

# John Street And Its Celebrities

Literary People Who Have Lived There—Mrs. Susan Dabney Smedes, Lucy Meacham Thruston, Katharine Pearson Woods, Dr. Richard Henry Thomas And Others.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.  
Let me have done! through the street,  
Full'd with an ever-shifting train,  
Amid the sound of steps that beat  
The murmuring walks like autumn rain.

—Bryant.  
Such a modest little scrap of a street it is—only six short blocks in all—then to the south it loses itself down the green slopes surrounding Mount Royal Station. Northward it climbs up and up in apparent search of a Shropshire Lake region, and, finding the Mount Royal reservoir at the entrance to Druid Hill Park, its quest is evidently satisfied, since here it stops abruptly, and from this lake height, where blue water smiles response to a still bluer heaven, it looks back at its own sunny length.

Regarded thus, John street is not an imposing thoroughfare from an architectural point of view. There is not a church, nor a club, nor a public building among its length. The term "palatial residence" could not by any flight of imagination be applied to a single one of its quiet group of houses, but it is none the less picturesque, pre-eminent-ly homelike and possesses an air of comfort and refinement. There are a good many trees, suggestive of the retirement of a country town, and diversity is accorded to almost every block by the interspersion of cottage houses, with plots of green grass and little porches before their entrances. Several really magnificent maple trees lend grace and charm to the square between Lantvale street and Lafayette avenue, and the one semi-public building by the wayside, the Hospital for the Women of Maryland—in spite of recent addition of wards and surgical rooms—has yet the old-fashioned home-like entrance and main building of Judge Edward Duffy's former country home, Ross of Sharon. A long stretch of them, skirt the hospital grounds on the John-street side, and their pink blossoms are a refreshing bit of color on warm midsummer afternoons. The residences are all well built and of pleasing, if unobtrusive, architecture, and as they have been chiefly erected by individuals instead of in contractors' groups, there is a pleasant individuality about them. The latchkey of one householder is not a passkey to the entire block. Visitors recognize the houses of their acquaintances by some distinctive architectural feature, and are not dependent upon an elusive number, or remembering that their friend's home is the eighth step from the drug store. The interiors of the residences are as diversified as their exterior.

When all of these houses were new John street bore the reputation of being a veritable dovecote, where fluttered no end of pretty brides and happy bridegrooms, and one bachelor of fashion is quoted as saying he did not dare wait the length of John street lest he fell a victim to the prevailing epidemic—heart disease—and be compelled to swell the rank of benedict.

Before the present Mount Royal avenue

York newspaper man. His best-known works of fiction are "The Story of Don Milt" and "The Gold That Did Not Glitter." The scene of the first story is laid about Richmond and the North river of Virginia, and in it is presented a delightful picture of the social life of that vicinity and the visiting in canoes from one stately homestead to another along the river course. "The Gold That Did Not Glitter" is a story of the impoverished South after the war and is a book rippling with humor and sparkling with quaint thoughts. Both books are perhaps better known in England than in America.

**Lucy Meacham Thruston.**  
Among the brides who came to live on John street in its days of wedding romance was the delightful authoress and even more delightful woman—Lucy Meacham Thruston—who in addition to ranking among the leading novelists of the present day, is regarded as an authority upon early Maryland and Virginia history. Mrs. Thruston's first long story, "Mistress Brent," published in 1901, deals with the early settlement days of Maryland and carries with it a sense of the open-air freshness of provincial Maryland and an atmosphere of reality in environment and historic accuracy wholly wanting in many similar works. The strength of "Mistress Brent" only heralded other fiction by Mrs. Thruston of equal merit—"A Girl of Virginia," "Jack and His Island," "Where the Tide Comes In"—all books of fascinating interest, have followed one another in easy succession. And only these who have made a study of the incidents and scenes of which Mrs. Thruston writes can realize the permanent value of her work as vivid pen pictures of historic places and stirring episodes. During the present month her latest work, "Called to the Field," left the hands of her publishers.

But if John street claims with pride Lucy Meacham Thruston, the authoress, the people of John street recall with love Mrs. Thruston's former neighbor. It is not often a writer fulfills in personality the ideals of womanhood presented to the imagination by the pen, but the authoress of "Mistress Brent" is a very charming woman—lovable, approachable, with the freshness of April and the inspiration of October. She is in keeping with her stories. Her laugh has the joyous music that awakens responsive mirth. How often her John street neighbors have found a bunch of March violets upon their breakfast plate, or a dish of crisp cookies—proof of her Virginian housewifery skill in which she takes womanly pride—or a current magazine, with a page folded down and slyly marginal criticism annotating the article. Indicated, only literary folk know the coziness of a literary neighbor, and lucky is he who to the question, "Who is thy neighbor?" can answer, "Lucy Meacham Thruston."



MRS. LUCY M. THRUSTON

hood. He was also a frequent contributor to THE SUN. Those who were privileged to hear Dr. Thomas speak at the Peace Conference in Baltimore, at which meeting he presided, will never forget the wonderful force and impressiveness, with which he repeated Longfellow's great poem, "The Arsenal at Springfield." While Baltimore was wrapped in a cloud of fire upon the appalling night of February 7, 1891, Dr. Thomas is said to have preached at Light Street Mission, with a sea of flame dividing him from his home, a sermon which seemed to the listeners inspired. Dr. Thomas took his degree in Baltimore and continued his medical studies in London and Vienna. He was dean of the Woman's Medical College, where he occupied also the chair of diseases of the throat and chest, so that his mission to the world was one

When first I saw, I knew thee,  
Ere yet thy name was known;  
Had I not always loved thee,  
And never been alone?

Miss Mary P. Grace, who resided for many years at 1600 John street, is widely known in the United States for her scholarly translations from the French and Spanish. Miss Grace was in close touch with the highest social and literary life of Baltimore when the salons of cultured women antedated the periods of women's clubs and she was one of the earliest members and for a long time on the executive committee of the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore.

**Kate Mason Rowland.**  
Miss Kate Mason Rowland, another gifted writer, has been a bird of passage that has nevertheless frequently alighted in Bal-

zines on historical and literary themes. Mr. Diller was deputy marshal of the United States Supreme Court in 1860-1870. Since literature, music and painting are sister arts it is not strange to find that John street has drawn to itself, as a magnet attracts the polar needle, a good many musical residents. Mrs. Jenny Lind Muller Green, the talented pianist, organist and choir director, once resided there. Prof. Horace Mills, Jr., composer and choirmaster of Mount Calvary Church, is still a resident there. Miss Emily White, an orchestral director, recently lived there and Miss Gertrude Woods, also an organist, looks from her windows on John street across to the home of her literary namesake, Miss Katharine Pearson Woods.

Mr. Henry McCaffrey, whose well-known music rooms were once a cosmopolitan club and who was himself the host of Charles Dickens, the friend of Joseph Jefferson, of Jenny Lind and Adeline Patti, died only a short time ago at his home, 1510 John street. Mr. McCaffrey's collection of Confederate songs and relics, which was one of the most interesting and valuable in the country, is now in the Congressional Library at Washington.

In art circles Miss M. Louisa Stewart, one of the instructors of the Maryland Institute School of Art and Design, resided for some years with her father, Dr. James A. Stewart, and her sister, Miss Emily B. Stewart, at 1611 John street, while Miss Lazarus, who has become well known in decorative art work, lived for some time with her mother, Mrs. Edgar M. Lazarus, at 1214 John street. Nor has the glory all departed at the present time from this quiet little thoroughfare. Miss Ruth Johnston, daughter of the noted writer, Richard Malcolm Johnston, herself an artist and one of the instructors at the Maryland Institute, School of Art and Design, now lives on John street, and her opposite neighbor is Mrs. John Mason of it. The latter has been for many years president of the Silver Cross Home, at Port Deposit, and State Secretary of the Kluge's Daughters. Mrs. Mason is one of the board of directors of the Maryland Society of Colonial Dames of America and also a member of the Thomas Johnson Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

State's Attorney Albert S. J. Owens, who with his family is living at 1706 John street, is a gentleman of scholarly tastes and one of the faculty of the Baltimore University School of Law.

Mr. S. Grant Oliphant, residing at 1613 John street, belongs to the literary family of Oliphant, among whom are numbered the celebrated English novelist, Mrs. Margaret Oliphant, and the English traveler, diplomatist and author, Lawrence Oliphant.

Mr. Oliphant is a fellow in Sanscrit at the Johns Hopkins University, in which department he assists under Dr. Maurice Bloomfield. He is a bachelor of arts and a master of arts of Princeton University and occupied the chair in Greek at Parsons's College, at Fairfield, Iowa. He was also professor of Greek and Latin at Phillips Exeter Academy and later at Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pa. Mr. Oliphant has published some of his earlier writings, and when at Princeton won the Wamamaker prize for a manuscript upon fourteenth century English as illustrated in "Piers, the Plowman."

Prof. Alexander Hamilton, chair of



DR. RICHARD H. THOMAS

was opened to the park entrance John street was called Mount Royal Terrace, being a sort of irregular continuation of Mount Royal plaza. Small truck farms lay below Dolphin street and furnished fresh celery and such garden produce to the neighborhood. Just where or how John street acquired its present strangely simple Anglo-Saxon appellation is not apparently known, but the impression prevails that the Christian name of Gen. John Eager Howard was bestowed upon it when the former John street became Monument street. This is probably true, since General Howard's estate extended westward to Howard street and northward as far as John street reaches. But it is not for want of the above mentioned reasons that John street is unique among the streets of Baltimore. There is a quaint, pretty and hospitable adage, "The ornaments of the house are the guests who adorn it," and as with houses so with neighborhood sections—it is the people who reside there who give to a locality character and distinctive interest. Chayne Row, London, England, will be forever associated with the lives and literary work of Thomas and Jeanie (Weish) Carlyle, with Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, with Rev. H. R. Haweis and other distinguished writers, and quiet John street bears her literary laurels with so much modesty that Baltimoreans as a rule do not appreciate the fact that within the short six squares that comprise this street have been grouped the homes of an unusually brilliant coterie of literary men and women—writers some of whom are known upon both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, while all of them have achieved distinguished reputations in the world of letters. Personal letters from the great English statesman, Gladstone, have been addressed to an author then living on John street; Charles Dickens, the novelist, was the personal friend of a resident of John street, and a daughter of Hon. J. Devan Braithwaite, of England, one of the late Queen Victoria's counsel, now resides on John street.

**Author Of "A Southern Planter."**

Among the many interesting literary families at one time residing on this thoroughfare, perhaps none was more distinguished than the family of the late Mr. Thomas Smith Gregory Dabney. Mr. Dabney was a descendant of the ancient French Huguenot house of D'Aubigne. He was born on the York river, Virginia; became one of the wealthiest pioneer planters of Mississippi, whose fortune was swept away by the Civil War, and his last years were spent in what was then 93 (now 1305) John street. The story of Mr. Dabney's life is told in a book written and published in 1887 by his daughter, Mrs. Susan Dabney Smedes. It is called "A Southern Planter." It is a very simple, unadorned history; but the charm of the book is profound and shows Thomas Dabney to have been a man of such heroic courage, such remarkable endowments and such peculiar sanctity as to almost compensate as holy ground any spot which he might call home. A copy of the book was sent to Mr. Gladstone, in England, who read it with such interest that he at once wrote to the author a personal letter, in which he says of Mr. Dabney that he found in him "one of the very noblest of human characters," and his enthusiasm was so aroused that he continued the cheerful task of publishing it in England." Higher compliment from a higher source than this could scarcely be desired by any writer of the present day.

Virgilus Dabney, son of Thomas S. G. Dabney, also associated with the John street home, became later a brilliant New



MISS KATHARINE PEARSON WOODS

of both spiritual and temporal healing. He also traveled extensively through the United States as a minister of the Quaker Church. His volume of poems, "Echoes and Pictures," was published in London in 1891, and he wrote also a novel, "Fenelon," which sets forth in fiction the lives and belief of Quakers in Pennsylvania. The scene is laid in Bellefonte. In conjunction with his brother, Prof. Allen C. Thomas, Dr. Richard H. Thomas prepared a "History of Friends in America," one of a series of denominational histories, which has been accepted as the standard history of the American Friends. "Richard H. Thomas, M. D., Life and Letters," compiled and edited by the author's wife since his decease, has only recently been published in London. It presents a delightful picture of Dr. Thomas' personality as shown in letters written from at home and abroad to his own people. It includes an idealistic little story of his marriage, in 1878, at Old Westminster Meeting House, England, to Miss Anna Braithwaite, daughter of the Hon. J. Devan Braithwaite, counsel to the late Queen Victoria, where he says concerning the wedding breakfast: "Anne cut the bride cake and I, according to the English custom, helped her." The following lines, written in 1901 to his wife, show how tenderly and long this course of true love bowed on.

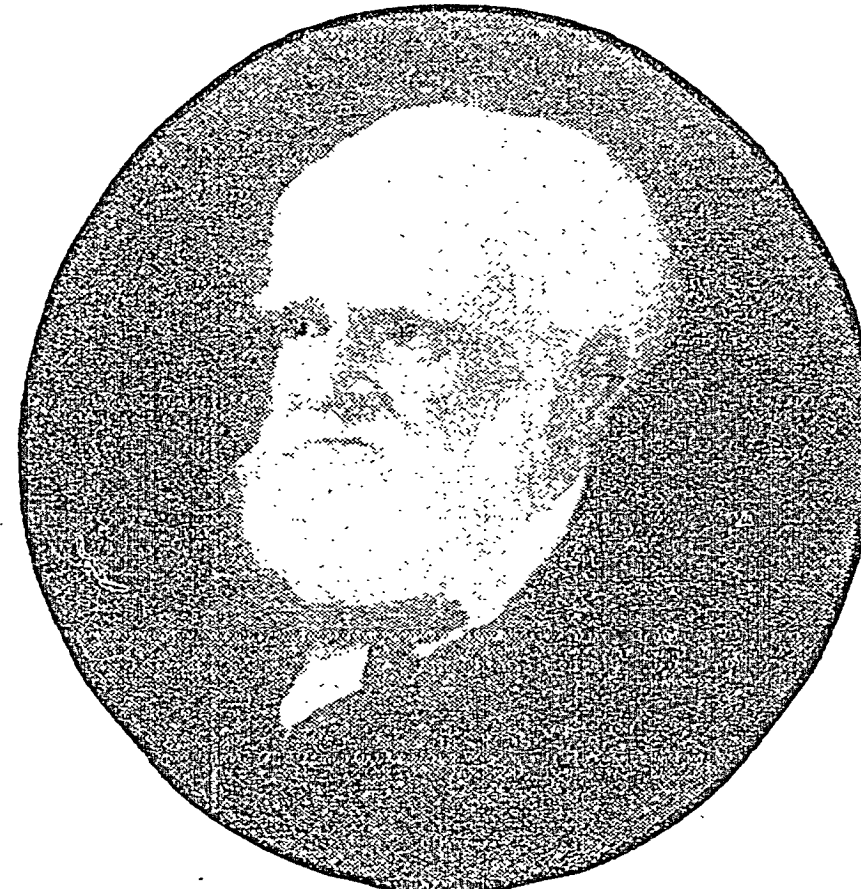
My heart had loved thee always,  
Unknowing and unknown,  
Our spirits sought each other,  
Our pulses beat as one.



KATE MASON ROWLAND

timore and for a season, at least, has called John street home. Miss Rowland's most important books have been "The Life and Letters of Charles Carroll of Carrollton," which is a work of great historic value, and the "Life of George Mason of Gunston." The last is in two volumes and was published in 1902. The poems of Frank O. Tieknor, M. D., were edited by Miss Rowland, and she has also contributed to Harper's Magazine, to the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, to the Atlantic Monthly, the Magazine of American History, the Southern Bivouac, the Southern Review, the Home Maker and other periodicals. Miss Rowland has a mind which grasps instinctively the picturesque features of historic incidents, while her literary skill lends them to new and vital interest. She is a daughter of Capt. Isaac S. Rowland, of Detroit, Mich., and his wife, Catherine Armistead (Mason) Rowland, of Virginia, and is prominent both as a society woman and a writer.

Mr. Eugene Lomoline Diller, the well-known Maryland author, also made his home for several years on John street. Mr. Diller is regarded as one of the leading authorities upon Edgar Allan Poe. He wrote a life of Poe in 1870 and "The Life and Letters of Mme. Bonaparte," that passed through three English editions, and was afterward translated and published in France. Other books by Mr. Diller are "The Political Adventures of James G. Blaine," also a "Primer of Criticism," and he has been a contributor to various maga-



THOMAS SMITH GREGORY DABNEY

mathematics, and Prof. Percy L. Kave, chair of history, of the City College, reside on John street, and Prof. Robert H. Wright, also of the City College, resided there until a short time ago.

The numbers of the houses on John street begin at 1200 and run to 1700. This is due to the fact that as the street begins at Dolphin street its numbers correspond with parallel streets.