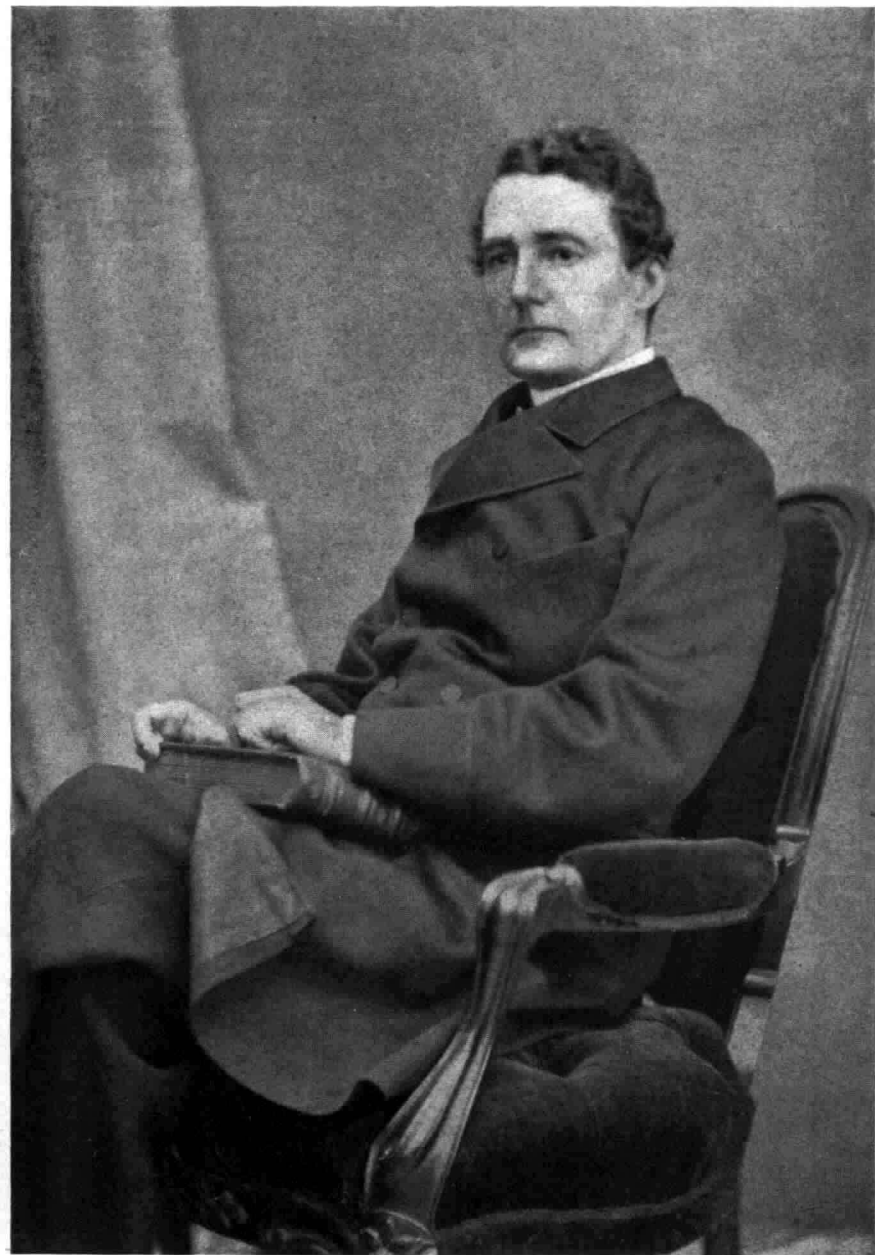


CHARLES JOHN MORRIS GWINN

The late Charles John Morris Gwinn, ex-Attorney-General of Maryland, was a man of great sagacity, quick perceptions, sound judgment, noble impulses, and remarkable force and determination of character. Honorable in every relation of life, and of unblemished reputation, he commanded the respect and confidence of all who knew him. He was held in the highest estimation by his fellow-citizens, and the record of his daily life was filled with evidences of this fact. As he devoted his life to a noble profession, so he was crowned with its choicest rewards. In all professions there are exalted heights to which genius itself dares scarcely soar, and which can only be gained after long years of patient, arduous and unremitting toil, inflexible and unfaltering courage. To this proud eminence Mr. Gwinn had risen, which statement was sustained by the universal opinion of his professional brethren, the best standard of judgment in such cases.

Mr. Gwinn was born in Baltimore, Maryland, October 21, 1822, son of Charles Gwinn, a merchant and importer of West India products. His early education was received in Baltimore's private schools. He was at one time a student at the University of Maryland, in the general educational work which that institution then conducted. Later he was a student at Princeton College, graduating therefrom in 1840 with high honors. Upon his return to Baltimore he studied law with the late John H. Latrobe and was admitted to the bar in 1843. In 1849 he was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, and in the following year was a delegate from Baltimore to the Constitutional Convention which framed the constitution of 1857. He was the first State's Attorney of Baltimore elected under that constitution. The election took place in 1857 and Mr. Gwinn was the Democratic candidate; his opponent on the Whig ticket was S. Teackle Wallis, Esq. The term of office was four years, and Mr. Gwinn declined a renomination. He was one of the presidential electors on the Democratic ticket in 1852. This was the campaign in which President Pierce was elected. Near the close of Mr. Pierce's term, Mr. Gwinn was sent to Europe on a special diplomatic mission for the national government. From 1856 to 1875 Mr. Gwinn devoted his time to the practice of his profession. During that period he became, in conjunction with John H. B. Latrobe, the leading counsel for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company. Mr. Gwinn was counsel for the banking house of Robert Garrett & Sons and for the late A. S. Abell and the late Johns Hopkins. Later he became general counsel in Maryland of the Western Union Telephone Company and the C. & P. Telephone Company. From the time that he drafted the will of Johns Hopkins, Mr. Gwinn became closely allied with the establishing of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins University. He



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was named as one of the first trustees of both institutions, and served in that capacity until his death. In the campaign of 1875 Mr. Gwinn was again pitted against his former opponent, S. Teackle Wallis, Esq. Mr. Gwinn was then a candidate for Attorney General on the Democratic ticket headed by John Lee Carroll for Governor, and Mr. Wallis was the Independent candidate for the same office. Mr. Gwinn was elected, and upon the expiration of his term of four years was re-elected in 1879, when William T. Hamilton was elected governor. The assistance of Mr. Gwinn was given and his advice relied upon in framing the national platform and in conducting the national campaign of the Democratic party in 1876-80-84-97. He was a delegate to the national conventions of the party in 1860-68-80-84-97. He was usually called upon to represent the Maryland delegation on the committee on platform.

Mr. Gwinn was an accomplished scholar and constant student. Through years of diligent effort and searching through the libraries and bookstores of America and London, England, he acquired what was said to be one of the finest private law libraries in the United States. His collection included many rare volumes of English and American books. Thoroughly conversant with the details of his profession, energetic in all his transactions, as well as honorable and high-minded in all the different phases of life, Mr. Gwinn occupied an enviable position among his fellow-citizens, who willingly accorded him a place in their first ranks, not alone for his professional qualities, but for every trait that marks the true Christian gentleman and man of honor. He was a gentleman of culture and refinement, which, coupled with his genial manners and the warmth of his attachment toward friends, secured for him a high place in the affections and esteem of his circle of acquaintances. His heart was ever in sympathy with the sorrows of the unfortunate, and his hand was ever ready to contribute to the alleviation of distress. But perhaps the richest and most beautiful traits of his character were his strong domestic sentiments and habits, which impelled him to seek his highest happiness in the family circle, and rendered him its joy and its light.

Mr. Gwinn was married, in 1857, to Matilda, daughter of the late Reverdy Johnson. They have one child, Mary Machall Gwinn, who married Alfred Hodder; she is deeply interested in educational work.

Mr. Gwinn died at his home, Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, February 11, 1894. The last appearance in court of Mr. Gwinn was February 2, 1894, when he was in the Court of Appeals at Annapolis, the case in which he was interested involving the construction of the will of his father-in-law, the late Reverdy Johnson. The flag at the Annapolis State House was placed at half-mast, by order of Governor Brown, in recognition of Mr. Gwinn's death.
