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TRIBUTE  
TO THE LATE ✓  
JAMES MARION SIMS, M. D., LL.D.  
BY  
W. O. BALDWIN, M. D.,  
OF  
MONTGOMERY, ALA.  
NOVEMBER—1883.

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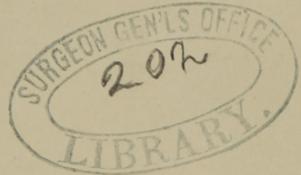


W. O. BALDWIN, M. D.,

OF

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## PREFACE.

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The following Tribute to the Memory of the eminent surgeon and physician, the late Dr. J. MARION SIMS, who recently died in the city of New York, was spoken at a *Memorial Meeting of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery*, and by that body ordered to be published in the *Montgomery Advertiser*. It was afterwards reprinted in *Gaillard's Medical Journal*, January, 1884. At the request of some of the friends and admirers of Dr. Sims it is now published in pamphlet form, with a few additional facts and reflections by the author; who desires to say that whilst some of the prominent facts and incidents in the life of this great man have been briefly glanced at, others of almost equal importance have not been noticed at all. All of these, when collected and fully detailed, will form a large volume of the deepest interest.

W. O. B.



## SKETCHES AND REMINISCENCES

OF THE LIFE OF DR. J. MARION SIMS, AS GIVEN AT THE LATE MEMORIAL MEETING OF THE MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTGOMERY, BY W. O. BALDWIN, M. D., OF MONTGOMERY, ALA.

After the introduction of appropriate preamble and resolutions, with addresses from other gentlemen—

Dr. W. O. BALDWIN said :

*Mr. President and Gentlemen:* In my somewhat lengthened life it has often been my lot to mourn the death of loved friends and associates, and to feel those bitter heart-aches which spring from lost companionship and cherished affections. One by one I have seen many such whose lives had become a prominent part of my pleasures here pass to the spirit land ; but, seldom in all my life has my heart been so filled with gloom as since the morning when the wires brought us the news of the death of my old and loved friend, the companion of my youth, Dr. J. MARION SIMS.

I am sorry, Mr. President, that I am unable to pronounce a fitting eulogy, as you have requested of me, upon the life and achievements of this truly great physician and good man. This duty belongs to an abler tongue than mine and to opportunities more ample than I possess. Rest assured, however, that the task will be performed in due time. The world accorded to him while living the praise of genius, and the still higher praise of consecrating that noble and beneficent genius to suffering woman. The world will not forget such a benefactor. Death has enhanced his claims on our justice, our sympathy, our veneration ; and thus life and death will combine to secure him a proud niche in that temple of fame whose gates already wait to receive him.

I probably know more of Dr. Sims' personal and professional history whilst he lived in Alabama than did any one else now living, except his brother-in-law, Dr. B. R. Jones.

So far as I can learn his history there was nothing particularly striking in his character up to the time when he set-

tled in this city in the fall of 1840. I hear from persons who knew him almost from his childhood, that when a boy he was not particularly remarkable for traits of character which distinguished him above other boys of his age. In his classes at school he stood fairly well, but was not precocious, and attracted no particular attention beyond his handsomely chiseled face, his delicate physique and his genial and playful turn of mind.

After graduating at the renowned College of South Carolina, he studied medicine in the office of Dr. B. C. Jones at Lancaster, a small village in the district in which he was born, and about ten miles from his native spot. He afterwards attended lectures at the medical college at Charleston, South Carolina, but received his diploma at the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. After graduating he returned to Lancaster, and for a short time offered his services to practice medicine in that village. As is often the case with young men attempting to pursue their profession in the towns where they had passed their boyhood, he did not meet with great encouragement, and remaining there but a short time, he removed to this State (Alabama) and located in the fall of 1835 at Mount Meigs, a small town twelve miles from Montgomery. At this place he remained about two years, during which time he returned to Lancaster (in 1836) and married Miss Eliza Theresa Jones, who still survives him. Returning to Mount Meigs with his wife, and remaining a year longer, he removed to Macon county in 1837, and settled in a neighborhood near Cubihatchie Creek, and not far from a little place called Cross Keys. From this place he came to Montgomery in 1840, bringing with him his little family—consisting of, I think, his wife and two little girls. It was at this juncture of his life that I first knew Dr. Sims. He was about six years my senior, yet we soon became intimate friends, I suppose partly from the fact that I was nearer his age than any of the other physicians of the place, and the additional fact that neither of us was overwhelmed with business, and had plenty of leisure to cultivate each other's society. I thought he was the most winning and captivating man I had ever met, and I soon learned to love

him as I did my own brother. Meeting a reciprocal feeling of attachment on his part, our intercourse soon ripened into confidential relations, which were not disturbed during his residence in this place.

When Dr. Sims located in Montgomery, he had scarcely any income except from his profession, and that being quite limited for the first year, he was sorely troubled, for a time, to meet his current expenses.

But his was not a nature to be long discouraged. He was all zeal, energy and pluck. Within a few months after he located here, the operations for club-foot and cross-eyes, the latter of which had but recently been devised by Deiffenbach in 1839, and practiced successfully by him, was creating quite a sensation in Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Toland, then of that city, and now of San Francisco, had but recently returned from Paris, and was making quite a reputation as a surgeon by performing these operations in Columbia. I heard Dr. Sims read from a newspaper published in that city in 1841, the first accounts he had ever seen of the operation for cross-eyes, commenting most favorably upon Dr. Toland's success. This, I believe was the starting point of the great success of Dr. Toland as a surgeon.

Dr. Sims immediately procured for himself a neat case of eye instruments, and was not long in finding cases of each of these unseemly deformities upon which to try his skill.

I was present at his first operation for each. They were attended with beautiful success, and being novel were much talked about. He was, even at that day, a remarkably neat operator, and I think handled the knife with more grace and skill than any man I have ever known of his age. His first successes brought him other cases, until within one or two years he had about finished up and straightened all the cross-eyes and club-feet within forty or fifty miles of Montgomery. This proved to be his stepping stone to general surgery, and within a few years more he had the largest surgical practice in the State, excepting, perhaps, that of Dr. J. C. Knott, 'of Mobile. He was a bold, fearless and dashing operator, and would undertake almost any case that another surgeon dare encounter.

At this day we had no such thing as specialties in this part of the country, and a man who could operate for cross-eyes, would be trusted to operate in the most formidable surgical diseases, and was also considered a good physician in all the various departments of medicine. So that his surgical reputation in turn brought him into general practice, and very soon he had the largest family practice that had ever been done in this place by any physician up to that time. His services were sought by all classes of people, and in all kinds of cases. He was frequently, though still a very young man, called into consultation with the oldest and most experienced physicians of the place, men who had long been established in practice. He was immensely popular, and greatly beloved, so that he was a formidable rival to the best established physicians, and with all these facts it would not be greatly surprising if he did not always escape criticism. But when such things were carried to his ears, they never made the slightest difference in his feelings or his deportment towards the authors of them, but he would meet and pass them with the same kind word and pleasant smile which were always his custom.

When Dr. Sims came to Montgomery we had no medical society for the report of cases and the discussion of medical subjects. Very soon after he located here, he took an active part in the formation of the old medical society, and was from that time one of the leading members in its affairs, and much of the *esprit du corps* which has since distinguished the physicians of the place was due to his example and influence.

Whilst he lived here he performed almost all the important surgical operations known to the science at that day. He was from the first a hard student, and thoroughly methodical in keeping notes, records and histories of his cases, in reading medical journals, and in keeping up with the medical literature of his day.

After the first year of his residence here, he kept a private hospital, in which to care for his surgical cases. This, after he first became interested in his speculum, and in uterine surgery, he devoted exclusively to females, and especially to

such cases in uterine surgery as were calculated to test the value of his speculum, in which he was already deeply interested.

I do not remember the precise year, but it was after he had acquired his great local reputation as a surgeon that he became earnestly engaged in working out what was at first known as his duck-bill speculum, the vaginal speculum, which now bears his name and which was the foundation of the brilliant reputation which he subsequently achieved. He interested his medical friends in the country in hunting up for him difficult cases of uterine diseases which had resisted treatment in the hands of other physicians, and he was delighted when among these he could find a case of visico-vaginal fistula, that loathsome disease of woman, which had previously been regarded as the opprobrium of surgery, and which physicians rather shunned than courted. He became enthusiastic in this as he was in all his pursuits, and was not slow in finding cases of this disgusting disease, particularly among the slave population, whose management in accouchment was generally confined to the ignorant midwives of their own color. His efforts promised success from the start sufficient to encourage him to continue his labors. Failures did not dishearten or repulse him, but he worked on and on, sometimes performing dozens of operations on the same case, until final success was achieved. During all this time he was devising methods and plans for procedure in his operations, and was inventing instruments and appliances as collateral aids to his speculum. Of all his labors, trials and achievements in this direction I think he has somewhere published a statement—probably in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, or it may be found, perhaps, in his book entitled *Notes on Uterine Surgery*, which I have not looked at lately.

If my memory serves me correctly this brings us to about the year 1850, when, in the midst of his investigations, his health failed him and he gave up much of his time to visiting different health resorts in order to regain it. This was a serious drawback to him and came near ending his life. Having no regular or fixed income and receiving now but

little from his professional services his financial affairs suffered greatly, and he again became hard pressed for ready means to support his family, which had grown to be larger and much more expensive than when he came to Montgomery.

About the year 1851 or 1852, I think it was, he began to entertain the thought of leaving Montgomery, and about that time he sold his office to Dr. Nathan Bozeman and took that gentleman into partnership with him. Dr. Bozeman has since that time attained great distinction as a gynecologist himself, and is at this time one of the surgeons to the Woman's Hospital of New York. The plea which he gave for wishing to remove to New York was that he believed this climate was unsuited to his health, but it is also probable that his desire to find a larger field in which to display his discoveries in that department of surgery to which he had lately been devoting his time, had much to do with his desire to change.

From the time he reached New York to make it his home (I think in 1853), most of you are probably as familiar with his movements as I am, and I shall not attempt any further connected account of him.

I will say, however, after further and fully demonstrating the value of his speculum and various other instruments and devices used in his operations and displaying his own superior skill in the use of them, he devoted himself to the thought and purpose of founding, through his exertions, a great charity, in that large metropolis, for the treatment of the disease peculiar to women. You all know of his labors in that direction, for they are now a matter of history. You all know how faithfully he labored with some of the great and benevolent of his own profession, and how he besought and obtained their aid; how he appealed to the hearts and enlisted the help of the influential, the opulent and the philanthropic; how he visited and obtained from the Legislature of the State a donation of fifty thousand dollars; how he besought the city fathers for municipal aid and procured through them a grant of land from the city which constitutes the site on which the hospital now stands; how

he, with ceaseless and tireless energy, worked and planned with a devotion and singleness of purpose rarely met with, until the Woman's Hospital was an accomplished fact. This act of his alone shows what a magnetic power he must have possessed. How he, a stranger; he who had scarcely emerged from the obscurity of a country life and himself in poverty, could so move the hearts of the people of a great city such as New York, and make himself the first and final cause of a great enterprise which, like the Woman's Hospital, should be a blessing to his race, proves how earnestly and untiringly he must have exerted his powers of persuasion over the minds of men. His efforts in the scheme of establishing this hospital, strange to say, were not always without opposition from quarters where it should have been least expected. And yet this opposition probably aided him in his work and was one of his credentials to genius and goodness. True men often owe no little of their power and success to the hostility, jealousy and littleness of others. He was not only a man of genius, but he was a lovable man, full of personal magnetism, full of kind and tender instincts, alive to the romance that redeems life from common place and routine, and abounding in those high impulses which make their subjects benefactors because they are enthusiasts in the pursuit of truth. No man could be an hour with him and not feel the simplicity and fervor of his nature, the straightforwardness of purpose and intent which went into all his intercourse with others, and the absorption of his whole being in the work he had set himself to accomplish.

Dr. Sims' health was never robust, and yet he could endure an amount of prolonged physical exertion which was remarkable for one of his apparently delicate physique. He had lived beyond the age of three score and ten, and yet his death was a great surprise to those of us who knew something of the elasticity of his constitution and the great care he always took of his health. I have seen much of him within the last fifteen years; I have been with him often in New York, and have met him at various other places, and twice during that time he has paid long visits to Montgomery. I was led to believe that he would probably reach

fourscore and ten, so perfect seemed his physical and mental preservation. When I saw him last he looked as if he had not more than reached the meridian of life, and he told me he thought he would live to be ninety—though at that time he had no idea of any organic trouble about his heart. Only a few days before his death I received two letters from him, written on two consecutive days, in which he says: “You can’t imagine how disappointed I am that I could not make you all a visit this fall. But if I live another year you may count on seeing me in Montgomery. But for that dreadful pneumonia, I would certainly have lived to be ninety. But my heart gives me so much trouble that I have given up the idea of longevity; still I hope to hold on awhile longer.” While he was in Rome last, in one of my letters to him, I begged him to stop his wandering, cosmopolitan life, and settle down in New York, and die there when it should please Heaven to end his days. In his reply, under date of Rome, January 14, 1883, he says: “I spend most of my time in Europe because my life is more pleasant here; my fees are much larger, I make more money, my work is lighter, and I have more leisure.” And in the last of the two letters referred to above, he again refers to the same subject, and says: “I cannot follow your advice and settle in New York. I could not possibly do the work here. I must go, and will sail on Thursday, the 8th, on the Celtic. I shall remain about three weeks in Paris, on my way to Rome.” During the latter part of the summer my letters from him were written at the residence of Mr. Yulee, formerly United States Senator from Florida, but now living in Massachusetts. Whilst there he was occupied chiefly in dictating to a stenographer his autobiography. He sent me advance sheets as they had been printed by a type writer. It consists of a brief history of his life, modestly told, interspersed with little anecdotes and life-stories which no one could tell so well as himself, if at all. It is deeply interesting and reads like a romance. He did not expect to complete it before he reached Europe, but I sincerely hope he brought it far enough up to make its completion an easy task for one of his children.

Dr. Sims' domestic relations were most fortunate and happy. The wife who survives him and who now sits in the tearful and hopeless agony of her grief within the precincts of Madison avenue, was the sweetheart of his boyhood. She was a loving and cheerful companion, a wise counsellor, a true helpmeet, and throughout his brilliant but chequered and eventful life she shared his prosperity with joy and gladness and bore his adversities with becoming patience and resignation, but at all times and under all circumstances she was to him "like the ivy to the oak, which clings closest in the storm." It was beautiful to see him in the sanctuary of his own home when surrounded by his wife and children, and to witness their common devotion, where even in his advanced age, he seemed as the "big brother" of the family. And when in their youth, with but two little children hanging upon their hearts, I used to visit them at their modest little home in this place they made a picture of sweet and confiding domestic bliss which has not, in all these changing years, left my memory. At that time I had no matrimonial ties or expectations, but their intercourse, I am sure, left a charm and a lesson on my heart which has not been without its pleasures, as well as profits. In later years he expressed to me the same chivalric and tender devotion to his old sweetheart, and assured me that all he was in this world was due to his fortunate selection of a wife.

As an author Dr. Sims stood well. He was never a voluminous writer on any of the subjects of which he treated. His work entitled "Notes on Uterine Surgery," was his largest, and was quite a respectable volume. It was printed in London in 1866, and was reprinted in several languages. It created quite a sensation from the number of original, novel and valuable lessons which it taught. It also met with some sharp criticisms, and, perhaps, it was not entirely free from blemishes. But had he lived according to his expectations, he would have corrected all these in good time, as it is known he was engaged in re-writing it, and had already completed several new chapters and had revised others. Take it, however, as it stands, and with all its de-

fects there has been no work published on uterine surgery within the last century that has been as full of original thought and invention, or that has contributed so largely to the advancement of gynecology as this book has done. I will not attempt to go into detail about his writings. Although I am somewhat familiar with them all, I have no list of them with me. Though his contributions have not been long they were not infrequent, and many valuable essays on different subjects were furnished by him to the medical press of his day. It is not the length or the number of the books, however, which a man may write, but it is the originality and the value of the material with which he fills them which makes them desirable. His were all terse, original and eminently practical. His style was peculiar; it was altogether didactic, and it was his own.

I cannot, either, undertake, in the short space of time allotted to occasions like this, to go into detail in enumerating the number of instruments which he invented or the operations or operative procedures which he devised or planned, but their number was immense and shows how fertile of ingenuity was his brain and how busily and skillfully it must have worked. He does not seem to be entitled to priority in the discovery of metallic sutures, but he was certainly entitled to great credit in their revival and the vast prominence which he gave them.

Dr. Sims was never connected with a medical school, but only because he did not desire it. There was probably no institution of the kind within the limits of all this country, that would not most gladly have given him a professorship could he have been induced to accept it.

Dr. Sims's clients, especially in Europe, seem to have been people of great wealth, and from his acknowledged superiority in his special department, he was able to command the largest fees, and yet he never became rich. He also had a proper appreciation of the value of his services, and usually demanded an adequate honorarium where his patient's purse could afford it, but when it came into his possession it seems that it was either lavishly spent or unwisely invested. (We are glad to learn, however, he left a

competency for his family.) He was also a man of large charities. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon these minor points in his life. The day which made him great was the day when the idea of his speculum first dawned upon him—that day when he first conceived the thought of throwing an abundance of light into the vagina and around the womb and at the same time obtaining ample space to work and ply his instruments. This alone is enough to carry his fame down to the remotest ages, and his historian will need no more brilliant facts than these on which to rest the immortality of his name. This instrument caused his name to flash over the medical world like a meteor in the night.

Gynecology to-day would not deserve the name of a separate and cultivated science but for the light which Sims' speculum and the principles involved in it, have thrown upon it. It has been to diseases of the womb what the printing press is to civilization, what the compass is to the mariner, what steam is to navigation, what the telescope is to astronomy, and grander than the telescope because it was the work of one man. Those great philosophers, Galileo, Gregory, Herschel and Sir Isaac Newton, all claim and deserve successive parts of the telescope. Sims alone discovered his speculum, and like Minerva, from the brain of Jupiter, it sprang from his hands alone, full fledged and perfect when he gave it to the world. His work was so complete that it is said that no alteration or modifications, which have since been made upon it up to this time, have been regarded as improvements. The distinguished Dr. Emmet, of New York, who is peer to any living gynecologist, and whose reputation is world wide, has been heard to say within the last few years, that so perfect was Sims' speculum and other instruments, that he had never been able to improve upon one of them. No man can divide the honor of his speculum with him, and he deserves to be called the father of modern gynecology.

Thus, starting amid the sloughs and swamps of Alabama, having for his patients the most humble in the land, often spending his nights by the bedside of the sick found in the slave huts of these localities, without family influence, him-

self poor and with nothing to aid him save a strong will and a careful preparation combined with a devotion to purpose, he rose by the splendor of his own genius above all obstacles, and before he has reached the meridian of life, we find him one of the acknowledged discoverers and benefactors of the world, and ranking as one of the foremost men in his own country. A few years later we hear of him in all the great capitals of Europe; sometimes the guest and pet of Emperors, often receiving honors and distinctions from learned and enlightened scientific bodies, courted by the *elite* of his own profession, sought by the nobility and receiving titles and decorations from courts representing and boasting the foremost civilization the world has ever known.

I believe that before the next decade shall have passed away, when time with its silent throb shall have buried those antagonisms, rivalries and jealousies which often spring up around the paths of great discoverers, it will be the settled verdict of the medical men of the world, that Sims has lived to a greater purpose than any man in any age who had preceded him in his special department.

Gentlemen, there is one page in the life of this great man, one scene in the living panorama of which he constituted a part, that I would fain not disturb, and one on which I would prefer to drop the mantle of oblivion, were it not that it is already a matter of history, and perhaps it is due to the memory of Dr. Sims that I should refer to it. I allude to the night when, as one of the surgeons, he last met the governors of the Woman's Hospital, and which closed forever his connection with that institution.

It is said that republics are ungrateful, and it therefore should not be surprising if even the governors of charitable institutions should sometimes forget their greatest benefactors, and smite the cheek of him whose hand was chiefly instrumental in calling them into existence. The Woman's Hospital was Dr. Sims' bantling. The creation of its germ and the conception of its possibilities were the outgrowth of those discoveries which emanated from his brain alone, and its final success was due to his untiring exertions. He

was proud of his work; he was proud of the child of his own life, and when the Woman's Hospital was completed he regarded it as the largest pearl in all his greatness—the central jewel in his crown of glory. But whilst it was the glory of his life it was its humiliation too!

Those governors, who were in fact but little more than figure-heads so far as the privileges and duties of the surgeons were concerned, had taken upon themselves the privilege of regulating the affairs of the operating room, and of saying to the surgeons that only fifteen guests or spectators should be permitted to be present at any one operation. Dr. Sims took this occasion for telling them that he had not obeyed this order of theirs, and would not, and that if they insisted on enforcing this rule his resignation was at their disposal. He claimed the right to invite such numbers as his own judgment and inclination might dictate.

Their action in assuming to restrict his privileges, in this respect, he regarded as without authority. To a man of honor their action must have been offensive.

In effect it accused him of being ignorant of the surgeon's duties in the sick room, and of wanting in a proper regard for the feelings and sensibilities of his patients. All this made it insulting and galling to him, and especially as he knew it to be an unauthorized invasion of his own prerogatives, inherent to the office which he held, and altogether outside of their accredited duties.

All the world over, the creed of common courtesy which exists between the laity and profession makes the physician the autocrat of the sick chamber and the privilege of the surgeon as to whom he will invite to his operating table or room, has never before been restricted. If it was wrong to invite all who desired to attend, or all whom the surgeon might wish to witness his operation, why invite fifteen? It was not necessary to invite any! The hospital service afforded all necessary assistance. If it would not offend the sensibilities of a woman to have fifteen guests present, would it shock her modesty very greatly to have eighteen, or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, or any number that the room could accommodate conveniently? Besides, it is well known that

the patients in this hospital are rarely ever seen by the spectators until after they have been placed upon the operating table and under the influence of an anæsthetic, when the table is rolled into position. And another and even stronger reason exists against this restriction. To serve all the purposes in the interest of woman, for which this hospital was capable, it was doubtless intended or in contemplation by Dr. Sims from the first that it should be used as a school, so far as possible, for teaching physicians from the country, or city, or other cities, or from other States or nations, who might temporarily be in New York for the purpose of studying that class of diseases, and would like to see these operations.

But suppose these governors could find nothing in all these facts to make them retrace their steps, could they find nothing in the fact that Dr. Sims thought they were in error and wished them to reconsider their unjust and unwise action? Could they not have conceded something to the opinions of the man who had created the Hospital, who had devoted fifteen or twenty of the best years of his life to its service, who had passed many weary days and sleepless nights in the promotion of its interest and had carried it upon his heart, as none of them had ever done? They knew he had placed himself in a position in relation to the order which they had issued from which he could not recede without loss of dignity or even honor; they knew he did not wish to sever his connection with the hospital, and they knew he did not wish his resignation accepted, and yet, with a heartless and cruel inflexibility, they refused to abolish their miserable order and accepted his resignation; thus stabbing him in the most vital spot of his life and mortifying him as nothing else had ever done.

In this difficulty Dr. Sims had the sympathy of a large portion of the medical men of America. And as an expression of their sentiments in this direction, the American Medical Association, at its very next meeting unanimously elected him its President. He was elected in Louisville in 1875 and presided at the meeting held in Philadelphia the succeeding year, known as the "centennial session." This

was the very highest honor which could have been paid him by the medical men of his own country. Whilst Dr. Sims in every way deserved this high compliment, and was himself an honor to the position, I yet have reason to know that he was selected at this particular time over other distinguished aspirants, not only that they might thus express their admiration of his exalted worth, but also in approval of the manly, dignified and honorable position which he had assumed and maintained in his controversy with the managers or governors of the Woman's Hospital.

When the names of these sickly sentimental governors shall long since have passed to oblivion, and their foolish rules and regulations, in connection with this hospital, shall have been wisely forgotten by the world, the name of Sims shall be known and read of all men as its great founder and patron, and emblazoned all over its walls "from turret to foundation stone" as its ensign-armorial and shield to guard it against evil and unwise spirits.

Nor can posterity accept the imputation as true or just that the man who had planned and schemed and worked even in the midnight solitude of his office that his life might finally achieve this good to woman, could be false to any of the proper delicacies or courtesies due to her sex. I will not pursue this subject further—it is not a pleasant one to dwell upon. He is now far beyond the cruel malice or petty jealousies of those who bore a part in inflicting this mortification upon him; and the manhood which recognizes the great value of his life will see to it that his name does not suffer neglect in the grave.

The friendship and affection which valued his exalted worth and appreciated the beauty of his life would not shadow his claims to the admiration and gratitude of the world by exaggerating them, or by saying that he possessed none of the weaknesses common to human nature. He no doubt had his share of these. It is known to his friends that he was sometimes fretful, impatient and intolerant about minor matters or little crosses, and when vexed or angered, did not usually attempt to conceal his displeasure. He was at times excitable, jealous of his rights and keenly

alive to any encroachment upon his claims to those discoveries which he thought belonged exclusively to himself, and when he considered them unjustly invaded he was offended and outspoken to a degree beyond the reserve usually found in men of less mercurial dispositions. I do not refer to these things as faults, for they, like his other traits, but go to prove that he was a man without guile or deceit—too honest to dissemble, too noble to disguise. Vices he had none, or if he had I never knew them. If he had faults they were harmless to others and deserve the name of frailties or foibles rather than faults, and were to his brilliant life only as the spots on the sun are to the splendor of that luminary.

For nearly half a century our friend pursued his profession with an energy and devotion which was as inspiring to himself as they were beneficial to medical science and the welfare of humanity.

The selfishness of renown had not a charm for him. Distinction he valued as every high minded professional man values it for its influence and intended usefulness. It came to him without the least resort to doubtful means, and it remained to him as an inalienable possession. No wreath upon his brow was other than a garland of just and honorable fame; and when death came, it had no frost to wither a leaf in the chaplet that two continents had woven for his crown. His splendid reputation is perfectly secure. It rests on such virtues, such talents and such works as give to the name of SIMS a mutual pledge of IMMORTALITY.

Pardon me, gentlemen, for a little personal allusion to myself connected with Dr. Sims.

From the time when Dr. Sims located in Montgomery up to the period when he left to cast his lot in the great city of New York, he was my warm and devoted friend and my loved companion. He was open and confiding to his friends. I was proud of his confidence and affection and gave him in return the full measure of my own. The fact which I am about to refer to is known to but a few only of the older members of this body, and is this: A few weeks or months after he had removed from Alabama to New York, a little misunderstanding grew up between us, which resulted in

our estrangement, and for many years afterwards all intercourse between us ceased. This has always been to me one of the bitterest episodes of my life, and memory never recalls the event without a feeling of sadness and regret. In this rupture I was probably more to blame than he, and I have no doubt that had not our paths in life widely diverged at this time, that the heart burning which our separation had caused to last for long years would have been forgiven and forgotten in a few days.

In 1868 I made a visit to New York, and whilst I was there he returned from a prolonged visit to Europe. The first time we met was at the opening of the Bellvue Medical college, when Dr. L. A. Sayre was to deliver the introductory address. We were each, without the knowledge of the other, invited to go on the rostrum, and were to meet in the faculty room to join the professors for that purpose. I did not know that Dr. Sims was in the room, and at the time I entered he did not observe me, but soon I felt some one clasp me around the neck with both arms, and looking I observed my long lost friend Sims, who only said "Baldwin, my old friend." We had no words of explanation, but from that moment all feeling of resentment left my heart, and again I loved him as a brother. Since then, our intercourse by letter and otherwise has been constant, confidential and free.

I look back now upon my association with him as one of the providences of my life, and his death as one of its bitterest afflictions.

### DR. SIMS' RETURN TO MONTGOMERY IN 1877.

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It is known that the first advancement of Dr. Sims towards the great distinction which he afterwards attained, commenced in Montgomery, where he resided for a period of twelve years. In the year of 1877, after an absence of nearly twenty-five years, he returned to his old home to make a visit to his friends. The physicians of the place, members of the *Medical and Surgical Society*, in anticipation of his arrival, made arrangements to receive him in a manner becoming his rank in the scientific world. The proceedings on this occasion were published in the *Montgomery Advertiser*, but as this paper had but a limited circulation outside of Alabama, and as the proceedings contained some interesting historical facts and incidents of a pleasing character, as related partly by Dr. Sims himself, it has been suggested that it would not be out of place to add them to this pamphlet for distribution among those friends who never met with them before as forming a portion of this brief sketch of his life.

W. O. B.

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[From the *Montgomery Advertiser*.]

ARRIVAL OF DR. J. MARION SIMS—THE COURTESIES EXTENDED TO HIM WHILE IN MONTGOMERY.

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DR. J. MARION SIMS, the distinguished Gynæcologist and founder of the Woman's Hospital of New York, arrived in our city on Wednesday evening, and was met at the depot and escorted to the residence of his brother-in-law, Dr. B. R. Jones, by the committee of four from the *Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery*: Drs. R. F. Michel, W. C. Jackson, J. B. Gaston and James Berney.

On entering the drawing-room, Dr. Michel addressed the distinguished visitor as follows:

As chairman of the Reception committee of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery, I come with these gentlemen, Dr. Sims, to welcome you to the city; and to tender most earnestly, our heartfelt congratulations on seeing you once more upon the soil of your former scenes of labor in the profession you have so much adorned by your intelligence, learning and skill.

To tell you how gratefully we have watched your advancement to the very first rank of your profession, not only in this country, but in the old world, is but to reiterate what you so well must understand.

The members of our Society, [of which you are an honorary member,] have requested us to solicit your presence at a banquet, to be given in honor of your arrival amongst us. Please, therefore, select for this purpose, an evening most suitable to your convenience.

DR. SIMS, with much feeling, replied:

That on visiting his old homestead in South Carolina, he was taken sick, and had not up to this time entirely recuperated his strength. However, after thanking Dr. Michel for the kind and complimentary manner in which the invitation from the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery had been conveyed, he accepted the courtesy, and selected Tuesday evening, March 20th, as the time most convenient for him to meet the members of the Society.

At the hour appointed last evening, the beautiful hall was well illuminated; and the walls decorated with drawings illustrating different important problems in physiology, gave to the entire room a most scientific appearance.

Dr. Sims was presented to the Society by Dr. Michel, when Dr. B. R. Jones, President of the Society, said:

*Dr. Sims:*—Sir, it is with no ordinary feelings of pleasure, that I welcome you to the Hall of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery. With a large portion of its mem-

bers you are personally acquainted, the others have known you by reputation. They and we have felt proud as we have watched your advancement to the highest honors of our Profession.

Sir, we have ever claimed you as one of us from the foundation of the Sydenham Medical Society of this city, of which, during its existence in former years, you were always one of its most active members, and in the organization of this Society you were elected one of its first honorary members. But, sir, I will leave it to one, and the only one left of your conferees, when you commenced your medical career in this city—Dr. Wm. O. Baldwin—to address you in expression of our high gratification in having you again with us.

Dr. Baldwin, who had been selected by the Society to receive the distinguished savaan, as he had been many years ago his intimate associate and companion, addressed him in the following beautiful and dignified language:

*Dr. Sims:* As the representative of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery, I am commissioned to tender you a hearty welcome to our hall, and to the courtesis and hospitalities of our Association, in honor of the distinguished services which you have rendered to the science of medicine and surgery.

I feel myself incompetent, sir, to express to you in fitting terms the just pride which the members of the medical profession of our State, and especially those of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery, feel in the renown which you have won since you left our borders. Yet, it is perhaps proper that one of the few remaining of the brotherhood with whom you were associated in youth, and who witnessed the promises of your morning life, should be selected to tender this testimonial of our appreciation of your labors.

After an absence of twenty-five years, you are again in the halls of the first medical society to which you ever belonged. Sir, your eyes will wander in vain over this assembly in search of the faces of most of those with whom you were

accustomed to meet and exchange friendly greetings in former years, and you will recognize but few whose hands you grasped as you departed from our midst upon the great mission of your life. I am pained to remind you that most of those who then answered to roll-call in this society have passed from the stage of this world's action and now sleep the sleep that knows no waking.

Sir, we claim you as an Alabamian. South Carolina may assert the honor of having rocked the cradle of your infancy and of having nurtured your boyhood, but it was here in Montgomery that your greatness had its first dawning. It was here that your genius found its earliest expression, and it was here it first took its flight and asserted its claims to the applause of strangers. It was here that your sleepless industry, your anxious toil and your sublime fidelity to purpose carved out those surgical devices and appliances which have made your name so justly famous, and it was here that you first reduced those inventions to that practical utility in the treatment of the surgical diseases peculiar to woman which has not only challenged the admiration of the great and learned in your own profession, but has also won the homage of the crowned heads of Europe, and made your name a familiar word in all the great capitals of the civilized world.

It is surely no small honor or trifling subject for pride and congratulation to the State which claims to be the mother of your early manhood, to see that the enlightened courts of the old world, with their splendid civilization, have recognized the vast resources of your genius and the importance of those great discoveries which have justified them in ranking your name among those of the foremost men of the age, and in conferring upon you honors, titles and decorations due only to those who by their achievements in science, literature, art or statesmanship have accomplished some grand purpose in life or conferred some lasting benefit on mankind. It is therefore eminently proper, upon your visit to the home of your youth, after an absence of so many years, that your early companions, associates and friends of the medical profession should desire to greet you and pay you that

homage which is so justly your due. We wish, sir, to congratulate you upon the success of your labors and the usefulness of your life, as well as upon the splendor of the fame which these have given you.

Indeed, sir, to those who like myself are familiar with the difficulties and struggles of your early professional career, the grand success of your life would seem almost as a romance, were it not for the solid and lasting benefits it has conferred upon humanity.

Let me also congratulate you upon the fine preservation of your physical and mental health. I am glad to see that Heaven has dealt so lightly and kindly with your person; yet you are no longer the youth with whom, though somewhat your junior, I commenced my professional career. Often in the solitude of my own quiet life I have called to mind those good old days when we were young together, and as I looked through the vista of the years that have since passed, and remembered your hopeful and cheerful enthusiasm, and your ardent devotion to your profession, which often excited me to greater zeal and effort, I could not wonder at the heroism you have displayed on other fields, or the brilliant reputation you have achieved.

Then turning to the members of the Society, Dr. Baldwin said: The association of things always effects us. A page or a leaf torn from the little book of memory which we have carefully stored away in youth, becomes most precious when circumstances arise which bring to mind the most trifling fact there recorded.

A review or contemplation of the life of one with whom we ourselves entered the world derives a larger interest from the fact that we were personally observant of the adventures, enterprises and resources which contributed to its success, and finds additional entertainment if we can call to mind the livery or outward appearance and habit with which it rushed into the world to work out the destinies awaiting it. In this connection, I well remember a friend with whom I associated much, about a third of a century ago, when we were young doctors together—moved by the same sympathies, hopes and ambitions, and striving in friendly rivalry

for a prize in the same noble calling. He had a handsome face, with a benevolent, lively and winning expression of countenance, dark eyes, chestnut hair, figure erect, slender and boyish looking, mercurial in his disposition, enthusiastic in his pursuits, unaffected in his address, kind in his deportment and always willing to do or say something to make others feel pleasant and happy. With these traits he possessed more personal magnetism than any man I ever met. It seems to me I can see him at this very moment with his captivating boyish tricks, and his other engaging levities, which being practised only on proper occasions, never failed to make him a most charming companion. One of the pictures of his daily life here, now most vivid upon my memory, is that one when I have seen him seated in his curiously fashioned buggy, which he playfully called his "Grecian Galley," with his mettlesome little sorrel mare between the shafts, with her shining red coat, her gay white face, and her sinewy white legs, looking as proud as Juno. I think he called her "Kitty Jumper." His buggy was indeed a queer and notable looking little land craft—and by the way, was the first four-wheeled vehicle ever used in Montgomery for the purpose of practicing medicine. At first this was quite a displeasing innovation upon the customs of our staid old physicians, as previous to that time we had all been going on horse-back with Doctors' saddle bags, or in the old fashioned two wheeled sulky, and considered these the proper paraphernalia of a physician as he was seen going his daily rounds. We soon, however, found this innovation of the young Doctor to be only a marked improvement upon our primitive mode of locomotion, as the world has since done with his innovations upon science—except that we could never come quite up to the style and fashion of this particular vehicle, which probably never had a duplicate.

Thus seated in his buggy, with his little negro boy by his side, and panoplied with a medicine box and case of surgical instruments at his feet, I well remember the picture as it used to pass rapidly to and fro in our streets, with the Doctor's whip nervously waving over his little favorite, as

if he did not intend to lose any practice through the lazy habit of slow driving.

But all things upon this earth must change. Time with its ceaseless and silent throb at length dissolves every living panorama, and that which constituted my picture has not escaped this all-pervading law.

The buggy, the horse, the medicine box, and perhaps the case of surgical instruments, it is reasonable to suppose, have long since turned to dust and ashes—the little negro, it is to be hoped, has reached the dignified position provided by the “Fifteenth Amendment”—whilst he who formed the central figure in the picture, the young Doctor, still lives, as the renowned originator and founder of one of the noblest charities ever erected to woman—the Woman’s Hospital of New York. Through his own unaided efforts he has achieved results which have throbbled a new life into the science of gynecology and awakened for it an interest and influence which have extended far beyond the confines of his own country, and indeed to the outer borders of civilization. For original invention and operative skill, he stands in his special department with but few rivals and no superior, and has had more honors and distinctions conferred upon him by his own and foreign countries than any living American surgeon. And now, at the age of sixty-four years, I will venture to say, has as much metal and pluck as did the little spirited mare which so proudly carried him in the days of his youth.

I have referred to these little incidents in the early life of my old friend, chiefly because they bring pleasant reminiscences to my own mind, and partly because they demonstrate the fact that the germs of great thought and inventive genius which are destined to receive the admiration of the world, can as well be hid under a light, happy, careless and sometimes seemingly thoughtless exterior, as in the recesses of that grave and severe mind, whose outward look is that of stern and dignified reserve.

Then turning again to Dr. Sims, he said:

Sir, you may not be able to fill up the blanks in the picture I have drawn, but I believe there are some within the

hearing of my voice and many old citizens outside of the Hall who will have no difficulty in that respect.

In conclusion, Sir, permit me to say, that if your achievements within the domain of science, or if your exalted worth as a benefactor of your race, should hereafter rear the monumental marble to perpetuate your name as a great physician, still those simple, unaffected, kind and genial qualities of the heart, so peculiarly your own, and so well remembered by the companions of your youth, will ever with them constitute the charm and glory of your life as a man.

Let me again welcome you to our city and to the arms and hearts of your old friends, and express the hope that the Providence which has watched over and prospered all your efforts, will still spare you many years of active, useful life, and shed upon your pathway its richest bounties.

In response to Dr. Baldwin's remarks, Dr. Sims said:

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Medical and Surgical Society of Montgomery:* I thank you with all my heart for this kind reception, and you, sir, for the kindly manner in which you have been pleased to speak of my labors. A warm personal friendship of nearly forty years naturally gives a roseate hue to your recollection of by-gone days. It is seldom given to any man to live to see himself fully understood and his labors fully appreciated. On this score I certainly have no cause of complaint, for wherever I go, whether in our own country or in the Old World, the same generous recognition awaits me. But not so demonstratively as here on my return to my old home, the scene of my early struggles. Sir, if I were a conquering hero or a great statesman, you could not vie stronger with each other in trying to do me honor. But when such an ovation is given to a mere Doctor, even if he is in deeds a philanthropist, and in heart a patriot, it seems almost paradoxical.

Forty-two years ago I left my native State—South Carolina—to seek a home in Alabama. I intended going to Marengo county, but circumstances conspired to arrest my progress.

The head and front of this conspiracy is my old friend, Dr. Charles S. Lucas, who is with us this evening. He was the first friend I ever made in Alabama, and has remained my friend ever since. Many little incidents have occurred in the last few days to touch my heart—first, the visits and congratulations of my medical friends; second, of my lay-friends; third, of former patients; fourth, of my former slaves; and fifth, when my octogenarian friend, Dr. Lucas, heard I was here, he mounted his horse and rode fifteen miles to see me. We met, and our tears were mingled for auld lang syne.

Well, I remained two years at Mount Meigs. The late Dr. Bolling A. Blakey, of Macon county, then offered me a partnership, and accepting it, I went to Macon county and lived there three years, and in 1840 I came to Montgomery. You claim me as an Alabamian, and rightly, too, for all that I am I owe to Montgomery and to the people of Montgomery. I am frank to acknowledge my allegiance, and can do it without treason to my native State. When I came among you I was young, inexperienced, in bad health, and very poor. I had nothing whatever to recommend me—nothing but honesty, industry and determination to succeed. You received me kindly and with the greatest hospitality. You were to me good Samaritans. You literally fulfilled toward me the command of our Savior, for “I was naked and ye clothed me; an hungered and ye gave me to eat; thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was sick and ye visited me,” and if I had been in prison I am sure you would have liberated me as soon as possible. Your Crommelins and your Pollards gave me houses to live in till I was able to procure one for myself. Your merchants gave me credit for food and raiment for my family when I had not a dollar in the world to pay for them. And no young man was ever treated more kindly by his seniors in the profession. How, then, could I ever be otherwise than grateful and loyal to those who were my friends when I most needed friends.

I have long felt that I belonged to a generation that is past and gone. But never till this moment have I realized this solemn fact more intensely. In looking round this

room I see that you, sir, and I are the only survivors of the noble band of brothers who were our companions in 1840.

Sir, as I said before, you and I are the only survivors of the men of 1840. You are many years my junior, and I hope and pray that you may long live to advance the science you have done so much to adorn, and to exert amongst your brethren the benign influence that has characterized your whole life.

Again, gentlemen, let me thank you for the distinguished honor you have conferred upon me.

After these interesting proceedings, Dr. Sims was escorted by the members of the society, in procession, to the mansion of Dr. Baldwin, on Perry street, this gentleman having kindly tendered his house to the Medical Society as the best place for the banquet they had prepared for their distinguished guest.

The company sat down to the table about 10 o'clock, and from then on until a late hour, there was literally "a feast of reason and a flow of soul." In the centre of the table was a beautiful stand of flowers, and above it a wreath, in the centre of which the word "Sims" was most artistically arranged in flowers. Many toasts were offered and appropriately responded to. Altogether the evening was one long to be remembered by all who were present.





