THE LIFE, CHARACTER AND DEATH

OF

DR. BENJAMIN HENRY KIBLER

by

AN INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE

Introduction and Annotations

by

Louis Kibler, Ph.D.
The information in the Introduction and the footnotes may be freely used for educational and nonprofit purposes. The text of the biography itself is in the public domain.
Introduction

In the summer of 2001 I was attempting to find information on my Kibler ancestors in the Page Public Library in Luray, Virginia, when I came upon a typed transcription of a work published anonymously in Baltimore in 1867: *The Life, Character and Death of Dr. Benjamin Henry Kibler*. There was no indication of who had prepared the typescript nor, in the absence of the original, was there any way to judge its accuracy. Moreover, the typist had worked from an incomplete document: he or she stated that the work was copied from “a 22 page booklet . . . I believe the last page to booklet [sic] was missing.” As I later learned, there were two pages missing.

Although I searched for a complete copy of the booklet in many libraries as well as on the internet, I had no success until I learned through Dennis Miller’s online Kibler Family Association site, “Some Descendants of Heinrich Henry Kibler and Wife Mary of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia” (http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/1622012), that Colleen Kibler possessed a copy handed down through her family. She made a digital copy of the work and generously shared it with others on Ancestry.com. I am indebted and most grateful both to her and to Mr. Miller as well as to the staff of the Page Public Library.

When I compared the digitized original with the Page Public Library typescript, I found that there were few errors in the copy. Some punctuation marks were missing, single paragraphs were sometimes divided into two or more units, and the typist had omitted one line of text. On the whole, however, there were no gross inaccuracies. The transcript that I am presenting here has been carefully copied from and compared with a digital version of the complete original booklet from 1867. This brief work consists of twenty-four pages minimally protected by fragile blue paper wrappers. On the title page is handwritten “W. H. Kibler,” possibly the name of the original owner.

The anonymous author of the work calls himself “An Intimate Acquaintance.” There is little doubt, however, that Dr. Kibler’s biographer is his oldest brother, Jeremiah. In his preface the author states that he was “acquainted, familiarly,” with Benjamin and that they were associated “in the varied social and domestic departments of life.” “Domestic” suggests family life, as does the word “familiarly,” one of whose meanings is “of or pertaining to a family.” The writer also identifies himself as the teacher who taught Benjamin “his first lessons in his school-boy days”; later the reader learns that Jeremiah organized the Mount Asa school and taught there for several years and that it was in this school that Benjamin began his education in 1840 (p. 7). The biographer again recalls the central role that this school played in Benjamin’s life when, in the summer of 1859, the doctor and Jeremiah (identified in the text only as the “oldest brother”) go hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains. From the heights they look down on “Mt. Asa, the old school house in which the Doctor learned to repeat the letters of the alphabet” (p. 13). The writer, then, and Benjamin’s first teacher and his brother Jeremiah are certainly one and the same.
person. Finally, the lengthy and minutely detailed descriptions of the brothers’ hike in the mountains could scarcely have been written by anyone who was not present—and the only ones on the trip were the two Kibler brothers.

It is difficult to understand why Jeremiah was so reluctant to put his name to the biography of his brother. Perhaps he did not wish to distinguish himself from his other siblings. Or there may have been a conventional avoidance of publicity common to the austere Germanic community; my grandfather, for example, born and reared in Page County, reportedly maintained that one’s name should appear publicly only twice—once in a birth announcement and for a second and final time in an obituary. Similar self-effacement is evident in Benjamin’s attitude toward photographic portraits. His biographer writes that he had always been “opposed to the fashionable custom of passing his portrait around among his friends” (p. 19); it is only in extremis that Benjamin agrees to a brother’s appeal to have his photograph taken. A third reason may also be considered. Jeremiah held his brother in the highest esteem. By concealing his kinship, perhaps he hoped that the events of Dr. Kibler’s life would shine forth with a more objective light. Certainly, emphasizing on the title page the prestigious name of the Rev. A. Poe Boude would contribute to this effect. However obscure the reasons for his desire to remain anonymous, it is quite clear that Jeremiah did not want his name to appear as author of the booklet.

The oldest child of Martin Kibler and Dorothy Rickard, Jeremiah was born 7 January 1818 in what was at that time Shenandoah County; Page County did not exist until 1831, when it was formed from Shenandoah and Rockingham counties. At birth his name was listed in “The Early Records of the Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Page County, Virginia” as Jeremias Kubler, reflecting the German tradition in much of the Shenandoah Valley during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. His sponsors were Georg and Catherine Schenk, and he was baptized on 3 May 1818. Although his parents were Lutheran, Jeremiah at some point joined the Methodist Church. Bethany Veney, a slave in the household of Jeremiah’s half-brother David, recounts in The Narrative of Bethany Veney, A Slave Woman how “Jerry Kibler and his sister, Sally had been to a camp meeting, and got ‘religion.’ They came home determined their religion should help others and through their influence, this little [Mt. Asa] schoolhouse had been fitted up with pulpit and seats, and now there was to be a series of revival meetings held there. . . . Master Jerry and Miss Sally were very kind to me and tried to show me the way to be a Christian.” In subsequent references to him she calls Jeremiah her “old Methodist friend” (p. 28) and her “good Methodist friend and class-leader” (p. 43). The bond between them must have been strong, for Jeremiah traveled to New England after the Civil War.

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1 Typescript in the Page Public Library. Translated from the German by the Rev. William J. Finck, D. D. Page 13. Mrs. Shenk is probably Jeremiah’s first cousin, Sarah Catherine Kibler, the daughter of Martin’s brother Philip and Catherine Snyder.

2 Boston: [George H. Ellis], 1889, p. 15.
and spent several days visiting Bethany Veney in Worcester, Massachusetts (p. 43). He died in Page County 13 November 1881.

Jeremiah’s Methodist affiliation was undoubtedly an important factor in his seeking the help of Reverend Boude in the preparation of the biography. Although it is not possible to determine exactly what modifications the churchman brought to the booklet, it is likely that his contributions were primarily stylistic and that Jeremiah drew upon the minister’s more advanced education and greater writing experience. The Rev. Adam Poe Boude was a well-known minister in Page and several surrounding counties. According to his obituary in the Page News and Courier of 5 December 1919, he was born in Mount Clifton, Shenandoah County, Virginia, and his tombstone in Graves Chapel Cemetery in Stanley, Virginia, gives his year of birth as 1835. Entering the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Church in 1857, Rev. Boude rose to become a prominent elder of the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.3

The author completed the biography a little more than two and a half years after the death of Dr. Kibler: his preface carries the date of 1 January 1863. At that time, however, Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley were struggling in the midst of the Civil War and harsh economic conditions. The little biography would have to await more peaceful—and more prosperous—times before John W. Woods printed it in Baltimore in 1867.4

In the following transcript of Dr. Kibler’s biography the boldface page numbers between brackets refer to the pagination of the original booklet. I have also maintained throughout the biography the punctuation and the spelling of the original. These include variant and less common spellings (enterprize, ecstacy), archaic forms (perturbated ‘perturbed,’ engulfed ‘engulfed’), spellings common in Britain and other Commonwealth nations but now rare in the United States (sceptre, draught, Saviour, centre), misspelled foreign words (boquet instead of bouquet), anomalies (overwhiming ‘overwhelming’), and archaic conventions of capitalization: when naming a specific county, for example, the author never capitalizes the word “county,” e.g., “Page county”. Finally, whenever possible, I have entered notes for persons, places, or events that may not be familiar to all readers.

Livonia, Michigan
December 2012

3James Henry Miller and Maude Vest Clark, History of Summers County from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time ([Hinton, WV?], 1908), pp. 700-701.
4Woods was an established job printer in Baltimore at least as early as 1829, when he printed Edgar Allan Poe’s Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems for the publishers Hatch and Dunning. He continued his trade for at least fifty more years.
THE LIFE, CHARACTER AND DEATH OF DR. BENJAMIN HENRY KIBLER

by AN INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE

Edited by Rev. A. POE BOUDE

Baltimore. . . John W. Woods, Printer
No. 202 Baltimore Street
1867
PREFACE

The writer being acquainted, familiarly, with the life, character and death of Dr. B. H. Kibler, consents, at the request of many of his relatives and friends, to write a brief biography of him; hoping to be kindly favored with the overshadowing mantle of charity, and with that indulgence which is justly due one whose descriptive powers are so limited as to fall far short of the task requisite to produce a just tribute of honor to the memory of one so eminently distinguished in his profession, as well as in all the social and political departments of life, and before whose bright vision the honors of renown flashed in such bright and vivid colors.

The writer was associated with Dr. Kibler in the varied social and domestic departments of life; taught him his first lessons in his school-boy days; saw him rise to manhood and to eminence in the medical profession; watched the progress of that disease which terminated his life; and now believing that his merits, as well as the urgent demands, call for this publication, the task is begun.

That we, his surviving friends, may imitate what was great and good in his character, is the sincere wish of

THE WRITER

Luray, Va., Jan. 1st, 1863.
BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

Dr. B. H. Kibler was born on Pass Run, in the county of Page, and state of Virginia, on the 29th of October, 1829. His parentage, (as the name indicates,) were from Germany; and emigrated about the year 1764. His grandfather, Henry Kibler, was a distinguished house-carpenter, who settled with his family, on the western slope of the Blue Ridge, in what was then Shenandoah county, Virginia. His expenditures during his voyage upon the ocean, which lasted more than six months, and the additional expenses incurred in moving his family to their new home, so reduced his funds that he was at once obliged to leave home in search of employment. The country being newly colonized, great political excitement prevailed. The celebrated stamp act had just passed the British Parliament and had excited in the hearts of the American people the most bitter indignation, and called forth the most urgent appeals of a Patrick Henry, and others, for redress. The native Indians, too, were lurking in ambush, eager to be avenged of the wrongs done them by the Colonists; and many were the old man’s hair-breadth escapes from the gory hands and dripping tomahawks of the red man, as he traversed the country in search of employment. A single incident will serve to show what dangers he was exposed to. Upon one occasion, having earned a few pounds, he started to his home. Mounted upon a fine fleet horse,
he made considerable progress the first day, during which nothing remarkable occurred until the
dusky shades of evening drew around him. He had yet more than twenty miles to ride before
reaching an English settlement. His horse was hungry and jaded, and he was quite hungry and
tired; and as he rode on, contemplating with gloomy forebodings, the dangers of the approaching
night, he suddenly came upon an encampment of about fifty Indians. The Indians immediately
surrounded him and invited him, in their own native tongue, to [page 6] alight and partake of the
repast, which they were then preparing at their camp-fires. He knew that if he accepted their
invitation he would be detained and scalped before the next morning; and he knew, too, that an
attempt to escape would be attended with almost equal danger; and thinking the earliest
opportunity the most favorable, he sought to divert their attention from him for a moment that he
might make the trial. In order to this [sic] he requested them first to furnish him with a pipe and
tobacco that he might enjoy a smoke of their “good old American” while considering their
proposition. They immediately dropped the reins of the bridle, which they had held all the
while, and hastened to the camp fire to prepare the favor, when he applied spur and whip to his
horse, and the whole company of Indians set out in full chase after him, making the forests ring
with their hideous yells. Tomahawks were hurled at him in rapid fury, and arrows were flying
thickly around him. Two very tall and fleet Indians ran by his side for more than two miles, and
several times attempted to seize his bridle reins, but the race was too long, they began to lag
behind; but for ten miles, or more, from the point at which the race commenced, he could
distinctly hear the frightful yelling of the savages. He reached the English settlement about 1
o’clock the next morning. Many other incidents of similar character might be related in
connection with the history of this venerable Virginia pioneer; but we pass on.

Martin Kibler, a son of Henry Kibler, of whom I have already spoken, and father of the
subject of this memoir, at the age of 24, was married to a Miss Comer, and settled on a farm
which was tendered him by his father. It was situated on Pass Run, three miles from Sandy
Hook, and three and a half miles from Luray, the present county seat of Page. This farm
contained about three hundred acres; but in a wild and uncultivated state. Providence smiled on
them, and they lived happily and prosperously together for more than fifteen years, during which
time seven sons and two daughters were born unto them. One of the sons died in infancy. The
other six sons and two daughters still survive. His wife’s health began to decline, and in
defiance of all the medical skill which could be applied, she sunk rapidly away under the most
malignant form of dropsy. She died in the year 1816. The condition of his domestic affairs was
such as to render a second marriage prudent and necessary. Accordingly, in the following year,

9 “Good old American” apparently means genuine native tobacco.
10 Martin (24 June 1772-5 September 1852) married Mary Comer (1772?-8 May 1816) on 8 May 1794. Martin
must have been about twenty-two years old, not twenty-four as the biographer has it.
11 Sandy Hook is a projection of land created by one of the bends of the Shenandoah River. It lies between the
mouths of Big Spring Branch and Hawksbill Creek. Luray was established 21 August 1812, and became the seat
of Page County when it was constituted in 1831.
12 The children of Martin and Mary living at the time of writing are: Catherine (1795-1881), Jacob (1796-1876),
Vincent (ca. 1797-1884), Philip (1799-1891), David (ca. 1803-1873), Susanna (ca. 1804-1861), Isaac Newton (ca.
1807-1881), and William (1809-1886).
he was joined in marriage to a Miss Richard, daughter of Dr. Benjamin Richard, of Rockingham county, Va. This union was also blessed, in that she proved herself to be an affectionate wife, a kind and loving mother and a true friend. As the fruits of this union, they were blessed with five sons and two daughters. The youngest son, Benjamin, is the subject of this memoir.

HIS EARLY TRAINING

Dr. B. H. Kibler’s parentage, as we have stated, were of German descent, and possessed all those sectional and peculiar notions of life which are characteristic of the German people. Whilst they entertained the most profound reverence for the Supreme Being and His Holy Word, as well as the moral law, &c., as taught them in the “Larger Catechism,” and other productions of the Lutheran church, (to which profession they belonged,) they, [sic] nevertheless regarded a classical education as one of the wholly unnecessary, as well as one of the moral polluting acquirements of the age. Hence, Benjamin, the youngest son of Martin and Dorothy Kibler was limited in the means and opportunities requisite to the acquirement of an education beyond the limits of their own peculiar and restricted notions.

Jeremiah, the oldest son by the second marriage, impressed with the importance of an education, joined a school for twelve months, during which time he qualified himself to take charge of a common country school, which he soon organized and conducted at Mt. Asa, on the banks of the beautiful and romantic Pass Run. Here he taught for several years, with some advantage to himself, and such success in teaching the elements of an education as to gain the approbation of his patrons. In his school, in the year 1840, Benjamin laid the first foundation stone of that science which in after years, so eminently distinguished him, and at the same time reflected the highest dignity and honor upon his profession.

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13Martin’s second wife was Dorothy, also known as Dolly (15 October 1792-19 July 1860). They were married 4 April 1817. Although her maiden name is spelled “Richard” in the biography, it is more commonly found as “Rickard” or “Rickart.” Her parents, Benjamin (1765-1827) and Margaret (b. 1768), had six other children, one of whom, Elizabeth, later married Martin’s son David.

14Benjamin’s siblings are: Jeremiah, Abraham Isaac (1819-1879), Sarah Ann (1822-1894), Andrew Jackson (1824-1896), Asher M. (1826-1870), and Louisa A. (1835-1919).

15Martin Luther composed two catechisms to serve as guides to religious instruction and knowledge. Both were published in 1529. The Small Catechism was written for uneducated people and for children. The Larger Catechism was intended for ministers and teachers, including parents instructing their children in Lutheran practice. The various parts centered on conduct, faith, prayer, and the sacraments.

16I have been unable to determine a more precise location of the Mt. Asa school. Since it is on Pass Run, visible from the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains (see page 13 of the biography), and was founded by Jeremiah, it is likely that the school was in the vicinity of Kimball, near the home of Martin, the father of Jeremiah and Benjamin. Although Bethany Veney in her narrative locates the Mt. Asa school in Powell’s Fort (p. 15), this does not seem likely: Powell’s Fort lies in Shenandoah County west of the Massanutten Mountain, more than ten miles from Kimball.
The rapid and almost unparalleled progress which this young genius made in his studies, soon discovered the most brilliant intellect, blended with an extraordinary ingenuity, which induced his father to take him from school and appoint him to a Mr. Cline of Front Royal, Va., a wagon-maker by trade, to acquire the art of wagon making.\(^1^7\)

Though naturally fond of any mechanical employment, his reflective mind seemed ill at ease in prospect of being circumscribed within the narrow limits of a wagon wheel, and his attention was directed to something else. He returned home and informed his father that he did not wish to learn that [page 8] trade. Without any unkind or coercive measures, his father consented to release him and allow him to select a business for himself in some other branch of mechanics. Benjamin, thinking, no doubt, that any arrangement of that kind would be but temporary, and that \textit{any change} would be a relief, suggested the saddler’s trade, to which his father cheerfully consented, and forthwith proceeded to the village of Luray to get him a situation of that kind; and having obtained one, he returned and informed Benjamin that a Mr. Crain, a distinguished harness maker, was anxious to procure the services of such a boy, and proposed to do all that he could to advance him in that business. Benjamin at once consented to go, and immediately set off to commence his new trade.

During his stay with Mr. Crain many little incidents occurred which might be interesting and instructive to the reader of this narrative but which we prudently omit. We, therefore, pass over a few years spent in Luray, by saying that his character in youth, as well as in manhood, was tender, forbearing, kind and affectionate, though he was sufficiently firm and courageous to stand up boldly in vindication of his rights and principles.

After the lapse of about two years Mr. Crain retired from business, and Benjamin returned to his father, flattering himself that he was a competent workman, and began by asking his friends to patronize him, and thus test his ability. But scarcely had he fitted up his shop, invested his stock and made the arrangements necessary to his success, than a new and more important enterprize elicited his attention, from which no remonstrances could divert his mind.

A Mr. Yates, of Rappahannock county, Va., introduced an English school in the immediate vicinity of his father’s premises, and Benjamin, aware of Mr. Yates’ competency as a teacher, soon had his whole mind bent upon spending a year in this school.\(^1^8\) Accordingly some time in

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\(^{17}\)Mr. Cline was a prominent wagonmaker. A Front Royal historian of the early 1800s described the local manufacturing business thus: “All the trades . . . were represented, but the most prominent and prosperous was the wagon manufacturing business: it gained such reputation that for thirty years the three shops of Messrs. Trout, Cline, Fort and later J.B. Petty found it difficult to meet the demand from the southern and western states” (cited in an Adobe Acrobat Document, cp-history.pdf available from http://www.warrencountyva.net or from http://www.hottubheavenproperties.com/history.html).

\(^{18}\)This is James A. Yates (d. 1858) who would later marry Benjamin’s younger sister, Louisa. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the schools of German-speaking communities in the Shenandoah Valley usually offered instruction in that language. Many if not most were affiliated with and very often organized by the church. Indeed, it appears that the principal aim of education was to enable young people to read church texts, many of which were not available to them in English. For example, the \textit{Book of Concord}, a compendium of Lutheran thought and
the year 1848, he entered the school and commenced his studies, which though opposed by many adverse interventions, he perseveringly continued in, until he became eminently renowned in all the arts and sciences pertaining to his profession.

Before the close of the scholastic year, (1848,) his father’s house was consumed by fire, from which Benjamin, as well as all the other members of the family, made a narrow escape. The fire began in a central closet and extended first to the middle doors, thus preventing the escape of the family. The flames had kindled upon their beds ere they were admonished of their danger. Benjamin’s bed was partly consumed when [page 9] the scorching flames admonished him to flee, which he attempted to do through the door, but found that it was well nigh consumed, and a thick volley of smoke and fire warded that point of escape; he was, therefore, forced to dash himself hastily out of a window. When the other members of the family had escaped, they hastily inquired “are we all safe?” Facts answered “No, no!” A little grand-son, who had visited the family the day before, was missing; a colored woman belonging to the family, rushed in through the smoke and flames, to the apartment where the little boy was quietly sleeping, and from which some of the family had just escaped, snatched him in her arms, and amid the shouts of applause from the whole family, rescued the little boy, with burning clothes and scorching temples, from the fury of the flames.

This sad event occurred on a cold bleak night in the month of February, when stern winter swayed unmolested his icy sceptre over the snow-clad earth. Thus the family was left without a home, without clothes, or anything to screen them from the piercing winds which whistled around. They fled from the fiery ruins as they retired at night, without a garment or a covering to shelter them from the pitiless blast.

The vast amount of combustibles which composed that ancient and timeworn residence, produced a flame so bright and towering as to gild the nocturnal heavens with a brightness like some aurora-borealis, and excited the attention of hundreds of citizens, who hastily assembled at the scene of conflagration, only in time to sympathize with the silver headed sage and matron, who were wringing their toil-worn hands with anguish and distress. But their sorrow was mixed with joy and thankfulness to Him through whose mercy the whole family had escaped the fiery fury of the burning mass, though they escaped with life only.

The warmhearted sympathies of friends and relatives were soon manifested in the bestowment of many of the comforts and necessaries of life; and also in the erection of an edifice

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document, did not appear in English until a translation of it was published in 1851 in New Market, Virginia (Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* [Charlottesville: U. of Virginia Press, 1969], pp. 138, 159-60). The Lutheran minister John George Schmucker distinguishes clearly the difference between German and English schools when he writes in 1813: “Our children should learn English, perfectly good English, but they also should learn German. . . . Send your children readily to German schools where they still study from hymns, prayer, Bible and catechism instead of the newspapers, history books and fables used in English schools” (cited in Wust, p. 161). Benjamin’s biographer specifically terms Yates’s school an “English” school, which suggests that instruction in Jeremiah’s school was probably in German.
upon the foundation of the “old castle,” whose walls were still firm as ever. About one hundred of the neighboring citizens were engaged in the erection of the new house; the dimensions of which were thirty by forty feet, and two stories high. In six weeks from the time the old house was burned the new one was nearly completed, and the aged couple and their family were invited to their new home.\footnote{The rebuilt Martin Kibler house still stands on Route 658, a few miles from Luray. In her excellent illustrated book, \textit{Old Homes of Page County, Virginia} (Luray: Lauck, 1962), Jennie Ann Kerkhoff describes the exterior thus: “On the banks of Pass Run in the Kimball section is the old Martin Kibler home . . . . The house is a tremendous frame structure with nine large rooms, large chimneys at both ends of the building and numerous large windows with the small panes so closely identified with older structures in this county. Large old boxwoods line the walk leading to the front porch, which extends along the entire front of the house” (p. 185).}

Still, however, a loss had been sustained which was irreparable. Their property consisting of household goods, bonds, money, &c., were all consumed; and as it was not insured, the loss was a total one, and estimated at $3,000.\footnote{It is difficult to determine the relative value of $3,000 in terms of today’s money. The Economic History Services, available on the Internet at http://eh.net/hmit/, provide several different methods of seeking approximate equivalents. For example, if one considers only the Consumer Price Index, then the purchasing power of $3,000 in 1850 would equal about $86,400 in 2010.}

Their new house must be furnished with at least the necessaries and comforts of life, and their pecuniary means of furnishing it were gone. They, however, set about the task with the mental and physical energy and vigor of youth. Benjamin suspended his studies to aid his aged father and mother in repairing the loss which they had sustained by the unfortunate fire, but resumed them some time in the year 1849. About the close of this year, or the beginning of the year 1850, his teacher, Mr. Yates, was married to his youngest sister,\footnote{The date of marriage is about one year early. James Yates and Louisa were married on 8 January 1851 (Page County Marriages 1831-1939, transcribed by Judy Campbell from Marriage Records located at Clerk’s Office in Luray, Va. Posted on Internet Jan. 5, 2000).} after which Benjamin remained at home with his parents. His father’s health now began to fail, and the infirmities of age, together with the misfortunes of life, were pressing heavily upon him. Benjamin’s presence and society was a source of comfort to his parents in their declining years. His attention to their wants, his obedience to their requirements, and his devotion to their general interests rendered him doubly dear to them. His attention to his father during his last illness was marked with unusual kindness and affection; and when, on the evening of the 5th of September, 1852, it was announced that his father was dying, no heart could have been more completely overwhelmed with anguish and distress than was that of this devoted boy. He now felt much more attached to his mother than ever before; and around her he clustered and entwined his most ardent affections. One of his chief concerns was to make her comfortable and happy; and this led him to consider the importance of choosing some business which would enable him to take care of an aged and infirm mother, and at the same time to procure a livelihood for himself. Having acquired considerable knowledge of the branches of an English education, and being endowed with more than ordinary mental capacity, the acquisition of almost any kind of knowledge was a comparatively easy task. The Medical profession was suggested to him; and believing his cast of mind peculiarly adapted to it, he determined to direct his attention to it. He commenced the study of medicine some time in the latter part of the year 1852, with Dr. Jonas Crain of Luray,
Va., who was an eminent practitioner, and one well calculated to give proper instruction to the young medical student.  

As a knowledge of the languages was indispensable to success in the medical profession, Benjamin at once bent his mind in that direction, and with that eager intentness and scrutinizing perception which was characteristic of his whole life, he soon acquired such a knowledge of the Latin and French languages as to warrant the approbation of the Faculty of Jefferson Medical College, of Philadelphia; and graduated, with distinction, in that College—receiving the degree of M.D., in the spring of the year 1856.

HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Having received his degree and his diploma, he may now, with propriety, be called Dr. Kibler. He located at the village of Spring Hill, in Augusta county, Va., where he had a senior brother with whom he boarded. Here, in the beautiful “Valley” of his native Virginia, he offered his professional services to the people, and, as it were, commenced life anew.

In his manners he was rather diffident, reserved and modest, until fairly introduced.

“He was, to all, a true and obliging friend,
And yet to all reserved alike;”

and had not some local circumstance taken place (which we will not here quote) which called forth a public display of his medical talents and skill, he might have remained for a long time unknown and unappreciated. The circumstances which called him so conspicuously into public notice were recognized by all who were familiar with them as honorable, just and legal.

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22 The 1850 census of Page County lists a twenty-seven-year-old physician, Jonas Crane. He is not found in later Page County censuses.

23 Founded in 1824, Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia is one of the oldest medical schools in the United States and has awarded more than 27,000 medical degrees. It became Thomas Jefferson University in 1969. Medical education in mid-nineteenth-century America emphasized graduation requirements, not entrance requirements. Benjamin was thus admitted to the College with a minimum of formal education. Since one of the requirements for graduation was three years’ study with a preceptor, Benjamin probably entered the College no later than the autumn of 1853. There were 215 graduates in his class of 1856 (Frederick B. Wagner, Jr. and J. Woodrow Savacool, eds., Thomas Jefferson University—A Chronological History and Alumni Directory, Annotated and Illustrated, 1824-1900 [Philadelphia: Thomas Jefferson U., 1992], pp. 93-94; available at http://jdc.jefferson.edu/wagner1/17).

24 This brother is Abraham Isaac, married to Mariam (or Marian or Mariana) Redman (b. ca. 1830). Spring Hill is a small community a few miles north of the city of Staunton.
Having now shaken off the fetters of timidity, he was fairly and fully introduced to a community in every way worthy of his kindest regards and most careful professional attention; and now he was appreciated, patronized and encouraged.  

Having thus battled with and triumphed over the difficulties which the young professional character usually meets at the outset of his public career, the fair fields of glittering fame and renown spread out almost boundlessly before him, inviting him on to distinction, victory and glory; and as he was rapidly raising himself to shine among the first of his professional brethren, he was suddenly seized with the most malignant form of typhoid fever, consequent upon the long and frequent exposures incident to the duties of his profession. During this attack of fever, which lasted about three weeks, his brother administered the medicines which he prescribed, and, with his wife, kindly and patiently watched around his bed until he was restored to the family and friends, and enabled to resume his practice. His general health, however, was permanently impaired; and in this condition he felt that the labors and exposures to which his extensive field of practice necessarily subjected him, would in all probability hurry him to a premature grave.

A cold which he contracted in his first adventures, after his recovery, fixed its iron grasp upon the bronchial organs, from which it never loosed its grasp until it had transmitted its baneful influence to the lungs and so involved them as to excite the most serious alarm. In the summer of 1859 his case grew so much worse that he resolved to abandon his practice for a time and repair to the mountains in order, if possible, to recruit his health. He accordingly visited his mother, in August, and after a few days rest he set out in company with his oldest brother, who was also in bad health, on a ramble over the western hills of the Blue Ridge. At the close of the first day’s ramble they found themselves in a beautiful valley on the west side of a towering peak whose summit was richly gilded by the rays of the cloudless sun which was sinking beneath the western horizon. Along the base and skirting of the valley, was coursing the beautiful sparkling brook of Jeremiah’s run.  

Here grows luxuriantly the staple comforts of life—such as corn, potatoes, turnips, hemp, flax, oats, beans, barley, &c., as well as the various fruits and luxuries, ripening in golden hues and hanging in abundance upon the green stems of apple, peach, pear and cherry trees. The melons and grapes were particularly beautiful and tempting; wild haws and spice berries grew in abundance upon the hill sides, and the feathered songsters, that loved to linger in this beautiful and inviting spot, were warbling their vesper praises to their Maker for the

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25The “local circumstance” mentioned in the preceding paragraph of the text remains a mystery. Little is known about Dr. Kibler’s life in Augusta County except that he was a recognized and respected member of his community. Among the periodicals covered in the website “Valley of the Shadow: Civil War-Era Newspapers” is the Staunton Spectator, whose issue of 6 December 1859 reported that Dr. Kibler was part of a committee appointed to raise money for the new volunteer companies (http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/news/ss1859/va.au.ss.1859.12.06.xml#02). Later, on 5 June of the following year, the newspaper published an obituary, announcing his death at his mother’s home near Luray (http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/news/ss1860/va.au.ss.1860.06.05.xml). The Mountain Guard militia at Spring Hill included a “Tribute of Respect” in their meeting of 2 June 1860 (http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/news/ss1860/va.au.ss.1860.07.03.xml#03).

26Jeremiah’s Run (also known as Jeremy’s Run) begins on the western slope of the Blue Ridge. The stream then flows westward toward Rileyville, near which it empties into the Shenandoah River.
loveliness and plenty with which they were surrounded. All these things combined their influence to enchant and enliven the oppressed pilgrim as he journeyed along the avenues of life. Upon an elevated plain a few steps from the sparkling brook stood the residence of H. W. Klizer, Esq., with whom they spent the first night very agreeably, and set out the next morning with a supply of provisions tendered them by their generous host. They continued their course along the slope of the craggy mountain until oppressed with heat, fatigue and hunger, they were forced to seek some cool place where they might refresh the relaxed energies of their nature. They soon found a suitable place by a brook side where they partook of a repast prepared from the abundance of provisions furnished them in the morning and spent a few hours in rest and conversation. Seldom does life pass more pleasantly than that spent in this mountain retreat; for this mode of life being entirely new, furnished a variety of interesting themes of conversation. From this place they started in a southeasterly direction, and ascending and descending vast cliffs and abrupt hills, or wandering in shady vine-scented glens or valleys; they amused themselves in the strangeness of the past and present or endeavored to anticipate the future. -- Thus they were kept in the highest state of merriment and joy. After some days thus spent they became weary of the wild and pathless mountain, and directed their course homeward. The sun was shedding its last mild rays on one of the slopes of the Blue Ridge which overlooked the valley beneath, when they ascended its summit, from which they could view with delight and admiration the verdant plain below. They could trace the silvery serpentine meanderings of their own Pass Run, and watch the multitudinous lowing and bleating herds which were hastening to their folds. In the distance could be seen the county-seat with its houses, churches, steeples and spires, glittering in the rays of the evening sun--all, all tending to enrapture the soul and render the occasion one of exquisite delight and admiration. There, too, in sight, was Mt. Asa, the old school house in which the Doctor learned to repeat the letters of the alphabet; indeed almost every visible object seemed to speak some painful or pleasant reminiscence which enabled the Doctor’s reflective mind to retrace in retrospect from the scene before him almost the entire track of his life. At the base of the mountain before them dwelt a kind uncle, with whom they resolved to spend the night. Accordingly they set off down the mountain with hurried strides, jumps, and tumbles, and were soon resting snugly at their uncle’s, where they were kindly received and hospitably entertained for the night. The Doctor, of course, gave his uncle a very interesting account of their adventures in the mountains.28

The time at which he had promised his friends to return to his field of labor had now almost arrived; accordingly sometime in September he took leave of his mother, his other relatives and

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27Henry W. Klizer (1810-1885) owned and operated a saw mill on Jeremiah’s Run (http://unconnectedkleiser.blogspot.com/, Internet, March 12, 2011). Although the title “Esq.,” which today usually designates an attorney, is attached to his name, there is no evidence that he was in the legal profession: both the 1870 and the 1880 Federal censuses list his occupation as “farmer.” The surname is spelled in many different ways: it is “Kliser” in the census of 1870 and “Kleiser” in the 1880 census. One can also find Gleiser, Clizer, and several other variants.

28Since all of Martin Kibler’s brothers had died before 1850, this uncle is probably a brother of their mother, Dorothy Rickard. The 1860 Page County census shows that both Abel (1799-1864) and Asher (1810-1884) lived with their families in the Luray district.
friends, bade adieu to those long loved scenes and returned to Augusta to resume his practice. But he soon observed symptoms of disease which excited his serious apprehensions. His rapidly declining health now began to admonish him, in tones of sternness, that his condition was one of fearful uncertainty. His energies were rapidly failing, and from the frequent losses of blood from the pulmonary organs he was kept constantly drained of the vital fluids.

An extract from a letter written to his brother, in Luray, will show the state of his feelings with regard to his condition at this time. It is as follows:

Spring Hill, Va., Dec. 23, 1859

Dear Brother: 29

My health is no better than when I last saw you. I bleed from my throat and lungs frequently; so much so that I am kept drained of blood all the time. My health and feelings admonish me to seek some other clime. If I had company I would repair to the Rocky mountains next summer. Probably you would fancy a trip of this sort; if so let me know. If I don’t go to the Rocky mountains my purpose is to spend the summer in the Alleghany mountains. 30 I purpose [sic] starting about the first of May next, and depend upon my success in hunting for a subsistence while in the mountains.

His brother replied to this letter informing him of the illness of his mother, and her request to see him.

An extract from a letter written to a brother a few months previous to this, will give the reader an idea of his affection for his only surviving parent. He says:

“I am fearful that if she does not take special care of herself she will never behold another green summer on earth. I often think of my poor old mother with sad emotions, until tears gush from my eyes. I wish I was close enough to ride and see her every week. I will prescribe for her.”

When he received the sad intelligence of his mother’s illness he hastened, in company with his brother Abram, with whom he was boarding, to see and administer to her. It was late in the evening of the 3d of January, 1860, when this sad intelligence reached Dr. Kibler, in Spring Hill, Augusta county, Va.; yet early on the following morning ere the sun had gilded the morn or thrown his benign rays athwart the ice-crested valleys, Dr. Kibler and his brother had dispatched a hasty breakfast and were hastening on their way to the “old homestead” and the chamber of a sick mother. It was on an exceedingly bleak, cold day; the northwestern winds were sweeping

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29 This brother is probably Jeremiah, since he would be most likely to have possession of the letter, and he was living in Luray at the time. It is possible, however, that the letter was written to Andrew Jackson Kibler, who also lived with his family in Luray in 1859-1860.

30 The Alleghany (or Allegheny) mountain chain lies to the west of the Shenandoah Valley and extends about 400 miles, from Pennsylvania to southwest Virginia. Spas like Hot Springs, Virginia, and White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, have been destinations for those seeking restored health since Colonial times.
furiously across the “Valley turnpike,”31 but they spurred on toward their desired destiny. They suffered much from the severity of the cold during the long ride of the day and part of the night, and when they reached Luray, and learned from a sister-in-law that their mother’s condition did not demand of their [sic] any further exposures that night, they were glad to enjoy the blazing fire which was soon rekindled by the sister-in-law, who was about to retire to bed when the chilled sufferers called to make the inquiry referred to. A warm supper was soon prepared, after which they were conducted to their chamber, where a bright fire had been previously kindled, and here they spent the remainder of the night in sleep. Early the next morning they [page 15] started, in company with their sister-in-law, to see their sick mother. The scene at this meeting was truly an affecting one. The mother’s tender, sympathizing, aching heart, as she lay upon her bed under the influence of the most distressing bodily agony, was almost excited to convulsions when she beheld with her languid eyes her two sons approaching her bedside; with feelings of heart that were expressed in their countenances, their tearful eyes, and the sorrowful tones which they employed in expressing the kindest sentiments of regard and parental affection that could possibly characterize the most devoted of sons. A further description of this scene of commingled joy and grief cannot now be given; but the readers [sic] imagination may contemplate the occasion with emotions that must affect his own heart when he learns that there were numerous sighs, and tears were profusely shed by those unused to weeping.

After the lapse of a few days the mother was considered in a convalescent state, and she consented that her son Abram might return to his home in Augusta, as his business required his attention; but she would not consent for Benjamin to leave her. Benjamin was too dutiful and affectionate to disregard a mother’s request; he therefore stayed with her to watch the changes of her disease and administer to her case as it might require. During his attendance upon his mother, from January 5th to the 15th, he felt a considerable and increasing pulmonary excitement; and while visiting, professionally, a brother’s family at Springfield,32 a distance of one and a half miles, he was seized with a violent hemorrhage of the lungs which excited the most serious alarm. On the following day it was necessary for him to go to Luray to obtain some drugs from which to prepare some medicines for his mother. Being detained until it was too late to return to his mother’s he was induced to stay with his brother until the next morning. Previous to retiring that night he communicated to his brother his feelings and convictions in regard to his own health. It is enough to say that they were sad and distressing to a brother and sister who so tenderly loved him. He also expressed a belief that his mother would not long survive. He expressed, too, his feelings and sympathies for his youngest sister who had been left a widow, with three small children, to struggle through a friendless world without the necessary means of

31The Valley Pike was originally a path used by Native Americans as they migrated in search of hunting grounds. It extended from Georgia to the northern border of the United States. Since it was a major road for early pioneers as they migrated south and westward, the Virginia government established the Valley Turnpike Company in 1834. Both public and private funds were used to construct the pike, and tolls were charged for its maintenance.

32This is probably Asher M. Kibler married to Sarah Ann Judd (1836-1869). Their address in the 1860 census is the Hope Mills Post Office District, which encompassed Springfield and the area where his mother Dorothy lived. At the time Asher and Sarah had two small children under the age of three: Lilly Ann (1857-1934) and Daniel Luther (1859-1938).
making life comfortable or pleasant.  

An extract from a letter to his brother in Luray, in reply to one which informed him of the sudden death of his brother- [page 16] in-law, will show the character of his feelings toward his sister soon after the death of her husband. It is as follows:

Spring Hill, Va., Feb. 18th, 1858.

Dear Brother:

I hope this will find you well. I received sister Amanda’s letter and also one from Lattimer, announcing the death of poor Yates.  

I was truly sorry, but not surprised to hear this. It leaves poor Louisa in a bad condition, does it not? Poor sister! what will she do? Three small children dependent upon her, and nothing but a cold, heartless world to look to; [sic] ready to spurn the widow’s moan and the orphans’ tears.

My heart bleeds with sorrow to think of her deplorable condition. Can anything [sic] be done to soothe her rough pathway through this world of sorrows? I think we can do something to cheer her lonely way. I am deeply interested for her protection; but is it any wonder that I should be.

These were his feelings two years before this time; and now that he contemplates but a short stay upon earth he feels a renewed concern for the protection and welfare of his lonely sister to whom he had pledged his attention and support as long as he might live.

After the social intercourse of the evening, which was of a sad character, and on retiring to his chamber for repose, before extinguishing his candle, he had another attack of hemorrhage, so vehement as to threaten immediate death. The scene was truly terrific and tragical; so much so that his brother, who was present, sunk under the influence of nervous prostration which was unusual for him.

The immense quantity of blood which he discharged during that night (for he bled several times) was truly alarming; and might be regarded as incredible by those who were not eye-witnesses of the scene. But citizens of the village, who were called in, know that during the night, as much as a gallon of blood was discharged from his lungs, which left him, of course, quite weak and perfectly prostrate.  

As Dr. Kibler was remarkably sensitive in the bestowment of favors, he could but feel grateful in the pleasant reflection that he was kindly cared for by his brother and sister-in-law, with whom he was now providentially confined. His professional brethren, too, manifested their kindest regards and warmest sympathies for him, lavishing upon him their devoted attentions and skill during his entire affliction; and many were the friends who

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33. From the letter that follows, James A. Yates, the husband of Louisa, probably died in early 1858. They had three children aged six and under: Martin Byrd (1852-1944), Sarah F. (b. ca. 1854), and Benjamin Aylett (b. ca. 1855).

34. “Amanda” is Amanda V. Lewin (1830-1874), the wife of Jeremiah. “Lattimer” is probably James Latimer Kibler (b. 1848), the oldest son of Jeremiah and Amanda, and the nephew of Benjamin.

35. The amount of blood is exaggerated: loss of a gallon would certainly be fatal.
visited and sympathized deeply with this young Doctor, whose prospects but a while ago were budding in the richest hues, but who now lay upon his hopeless pillow, emaciated and colorless.

But now a mother’s heart began to ache. The delay of her dear boy’s return excited her apprehensions and grief to such an extent as to augment her disease and affect her condition deleteriously. But her boy was kindly and tenderly cared for until he was able to sit in a carriage and ride to the residence of his mother. His presence greatly relieved her suffering mind; but when she considered the many privations which he had endured for her sake, and that he was now willing to sacrifice or hazard all for her comfort and happiness, and yet such a son was suffering the most acute and fatal pulmonary disease; the consideration was truly sad and distressing to her grief-worn heart.

The Doctor now occupied the same room with his mother in order to attend to the administrations necessary in her case, and watch the changing symptoms of her disease, which he did with great interest and anxiety, though we may now consider him as considerably involved in

**HIS LAST ILLNESS.**

Though Mrs. Kibler became convalescent, after a while, there was no change or favorable symptom evinced in the case of her son. He rode out several times in a carriage, hoping to realize some change for the better, but to no purpose. His nervous system gradually gave way under the most fearful form of consumption. His professional brethren did not desert him; but were daily around his bed, and with emotions of deepest sympathy, consulted together for his good and administered to his case.

He was careful, himself, in watching each symptom of his own case, and frequently communicated to his friends the sad intelligence of his condition.

About the 25th of April, 1860, the last vestige of hope of his recovery fledged its wings and left him. He, therefore, began to make the necessary preparations, temporal as well as spiritual, to quit these scenes of earthliness. He requested a brother to hasten to Spring Hill to attend to some important business, concerning which he gave the necessary direction; directed him also to collect an amount of money sufficient to liquidate a bill which he was due the firm of E. & S. Frey, of Baltimore; \(^{36}\) tender his kind regards to his numerous and warm friends, and return with his account books. Accordingly his brother hastened to attend to his business as directed;

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\(^{36}\) According to a website dealing with Baltimore patent medicines and druggists, E. & S. Frey were druggists at 314 W. Baltimore Street from 1835 until the 1920s (http://mysite.verizon.net/mkrenrut/mybaltimorebottlecollection/id2.html).
remitted the amount of the drug bill with E. & S. Frey, and in a short time received their receipt, in full, of accounts against Doctors Kibler & Redman.\textsuperscript{37}

The receipt arrived on the 6th of May; just in time for Dr. Kibler to see for himself that the amount of his drug bill \textbf{[page 18]} was receipted for, which relieved his mind very much. A note was subjoined to the receipt expressing much sorrow and regret for his afflictions, and a hope and prayer “that he might believe on the Saviour, and rise to life and immortality.” The Doctor read the note and felt much encouraged and strengthened in his trust in the Saviour, and joined heartily in the sentiments of the note, and in return blessed and eulogized its authors.

His account books were examined by the aid of his oldest brother. The object of this examination was to reduce any accounts which he might think extravagant down to the standard of a dying man’s conscience.

As he was now “packing up,” as it were, to take a final leave of all the conflicts of time and this world, he requested to be removed to another room that he might transact some other business, and that his afflicted and grief worn mother might not see him in the agonies of his death-bed struggles. But his removal only augmented her grief and anguish. She insisted upon being admitted into his room every day that she might hear from his dying lips some good, precious counsel, which he was always wont to give.

It was now evident to all that his short history was rapidly coming to a close; and hence all his business should be attended to in a few days. Much of his attention had been devoted to the all-absorbing subject of religion, the principles of which were firmly established in his mind. The doctrines of the Bible were his almost constant meditations; and when he could no longer hold the sacred Book and read for himself he would request it to be done for him. The precious promises of life and immortality which it contained calmed the perturbated [sic] spirit in full view of death and stilled its turbulent waters. Through these promises he was led to put his trust in Jesus and feel that the world’s Redeemer was his Redeemer. He was visited not only by his relatives, his friends and his professional brethren, but also by the servants of the Most High, who would pray with him and point him in the way everlasting. He was especially interested in the visits of one of these men of God, with whom he used to be familiar, under whose divine teachings he had often wept, and to whom he had given, in the early part of his affliction positive demonstrations of his purpose to seek an interest in the atoning merits of Christ, the Lamb of God, slain for sin. Now, as he approached the margin of the

“Stream whose narrow tide
The known and unknown worlds divides,”\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37}The 1860 Augusta County census lists a W. Redman, age 24, occupation medical student. Since Benjamin’s brother Abraham Isaac, with whom he lived in Spring Hill, had married Mariam Redman, it is quite possible that there is a family tie.

\textsuperscript{38}These are the first two verses of a poem and hymn widely reprinted in the nineteenth century. Its title is variously “Crossing the Flood” or “The Stream of Death.”
he felt his purposes becoming firmer and his trust in Christ more implicit. On one occasion while agonizing in prayer he cried out in bitterness, as if repulsed by the enemy when he was about to seize the prize, “O my God, shall I never know a living Saviour!” A brother present embraced him and assured him that the Saviour had come to manifest himself to all the world, and especially to the individual penitent who humbly seeks him. Then, as if recovered from the repulse, he said, “I will then trust Him;” and clasping his hands and closing his eyes he said, “be quiet a moment,” while there seemed to be a manifest communion between Christ and his own heart. About this time he requested several times to know if that kind friend and servant of God, Rev. J. Markwood, had returned from a tour he had taken west; he was answered negatively; and though he was anxious to see him he patiently submitted to the deprivation.  

As he admonished his friends of the near approach of his end, a brother suggested the propriety of having his picture taken for the gratification of his friends; and though he had all his life time been opposed to the fashionable custom of passing his portrait around among his friends, he now consented to have it taken. Speedy preparations were made. A beautiful boquet [sic] of significant flowers was placed in his hand, the artist arranged his camera and brought his chemicals in contact with his reflected image, and after several efforts, with but partial success, adopted but one as at all reflective of his true features.

And now another, the last, but not the least, important of his earthly transactions was pressing upon his mind. He requested that a friend be called into his room to write his last will and testament, in which he directed that all his real and personal estate should be appropriated to the use and for the benefit of his bereaved and almost heart-broken sister, who had been more than kind to him during his afflictions. This was truly a wise and judicious appropriation, and one

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39 Jacob Markwood was a preeminent leader of the Church of the United Brethren of Christ and its eighteenth bishop. He was born in December 1818 (or possibly in 1815) near what is now Charlestown, West Virginia. A weaver by trade, he was given license to preach in 1837, the same year that he married Arbeline (or Arbelia) Rhodeffer of Luray. Rev. Markwood was elected elder of the church in 1843 and was chosen bishop in 1861. In 1860, during Benjamin’s last days, he and his wife were living in Luray in the house of her parents, John and Phebe Rhodeffer (1860 Page County census). Fiercely pro-Union and abolitionist, he fled Virginia when the Confederate government offered $1,000 for his arrest, and he passed the war in Maryland. In failing health during his last years, Rev. Markwood died and was buried in Luray in January 1873. His body was later exhumed and moved to Rohrersville, Maryland. After the death of his wife in 1886, however, and in accord with the terms of her will, his remains were returned to Luray and interred next to hers in Green Hill Cemetery (Henry Adams Thompson, Our Bishops: A Sketch of the Origin and Growth of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. [Dayton: U. B. Publishing House, 1904], pp. 426-447; Helen Long and John Thomas Scharf, History of Western Maryland: Being a History of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Alleghany, and Garrett Counties [Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1968], I, 1276).

40 “Significant flowers” would be those with symbolic meaning.

41 The following is an abstract of the will of Benjamin Henry Kibler:

“Just debts & funeral expenses paid.
Sister, Louisa A. Yates wife of James A. Yates decd, all my property both real & personal which is to be placed in the hands of Charles Yates her brother-in-law to be managed as he may think best. My interest in my mother's dower that my portion of said dower shall pass to my Sister, Louisa A. Yates & placed in
which was alone characteristic of the tender sympathies of Dr. Kibler’s heart. After this he gave some dying counsel and advice to his sister with regard to the course of her conduct through life. He desired her to live devoutly, prudently, discreetly; to educate her three children creditably, that they might be the better prepared to buffet successfully the rough tide of this world’s affairs, and afford her, in her declining years, the consolatory reflection that she had discharged a mother’s duty to them, which reflection would be more precious than all the treasures of earth.\[42\]

\[page 20\] But now the time of his dissolution is near at hand; and feeling that the chilly waters of Jordan are dampening the soles of his feet, he desires to see all his brothers, sisters and friends and bid them a parting adieu. He called a brother to his bedside and inquired if his brother Abram (with whom he boarded in Augusta, and who had been written for) had arrived, and being informed that he had not, he said “there are but three of my brothers, then present; and I make the fourth.\[44\] Is that right?” A brother replied, “It is.” He then said, “I shall not make the fourth long. I shall soon have crossed the narrow strait. But think not that I shall forget you all when I shall have crossed over to my inheritance in Heaven. No, no! The strait of death is too narrow to sever my love and attachments from you all. I shall think of you then.” He was anxious to see a sister with whom he had parted several years previous, and who was living in the state of Indiana with her husband and three children; but he knew that this could not be.\[45\]

On Tuesday night, the 8th of May, an unusual quantity of tuberculous matter accumulated in the trachea or windpipe which affected his breathing to an alarming extent and threatened immediate strangulation. He perceived the danger and requested that some brandy be quickly heated and applied with considerable friction of the hand to every part of his surface, so as to

the hands of Charles Yates. After the death of my sister, my estate shall be extended to her children until the oldest child is 21 years.

(signed) B. H. Kibler
Witnesses - Reuben P. Bell, Asher M. Kibler, Jeremiah Kibler
Written - 08 May 1860
Recorded - 28 May 1860”

(Page County Will Book H-78)

Charles Yates is named manager of Louisa’s property because married women including widows had no legal existence at this time. Virginia did not pass its Married Women’s Property Act until 1877.

\[42\]Since the 1870 Federal census shows Louisa living in Jeremiah’s household in Warren County, she probably did not remarry until after that date. Her second husband was Samuel Good born about 1824 in Rockingham County. He died in Luray in March 1888. On June 25, 1891, Louisa married William A. Johnson (b. ca. 1831) in Pattonsburg, Missouri, where she lived until her death on 6 March 1919. James’ and Louisa’s son, Benjamin Aylett, had emigrated to Pattonsburg in 1876 and he was joined by his brother Martin Byrd in the mid-1880s. They were successful merchants there.

\[43\]The Jordan River is frequently regarded in Judeo-Christian cultures as a dividing line between bondage and freedom or, in this case, between the terrestrial and spiritual worlds.

\[44\]The four brothers present would be Jeremiah, Andrew Jackson, Asher, and, of course, Benjamin.

\[45\]The sister is Sarah Ann who had married William Asher Strole (1820-1874) in 1845 and sometime after 1855 moved to Newton County, in northwest Indiana.
keep up, if possible, a flow of circulation until he could have administered some nauseating draught by which the parts thus oppressed might be relieved. The directions were soon complied with and relief obtained. After resting a while he [sic] asked if he wanted anything; he replied “no, nothing now.” Then feeling for the beatings of his pulse he paused a moment, and said, “I was very nearly off in the struggle, but was not just ready;” and pausing for breath, he added, “my pulse is almost extinct -- yet I feel pleasantly.”

The next morning, May 9th, his mother requested to see him once more; and being carried in her large armed chair to his bedside, he grasped her hand as she approached and inquired how she felt. She replied, “Poorly, my dear son; and how do you feel?” He answered, “No pain or distress now; I am resting pleasantly — sweetly; as I am gliding over.” He then examined his mother’s pulse, and made some inquiries relative to her case, and then said in broken accents, “I hope that you will get better; your pulse is good; but with me the conflict will soon be over. I desire not to stay.” He then said, “I am now crossing the river, pleasantly, safely; and will soon have been moored in the harbor.”

This was his last interview with his mother. It was deeply affecting, and will long be remembered by those who were present. Though dying he was perfectly rational; calm, though standing upon the threshold of eternity. Just such a scene was beautifully described by the poet, who said:

“His mother too, was there to weep,
And brothers wept; his sister too,
Did weep and sorrow comfortless, and I
Too wept, though not to weeping given; and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well, but better still,
I do remember, and will ne’er forget
That dying eye! That eye alone
Was bright;
And brighter grew, as nearer death approached!
As I have seen the gentle little flower,
Look fairest in the silver beam which fell
Reflected from the thunder cloud, that soon
Came down, and o’er the desert scattered far
And wide, its loveliness; the angel of the Covenant
Was come, and faithful to his promise stood,
Prepared to walk with him through death’s dark gloom.”

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Prepared to walk with him through death’s dark gloom.”

46 A slightly modified version of a long but very popular poem in ten books by Scottish author Robert Pollok (ca. 1798-1827). Published in 1827 and entitled “The Course of Time,” the original reads: “. . . Her husband, too, was there, / And brothers, and they wept; her sisters, too, . . .” Changing the feminine pronouns to masculine, the biographer follows the original poem until the fourteenth verse when, after “loveliness,” about ten lines are omitted. He picks up again with “the angel of the Covenant.” The final “gloom” of the present text was “vale” in
He remained perfectly calm and composed during the day. At night he ate a little chicken soup, prepared by his sister, and said, “I shall want no more here.” He requested several times, during the night, that the candle should be extinguished, and that his friends, particularly his sister, should retire and take some rest. But with them the closing scene was too near. They kindly, yet mournfully, kept watch around his bed. A calmness possessed his entire frame during the night. He dozed much; and when roused would ask for water from a tin vessel, which had been so constructed by his direction as to emit the water into his mouth by a slow filtration, as he could swallow only a few drops at a time.

His face was beaming with joy and confidence, and the only anxiety that seemed to agitate his mind, was to be released from earth. No pain or suffering was evinced in his dying hours; a calmness and serenity unusual in death bed scenes, marked his case. His countenance brightened as he approached the king of terrors, and a foretaste of future blessedness, excited his joys almost to ecstasy [sic].

About 4 o’clock, on the morning of the 10th, while pleasantly dozing, he said distinctly, “shall I ride the white horse?” a figure representing death, which he momentarily looked for, and which he welcomed with a smile, as he sunk [sic] into his embrace, and passed away to the empyrean of the redeemed, within the gates of the celestial city.

He died about 4½ o’clock, on the morning of the 10th of May, 1860, without a struggle or the movement of a muscle, with his eyes closed, and with a smile of ineffable sweetness, which remained prominent upon his marble features when cold in death, a sure evidence of achieved glories in the blissful abode, whose opening portals received his ascending spirit.

On the following day, May 11th, an eloquent and appropriate funeral address, was delivered at the residence of his mother, by Rev. J. Markwood, from 1 Peter I, 24. The day was inclement, but the attendance was large, serious, and mournfully affected; and as they followed this bud of genius to the silent tomb, many were the sighs heaved, and the tears shed, in memory of the blighted hopes and unfinished labors of his probation.

Too much cannot be said of Dr. Kibler’s private or professional character. In private he was humane and affable; in public, he was learned, sound, and eloquent. Diligent in the discharge of every public or private duty. Attentive, sympathizing, successful and popular in his practice as a
physician; and no one could have been more endeared to a community, than he was to that in which he lived in Augusta. With his special friends there, he enjoyed many pleasant social hours, the remembrance of which he cherished through life. Of these he would often speak, and their remembrance would throw cheering flashes of light and happiness across his mind in periods of affliction, “like good news from a far country,” or oases upon the desert of life.

The writer remembers many interesting narratives related by the Doctor of his adventures, associations, etc., during his four years practice in Augusta; but time will only allow me to refer briefly to one, which will no doubt, be more accurately remembered by the parties who were with him, than by the writer. I refer to the “fishing adventure,” on the sunny banks of Middle river. Accompanied by a young student of his, and two young ladies of his choice, the fishing exercise was persevered in until it became irksome; and a boat ride was suggested and consented to by the party. Accordingly they got into a boat, and soon managed to gain the middle of the stream. But the awkward rowing or poling, together with the current of the water, soon drifted them to a precipitous fall of water over a mill dam. If they had passed over this dam, they would have been engulfed beyond recovery; but providentially, the projection of a wooden pin or stake, upon the very brink of the precipitous fall, and three or four inches above the surface of the water, caught the centre of the boat, which by the aid of their poles braced against the ends of the boat, enabled them to “hold on,” until their minds were sufficiently collected, to advise upon the safest means of escape. No aid was near, and every moment was precious and hazardous; some hasty conclusion must be arrived at; it was therefore, resolved that the Dr. and his student, should take each, a lady upon his back, with her “tendrils” entwined about his neck, and leave the boat and endeavor to regain the shore, by wading if they can, swimming if they must. They were both stout and robust, and the prize which bribed them to duty and action, was insuperable to all other considerations. Accordingly, with commendable gallantry, even “sacrificing to save,” they set out, and succeeded in regaining the bank of the river, all safe and sound.

This is but one of the many adventures of his short life in Augusta; but this must suffice for the present.

About four weeks after his death, his funeral was preached by special request, at Spring Hill, by Rev. J. Markwood, from the same passage of scripture, preached from at his mother’s, at the time of his interment. The attendance was large and serious, and many to whom he had formerly administered professionally, were there, clad in the habiliments of mourning, with tears of regret and sorrow, forcing their way down their burning cheeks.

49 The quotation is a common early American proverbial expression. It derives from Solomon, Prov. 25:25: “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”

50 The Middle River flows near Spring Hill in Augusta County and is a tributary of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The young student may well be the W. Redman mentioned above.

51 The modesty of speech in nineteenth-century gentlemen often avoided such explicit words as “arms” or “legs”; thus “tendrils.”
When Dr. Kibler stood in the class of graduates, in 1856, one of the charges given him by Professor Huston\textsuperscript{52} was, “be kind and compassionate to all, suffer nothing to interfere with the regularity of your attendance on those who invoke your aid.” This it seems he never forgot; and ever adhered strictly to it. His professional life was approved by all who knew him; and his visits to the sick chamber, were hailed as an angel of light, to save the sick from dying.

When the sorrowing or bereaved sisters, or the heart broken brothers, shall read this mournful biography, and the remembrance of their bereavements, shall heave their troubled breasts, let them remember that he has left a name honored by all who knew him, and gone to his reward in a nobler clime.

His mother’s grief, was too overwhining [sic] to withstand the conflict long. She desired from the time of his death, to follow her “dear boy,” which she soon did. Her grief and sufferings were assuaged in a happy and triumphant death, on the 19th of July, 1860, and they were both interred, side by side, in the same vault.

A very beautiful monument was purchased by his surviving brothers and sisters, inscribed as follows:

[page 24]

> “We’ll think of our brother,  
> While on earth we remain;  
> And when life’s journey is ended  
> We’ll join him again.”\textsuperscript{53}

This monument was erected at the head of the grave, on the 1st day of December, 1860, at which time, the grave was remodeled and adorned with a variety of beautiful shrubbery and autumnal flowers, significant of the most endearing attachment. Sentiments were offered by relatives and friends, which were appropriate, a few of which we subjoin as follows:

> “The seasons may pass, and this monument fade,  
> These flowers grow richly o’er this now new made grave;  
> Yet I will remember with the seasons that pass,  
> The dear social hours, I enjoyed with you last.”  
>  
> Your sister-in-law  
>  
> AMANDA V. KIBLER.

> “With him I hope to rise to life above,  
> And live, as once I did on earth, in love.”  
>  
> His brother,

\textsuperscript{52}Dr. Robert M. Huston (1795-1864), a former dean of the medical college, was one of the members of the so-called “famous faculty” of the institution (“Chapter 7. Eminent Jefferson Professors, pp. 231-386” [2009]. Legend and Lore: Jefferson Medical College. Paper 8. http://jdc.jefferson.edu/savacool18).

\textsuperscript{53}Dr. Kibler is buried in the Martin Kibler family graveyard near Luray. The above inscription is preceded by the words “Trusting alone in the merits of Christ for salvation.” The monument still exists.
ASHUR [sic] M. KIBLER

“These flowers will live and bloom,
On this dear honored mound,
Though tears of a sorrowing one,
Will often fall around.”
Your sister,

LOUISA A. YATES.

“This monument in honor of thy name shall stand,
Till time shall fade this transient world below;
Then rise and live, dear brother, with the honored just,
For God’s own angel, shall uplift the latch of heaven’s gate,
And we rejoin thee for eternity.”
Your brother,

JEREMIAH KIBLER.

The writer in concluding this brief memoir, would suggest that the friends of Dr. Kibler, prize this little volume only for his sake, who merits more than the writer has given or can give, as a memento of his personal worth.

And that he, together with all endeared to him, may finally find a perpetual home, in that temple “not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,” to swell the chorus of the countless millions cemented together by bonds of union, indissoluble and eternal, where the chilling and poisonous zephyrs never blow, and the withering hand of death is no more felt, is his sincere wish and prayer.

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54 2 Cor. 5:1.