

Gilman

Dr. Walker
from his friend
The Author

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

SAMUEL W. MOORE, M. D.,

LATE FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, ETC., ETC.

BY

C. R. GILMAN, M. D.

NEW YORK.



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THE life of a practicing physician is very rarely one of startling adventures or striking events. His duties, though important as the value of life itself, are chiefly performed in the privacy of the sick-room; and of consequence the manner in which he performs them is known only to the small circle of loving friends who gather around the bed of the sick or the dying.

Such a life, it may seem, presents but a barren field to the biographer. Bid him chronicle the victories of the warrior, the triumphs of the statesman, and he will devote to the task all his most brilliant powers, and do it with pride and pleasure. But to trace the every-day life of one who has "pursued the noiseless tenor of his way" in that obscurity which necessarily and very properly shrouds most of the labors of the physician, whose path has been from sick bed to sick bed, and whose contests have been only with the great enemy, death,—this, to the ambitious biographer, may seem to be an ungrateful task. But it is not, or at least ought not to be an ungenial labor, to speak of a life devoted to the service of humanity, spent in the unostentatious performance of varied and important duties. Especially should the task of tracing such a

course be grateful when the duties of the man have been performed in the spirit of a Christian.

Such a task I have imposed upon myself, in attempting to write a biographical sketch of the life and character of Samuel W. Moore, M. D. whose recent removal from among us, while it has plunged a bereaved family into deep affliction, has spread throughout a large circle of loving friends and strongly attached patients, a deep and abiding sorrow "that they shall see his face no more forever."

Samuel W. Moore was born in New York city, 11th October, 1786, the son of Dr. William Moore, long one of our most highly esteemed and successful practitioners. From early childhood his constitution was frail, and the delicacy of his bodily organization was equaled by the gentleness of his temper, and the kindliness of his feelings.

Such an one might seem to be unfitted to bear the grave responsibilities, and act amid the appalling dangers which so often beset the physician's path; but this, I believe, is not so; and the success of Dr. Moore adds another to the list of those physicians whose lives prove that it is not so. The truth seems to be that a strong sense of moral duty will so nerve the heart and strengthen the hand, that the most acute sensibility will only make its possessor more eager to relieve those sufferings by which his compassion is so strongly excited. Dr. Moore received his early intellectual training from Mr. Samuel Rudd, and entered Columbia College at the age of sixteen years, in 1802. His connection with Columbia College was probably rendered more pleasant and profitable by the fact that his uncle, Benjamin Moore, D. D., Bishop of New York, was then president of the institution. Several of his classmates still survive among us, and we noticed two of them among the sorrowing friends who assembled at his funeral. He graduated in regular course in 1806, and immediately commenced the study of medicine, under the guidance of his father, attending lectures in the medical department of Columbia College; in which Dr. Wright Post then taught Anatomy, Dr. Richard Bailey, Surgery, Dr. Hammersley, Theory and Practice of Physic, Dr. J. R. B. Rodgers, Midwifery, and Dr. David Hosack, Botany. From those distinguished teachers he received, in 1810, the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and immediately entered into full practice, taking a share of the large business of his father. This arrangement continued until 1824, when the elder Dr. Moore died, having practiced physic forty-four years. His son now took his place among the prominent physicians of New-York, with a large circle of patients, and a still larger

one of friends; for such was the unaffected kindness of his heart, and such the graceful amenity of his manners, that few became his patients without remaining ever his attached friends. With his professional brethren, his position was peculiarly pleasant; a thorough medical education, and a large measure of well-improved experience, gave to his opinions deserved weight, and insured him as a physician a strong hold on the confidence of physicians; while his conduct, on all occasions so perfectly upright, his manner so dignified yet so gentle, gave him as a man the highest place in their regard: to quarrel with such a man was simply impossible, and to distrust him seemed not so much a wrong, as a folly. Of him it can truly be said, that after a successful career of more than forty years, and that in times of many professional contests, he made many friends, and not one single enemy in his own profession. *Oh, si sic omnes!* In 1824 he was appointed one of the physicians of the New-York Hospital; for this situation he had moral qualifications which are more important, and alas! more rare, than professional skill. His conscientiousness insured to the poorest and most degraded of his pauper patients a full measure of his attention; while his amiability and benevolence made him the friend of poor and rich alike. In 1828, he was compelled, by failing health, to retire from a position which he was so well fitted to adorn.

In 1828, Dr. Moore was appointed Trustee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and continued, from that period to the end of his life, to take an earnest interest in the prosperity of that institution. At the time of his death, he was the senior member of the board. In 1849, on the reappearance of the cholera, Dr. Moore, in conjunction with his friends Dr. Joseph M. Smith and Dr. John B. Beck, was appointed medical counselors to the Committee of the Sanitary Board of Health. To the duties of this position, made more onerous by the fact that his associate Dr. Beck was soon, by the state of his health, disabled from taking his share of them, Dr. Moore devoted all his energies; and the Report published by the Committee affords most satisfactory evidence of the ability and faithfulness with which this important public duty was performed. For several years, the health of Dr. Moore, never very robust, had been gradually declining, and he felt himself obliged to contract the sphere of his professional labor. Still he was unwilling entirely to give up the practice of his profession, and very many of his old friends were still more unwilling to be given up. In March last he met with an accident, which, though not immediately followed by grave symptoms, caused, as after-

wards appeared, effusion of blood into the cavity of the arachnoid. He continued to visit a few friends, and his venerable form was still seen at church; till, in July, paralysis very gradually supervened; and, on the 26th of August, 1854,

“Gently as an infant to his sleep,
Went he to death”—

Dr. Moore married in 1813, Emily, daughter of William Constable, Esq., by whom he had thirteen children, ten of whom yet survive to give unto God most “heartly thanks, for the good example of him who, having finished his course in faith, doth now rest from his labors.”

