, and the fulness of power. He had never been more useful to the community or more honored than when death took him.

Dealing almost wholly with the material part of man our profession is prone to scepticism. We find that a little vessel has ruptured

within the skull and if death does not come speedily we witness the wreck of a great intellect, the warping and contracture of all the faculties of the mind and so we say when the end comes: This is the end. The clay has returned to clay. Death is but annihilation. But is it? We, all of us, believe in the doctrine of the conservation of energy. Is this to be applied alone to the dull atoms and molecules of chemistry? Are these to survive in other forms and the soul of man to perish?

Are the miracles of self denial and abnegation which every physician witnesses but irresponsible forms of molecular motion? Did the martyrs indeed die in vain, for if death ends all, of what avail are all these, since they are but the product of cellular activities which alternately perish and renew their substance from day to day until the force which we call life ceases to actuate them?

Osler some years ago delivered a lecture at Cambridge on "Immortality" and came to the conclusion that it could not be proved. If, however, we depended on mathematical proof for our beliefs, we should believe nothing save the propositions of Euclid, for those only are capable of absolute proof. Life is made up of phenomena and experiences. Concerning the phenomena we can formulate certain laws from which in our experience the phenomena do not depart. Of the ultimate cause we are all of us as ignorant as little children, as ignorant as we are of the source of life and love and our reasoning power. Are the most precious things of life, the things which the individual, the family and the nation hold most dear born of a few grey cells and 95 per cent. water? Who can really believe that and read history? If that be true, then justice is a mockery and for society to punish the criminal is merely an act of insensate rage, as one who revengefully kicks a stone which has caused him to stumble.

"I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;
Not only cunning casts in clay;
Let Science prove we are and then
What matters Science unto men."

So sang one of England's greatest poets, a true seer. So says that still, small voice which ever whispers in the inmost chambers of our hearts. No mere negations of science will ever silence that voice. Life is but a chill grey mist at best. Who would quench the one light which beams through the vapors which enshroud us? For unnumbered ages all the races of the sons of man have followed the Gleam.

Said Socrates, the wisest of the ancients before he drank of the cup:

"Wherefore be of good cheer about death and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death."

A. T. B.