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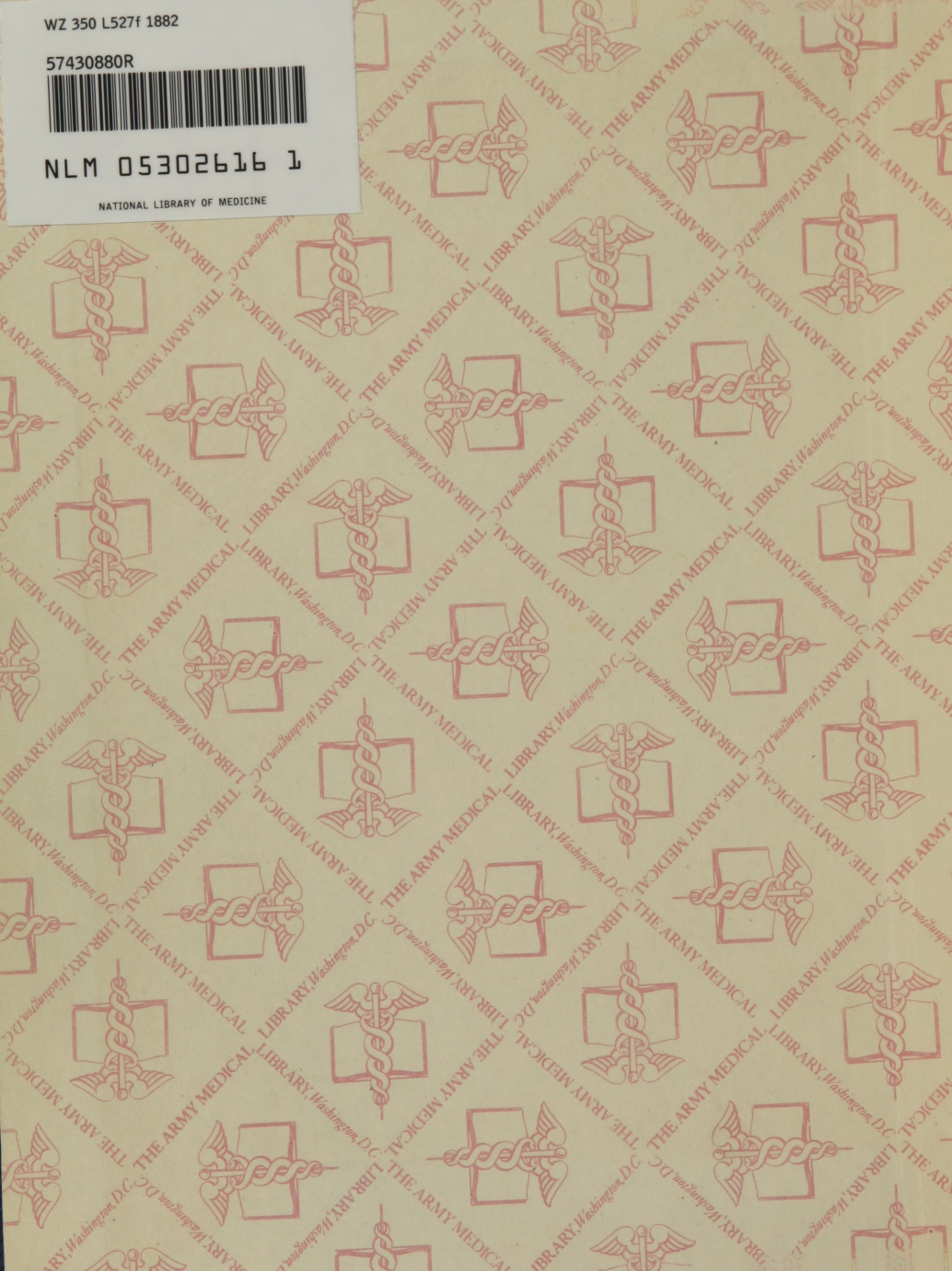
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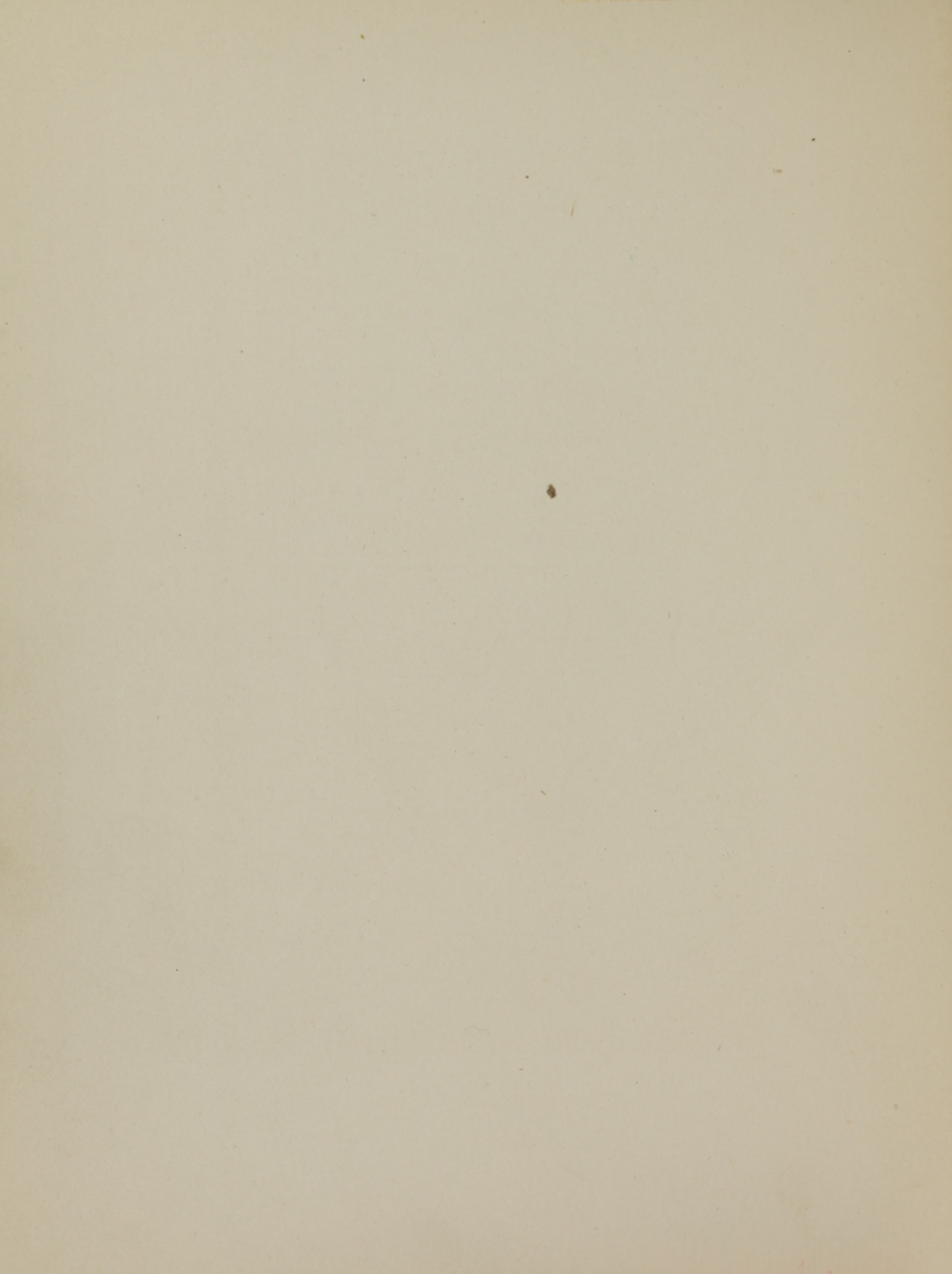
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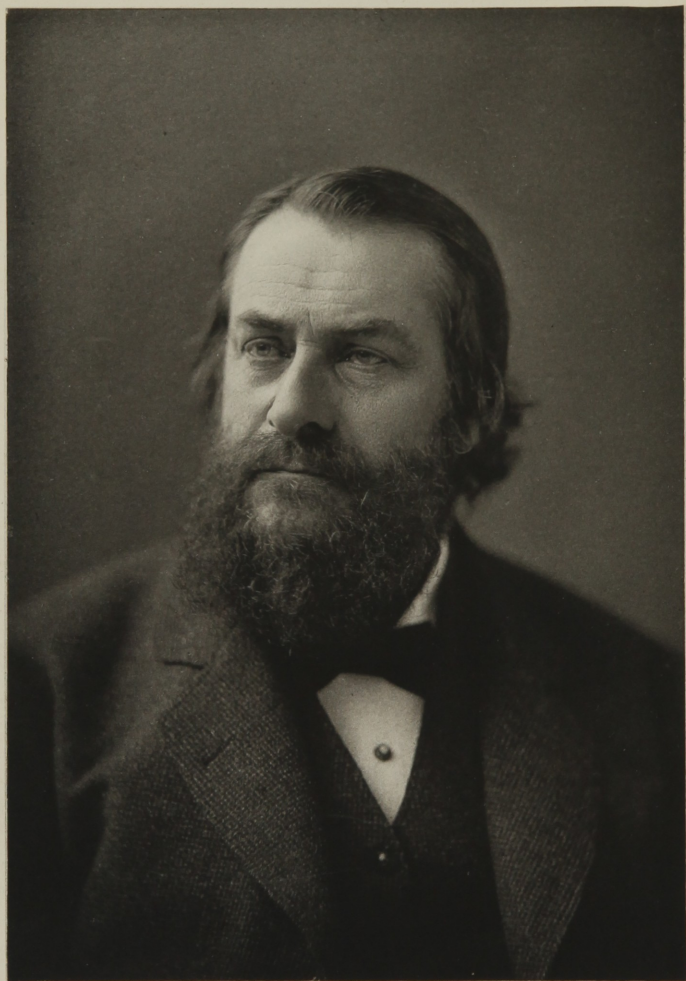
Mr Charles E Smith

with the author's kind regards

Christmas 1883.

A FAIRY TALE.





Joseph Leidy, M. D.

A FAIRY TALE

WRITTEN FOR, AND FIRST READ TO

Allie, Joseph Jr., and Clarence Leidy,

AT A DINNER GIVEN TO

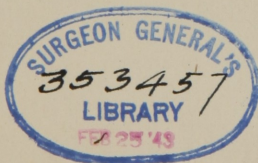
PROF. JOSEPH LEIDY, M.D., 1823-91

President of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

September 9th, 1882.

ON THE

FIFTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTHDAY.



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FIFTY-NINE years ago, on a warm night of the early Autumn, a lovely, little, fair-haired, blue-eyed baby opened its eyes on the world, and, looking around, seemed to wonder very much how and when it came there.

And well might it wonder, for here it was, just on the border of the old City of Philadelphia, the observed of all observers, a grave old doctor, a thoughtful young father, a fussy

old nurse, and last, and best of all, a dear, kind and loving mother.

It was "a wonderful baby," they all said, so fair and yet so rosy, so little and yet so plump, so good-natured and so happy.

"It has a great way of peerin' round," said the old nurse, "seems to want to see every thing, how it looks at them flowers on the curtains; reckon it wants a little catnip and sugar!" And so the fussy old nurse bustles out of the room; and, after a time, the good old doctor goes his way, to care for other mothers and other babies. It seems a long time before the nurse returns, but, at last she does so, and the father kisses his wife and his baby, and takes his leave; and then a thoughtful young auntie, who has quietly come into the room, is dis-

missed, by the tyrant of a nurse, who tells her she wants "no young folks a-busyin' about in her room, at this time of night."

For it is now near midnight, and the young mother looks pale and weary, and even the little baby himself shows signs of sleeping. And so the wick is lowered, and the lamp is put in the chimney place, and baby is more closely wrapped in his little blanket, and, in a few minutes, all is quiet in the chamber.

An hour later and the fussy old nurse shows that a fussy nurse is not necessarily a good nurse, for she is now sound asleep in her high back rocking chair, and is snoring so loud that it is a wonder she don't waken herself with so much noise, so near to her ears! Perhaps it is the toddy she took, when she went for the catnip, that makes her sleep so soundly!

But the young mother, though she lay so quiet, was never wider awake than she then was. One pale, thin hand was stretched out toward her baby, and her feeble, but warm and loving heart was beating close to her child's. For, though she was young, she knew that her hold on life was a slight one, and all a mother's love seemed to well up afresh for her boy. And she thought of all the dangers and trials of life, and of the many snares which are set for little unwary and uncared for feet, and she almost wished that she might take her baby away with her to heaven.

While these sad thoughts pressed on her, she was suddenly conscious of a great change in her sick chamber. The moon, which had been shining brilliantly, passed under a cloud, and, in a

moment, a light of unearthly brightness shone on the window. A minute later and a troop of fairies, with Titania leading them, came sailing into the chamber.

“Out for the night, and we’ve stopped to see the baby,” said the youngest of them, a pert little fairy. “A baby! a boy baby!” whispered each one of them. “What shall we do for him?” said the Princess Titania. “Let’s take him home with us,” said the pert little fairy. “What, from that sweet young mother who is sleeping beside him?” “Quiet that old nurse with vapor of poppies!” Faster and faster beat the mother’s heart as she heard these strange words and voices, and then a dreamy drowsiness came over her, and she too sank into a slumber. Not a deep sleep to make her unconscious, but

one that was quiet and restful, and yet allowed her to see and to hear them.

“Hand me the baby,” said the Princess Titania, and four of her ladies raised up the young sleeper.

“Pretty and dear little fellow, let each give him her blessing; speak quickly, my maidens, what will you do for him?”

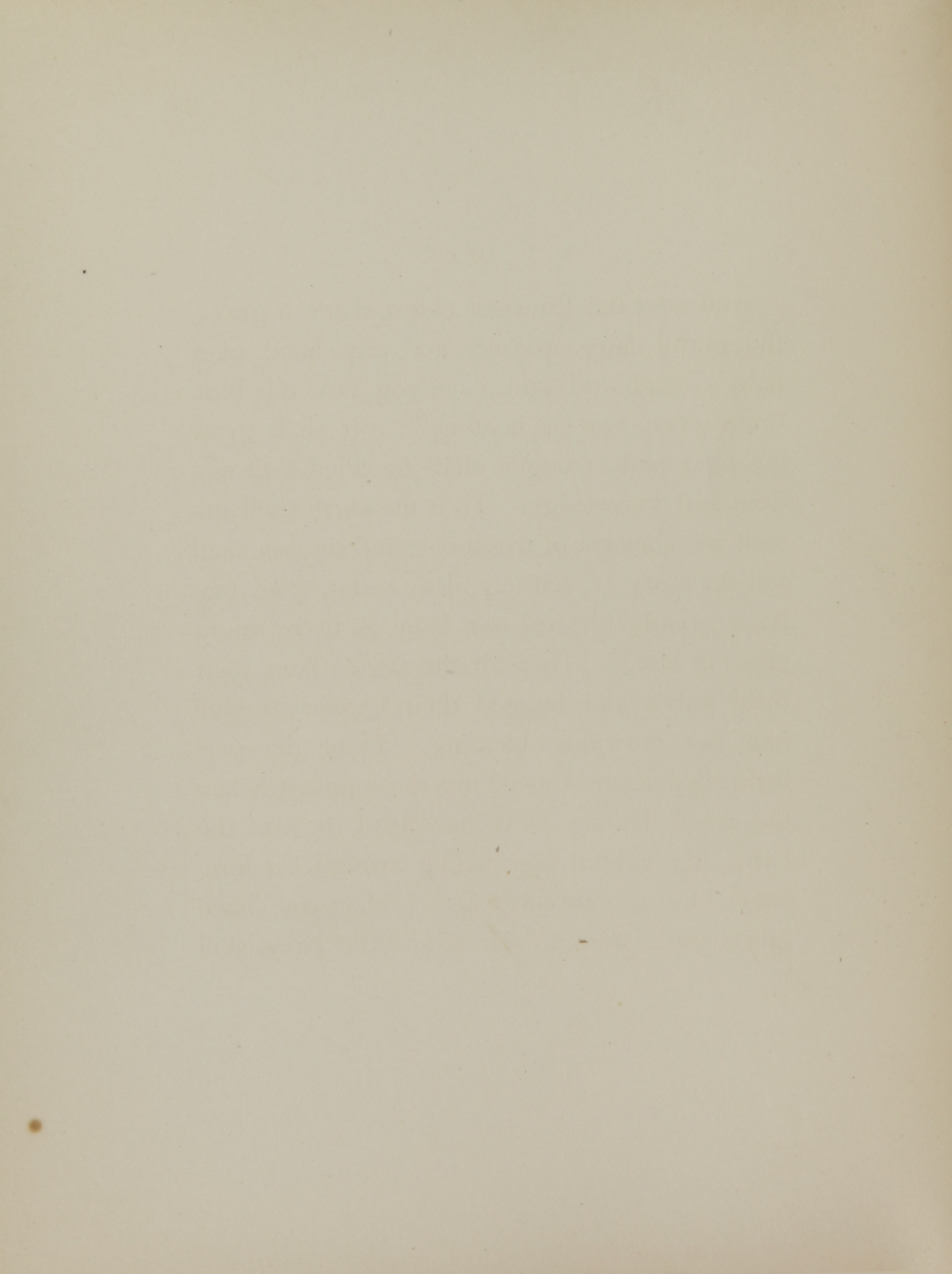
“I,” said the youngest, as she kissed his dear little fingers, “give him great skill with pen and with pencil.” “And I,” said another, “give him manly beauty.” “And I,” said another, as she touched his pretty little ear, “give him the best kind of hearing—nothing but good shall he hear of his fellows.” “And I,” said another, “bless this dear little tongue—words of rare wisdom shall always come from it.” “And,”

said another, as she bent to kiss them, "these little lips shall watch over and guard it, never a harsh or unkind word come from it."

"Tenderly open those little blue eyes, my sister," said the Princess, "give them thy blessing, such as thou only can give."

Then a sweet, but grave fairy, said, "with these eyes he shall see what man never before has seen; floras and faunas within and without; wings of grasshoppers and how they can move them, worms of the earth, of man and of cattle, fossils whose years are numbered by millions, and to them jelly like drops shall grow to rare beauty."

"Surely dear sister you speak but in riddles!" "Never, dear Princess, I speak very truly; this is my gift, and I give it him freely."



And next the Princess' eldest sister, a grave, thoughtful fairy, passed her tiny hand over baby's head, and said, "see you, how this little brain even now is beating!" "It shall grow stronger and stronger, shall be filled with wisdom and knowledge. To it the earth shall unlock her choicest of treasures; and the sea shall tell its story." "Surely, dear sister, you, too, have greatly blessed our baby, is there aught else for him?" Then all the fairies bent their little knees and begged their Queen to give him her crowning blessing. Even the pert little fairy seemed awed for the moment, when the royal Titania bent her head to kiss the baby, her golden hair falling around his forehead like an aureole, and said, "you have given, my sisters, to our dear little baby, skill

of hand, keenness of eye, rare gift of speech, wisdom surpassing; all these he shall have, and now we give him our blessing. Again her royal lips touched those of the sleeping child, and sweetly and softly, like strains of heavenly music, came the words, "we give thee, our darling, both now and forever, a kind, tender, loving heart, always faithful to friends, always gentle towards the erring. Men may praise the work of thy hand, of thy eye, of thy brain, but they shall honor still more thy heart."

* * * * *

"When shall we see our baby again?" said the pert little fairy! "*In fifty-nine fairy days,*" said the Princess Titania, "in the Park called Logan, at midnight, far from the noise and the dust of the City."

There was a rustle, as of forest leaves, for the fairies were now moving, four of them had placed the baby on the arm of his mother, and then, in a moment, they were all gone together.

The old nurse slumbered 'till a cough came from baby's mother, when she jumped up so suddenly as to overturn her rocking chair, "ugh! what a strange smell in the room, I guess it must be the catnip!"

But the baby's mother knew that the perfume was the fragrance of lillies, of rose buds and of violets, and a sweet refreshing sleep came quickly to her, for she knew too, that her baby was now blessed and cared for forever.

Fifty-nine "fairy days" ended last evening, for a year of man's life is but a day with the fairies. All through the evening were strange fireworks of lightning, but promptly at midnight, in the Park called Logan, under the shadow of the great Academy, came the Princess Titania and her fairies all with her.

Every leaf of the trees had been washed by the rain drops, and sparkled with dew every blade of the green grass.

The grasshoppers were there in force, spreading out their wings as though they were eagles, the crickets were chirping as if hired for the evening, while hundreds of fire-flies came out with their torches.

"And now," said the pert little fairy, grown no wiser by years—"and now of our baby—

pray what has he done for us." "Tell me fair ladies," said Titania, "all that you know of him." Then out spoke the little fairy,

"I gave him skill with pen and pencil—right well has he used it."

"And I," said another, *"gave him manly beauty and long has he held it."*

"I gave him kind hearing and well has he kept it."

"I gave him sight and his microscope knows it."

"I gave him wisdom and all the world honors it."

"Prove me all this," said Titania, "and I shall believe it."

In a moment there was a blaze of light, far surpassing that of noonday, and the great

Academy, across the street, seemed alive with flame. And then, oh wondrous sight! a new life came to all that was within it. Out of their places, out of their cases, from closet, from book-shelf,—everywhere—they came.

The fairies are a brave little people, or they would have been terribly frightened at what followed.

First came the great *Hadrosaurus*, his years quite a million—“*I am his servant, and proud of my master.*”

Next came the *Megalonides* and *Megatheria*, huge creatures, in size like to elephants; then great troops of *Wild Horses*, and herds of *Wild Oxen*,

“*We were long dead, and he gave us new being.*”

Then, little *White Ants*, all their parasites with them.

Then beautiful banners with rare pictures on them; great groups of *Polyyps*, the *Corallium* leading them. Then wonderful *Sponges*; and *Floras* and *Faunas*; delicate *Rhizopods*, once mere drops of jelly; and then great leaves of Book Lore, all having baby's name on them.

And there too, looking down on this vast procession, were the shades of departed great men, *Morton*, *Jackson*, *Wood*, *Casson*, *Gliddon*, *Conrad*, and many others.

"He is our friend, and proud are we of him."

"Are you not satisfied," said the fairies to their Queen. She raised her hand as if to speak, but in a moment there came the shout of many voices—voices of the living—voices of the dead.

"We never knew him to harbor an unkind thought towards anyone."

"He is always more thoughtful for others than for himself."

"He could not do a harsh or cruel act."

And then there rung out on the still night air a chorus of rich, young, manly voices, with these words,

*"Proud of his brain and all the wisdom there,
Proud of his hand, and all that hand has done,
Proud of his eye, whose wonders thousands share,
We LOVE our Leidy, for his heart alone.
God bless and keep him, through each coming year,
Boast of our nation, Science's hope and pride,
Fairies have blest him on life's pathway here,
Angels shall greet him, on the other side!"*

There was a pause, and then Titania, raising her hand, said, *"we are satisfied with our baby;"*

and then all the fairies said, "*we are satisfied with our baby;*" and then they all danced around their Princess, singing a sweet little fairy song, and then, in a moment, the fairies were gone, all was quiet in the Academy, the lights were gone, everything back in its place again, everything as before, save that the wondrous light, which had so lately lighted it, had traced in ineffaceable lines, on every stone of the building, the features of him, who was once the fairies' baby, but who is now the Academy's President, and its pride!

* * * * *

The Fairies are gone—the Baby is gone—
but oh, dear children, the Man—the Man is
here,

Behold the Man!

JOSEPH LEIDY, M.D.,

President of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, etc.

Joseph Leidy, born in Philadelphia, September 9th, 1823. His parents natives of Pennsylvania, his ancestors Germans from the valley of the Rhine. His taste for natural history was exhibited at an early age, even as a boy collecting minerals and plants. Began study of medicine in the autumn of 1840, graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1844, presenting as his thesis an essay on "The Comparative Anatomy of the Eye of Vertebrated Animals." In 1846 he was appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy in the Franklin Medical College of Philadelphia, and gave his first course of lectures on microscopic anatomy in the spring of 1849. In 1852 he lectured as substitute for Dr. Horner during the ill health of the latter, and on the death of Dr. Horner was appointed Professor of Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania, A.D. 1853. In 1871 was appointed Professor of Natural History in Swarthmore College.

In 1844 he prepared an article on the Special Anatomy of the Terrestrial Mollusks of United States. His first published communication entitled "Notes on White Pond, Warren County, N. J.," was presented to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences in October, 1845, in which year he was, a short time before, elected a member. In 1846 he was elected a Curator of the Academy. Communications from him to Academy were in these early years of his membership given in rapid succession: the anatomy of spectrum femoratum, new species of entozoa, the mechanism which closes the wings of grasshoppers, and new species of planarian worms were among those claiming his attention. In October, 1841, he recorded the occurrence of the trichina in the hog, an observation which led Leuckhart to trace the development of trichina

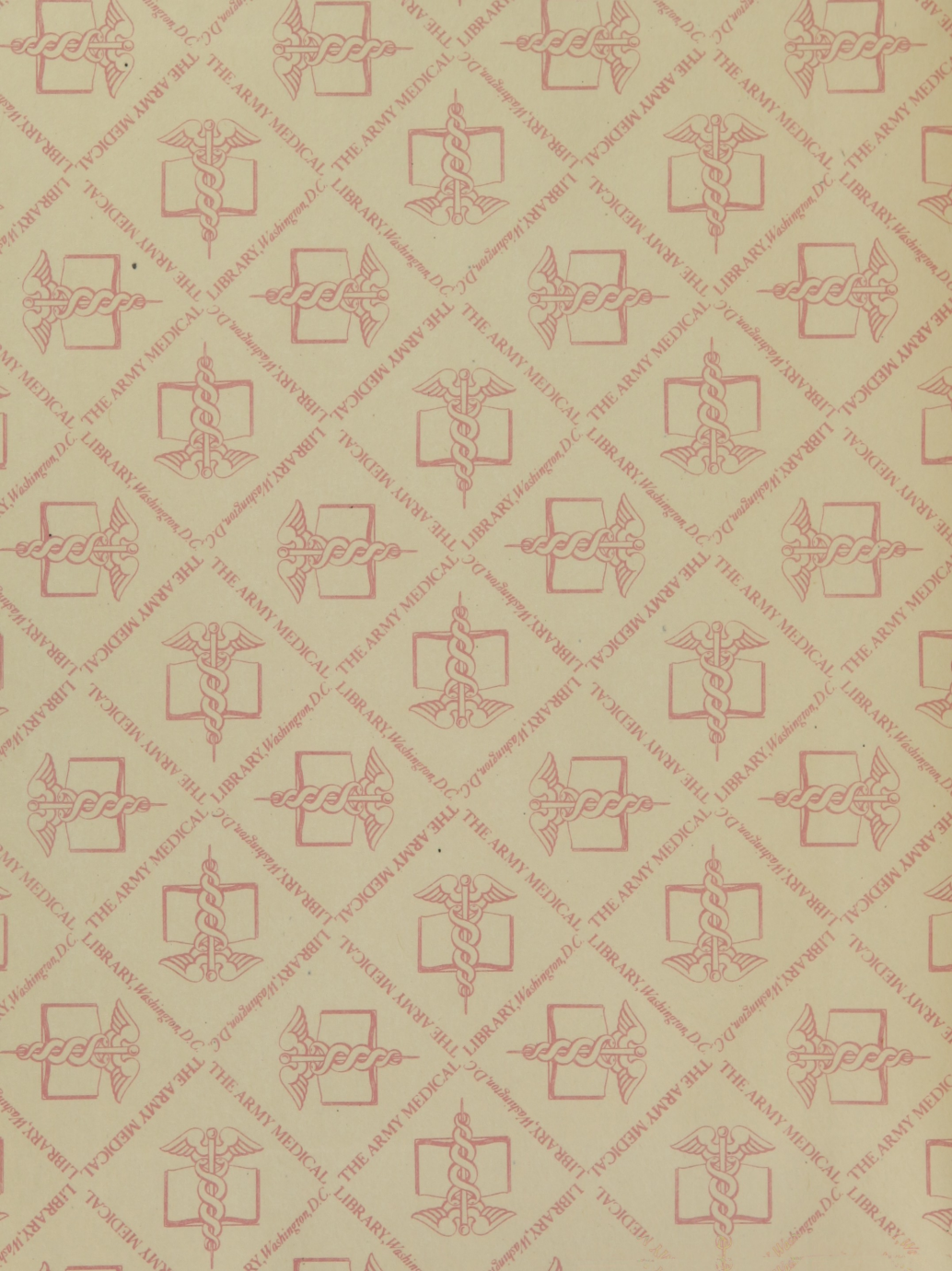
in the hog and man. In 1847 he published his first paleontological paper "On the Fossil Horse of America," establishing clearly the prehistoric existence of this animal in America. Numerous papers followed on minute human and comparative anatomy, the discovery of many new forms of entozoa and entophita, contributions to Helminthology, a beautifully illustrated monograph entitled "A Flora and Fauna within Living Animals." Other papers of paleontological interest, including an elaborate work on the "Ancient Fauna of Nebraska."

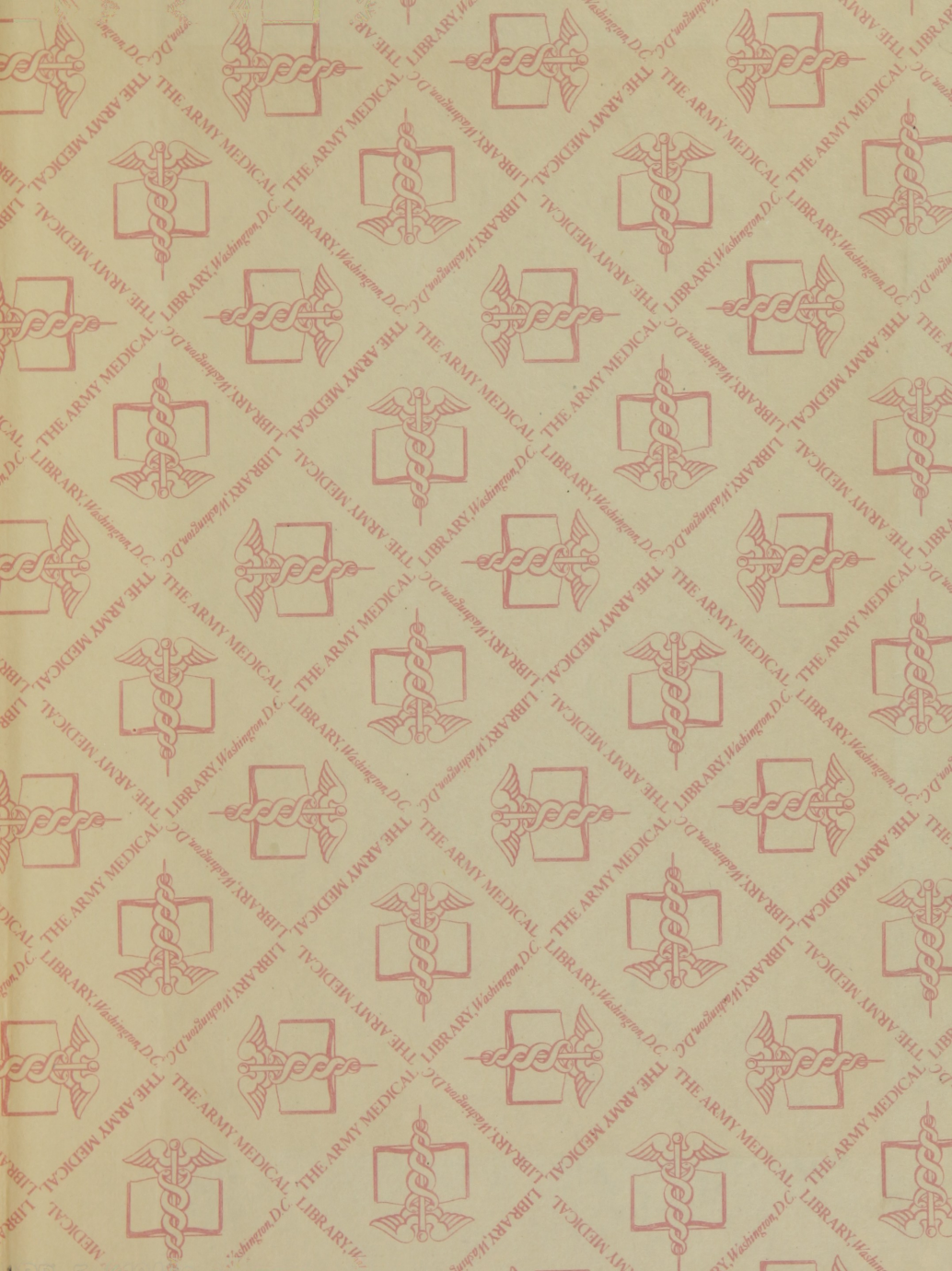
Between the years 1854 and 1872 seventy-two communications of a scientific character were published by him, chiefly in the proceedings of the Academy. In 1869 and 1873 appeared his remarkable memoirs entitled "The Extinct Mammalian Fauna of Dakota and Nebraska" and "The Extinct Vertebrate Fauna of the Western Territories." Of later years Dr. Leidy has turned his attention to the fresh water Rhizopods of North America, and has published under the auspices of the U. S. Geological Survey, a superb monograph on this subject. In 1880, the Boston Society of Natural History awarded Dr. Leidy the Walker Prize of 1879, "for his prolonged investigations and discoveries in zoology and paleontology," and in consequence of their extraordinary merit, the sum of \$1000 was given.

An interesting monograph on the Parasites of the White Ants, and a communication made to the Academy on "Rotifera without Rotatory Organs" have been among his later papers.

Dr. Leidy was elected President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, December, 1881.

The respect in which his talents are held by his fellow-members is only surpassed by their love for him as a man.—*Abridged from Popular Science Monthly* (EDWARD J. NOLAN, M.D.), Vol. 16, p. 684, *et seq.*





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