

## WILLIAM HENRY BAKER, M.D.

Born in Medford, Mass., March 11, 1845. Elected to Society, 1882. Council, 1886-1889. Vice-president, 1891 and 1893. Honorary Fellow, 1910.

Harvard University, 1872.

Instructor in gynecology in the Harvard University, 1875-1882. Professor of gynecology in the Harvard University, 1882-1895. Founder and visiting surgeon, and in 1908 surgeon emeritus to the Free Hospital for Women, Boston.

Twice honorary president of the International Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Member of the British Gynecological Society and of the Boston Society for Medical Improvement, etc. Past member of the Boston Obstetrical Society.

Died, 1915.

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of prominent members of the medical profession

WILLIAM HENRY BAKER, M.D.,

BOSTON, MASS.

DR. WILLIAM HENRY BAKER was born in Medford, Mass., March 11, 1845, and is descended through a line of honorable ancestors from Richard Baker, who came from England and made his home in Dorchester, Mass., 1630.

Dr. Baker's father, the Rev. Abijah R. Baker, D.D., was a Congregational clergyman, and his mother, Harriet Woods, a well known author and a woman of unusual beauty of character, was the daughter of the distinguished divine, Rev. Leonard Woods, D.D., LL.D., who, for many years, was President of the Theological Seminary at Andover, Mass.

After passing his boyhood days at Wellesley, where his father was then settled, Dr. Baker continued his education at the Atkinson Academy, N. H. He left school at eighteen years of age, and was engaged for six years in business in New York City. While possessing, to an eminent degree, all the qualifications necessary for success in the mercantile world, and although the outlook for his future was most flattering, yet he felt that his life's work lay in another direction.

His mother had been an invalid from the time of his birth, and often suffered acutely. On this account Dr. Baker gave up his business interests and entered upon the study of medicine in Harvard University, from which he received the degree of M.D. in 1872.

After serving one year in the Boston City Hospital, he went as interne to the Woman's Hospital in New York, and was assistant for eighteen months to Drs. J. Marion Sims, T. Addis Emmet, T. Gaillard Thomas, and E. R. Peaslee.

From the fact of his Puritan descent and early associations it is not surprising that he should select the city of Boston as the field for his future labor. Thus we find him at the outset of his career, in 1874, physician to the Woman's Room in the Boston Dispensary.

Here he began to disseminate the knowledge he had acquired from his masters in the profession at the Woman's Hospital in New York.

About a year later he was appointed Clinical Instructor of the Diseases of Women at the Harvard Medical School,

and for the next twenty years he continuously taught that subject there. Indeed it may be said that he created that department in the college. In 1882 he had the honor of being made Professor of Gynæcology in Harvard University, and he held that chair until a few months ago, when he resigned in order to devote more time to special medical researches, and also to his work at the Free Hospital for Women, a charity which owes to him its inception, organization and pre-eminent success.

Realizing the need of an institution in Boston for the exclusive treatment of poor women afflicted with the troubles peculiar to their sex, Dr. Baker had the courage to attempt its establishment, although he had had but one year of practice. He possessed the executive ability to carry out the project, and now, while yet in active service, he sees the fruition of his hopes. Nearly three thousand patients have been treated in the wards of this hospital, and as many as 46,000 in the Out-patient Department.

The new building recently dedicated embodies all that is highest in hygienic and artistic structure. It is finely situated in the Riverdale Parkway, in the immediate suburbs of Boston, and has a capacity for sixty patients. Every detail of this most successful institution is under Dr. Baker's personal supervision, as he holds the dual post of Surgeon and Member of the Board of Trustees, a most fortunate combination, which, if secured in all hospitals, would tend to their own best interests in discipline, care of patients and improved medical results.

It is rarely that a man so young in his professional life, and located in such a conservative and old a place as Boston, attains to such eminence. His success was, however, considered almost assured even during his internship at the Woman's Hospital. By his intelligent interest and untiring zeal in his hospital duties he very soon attracted the notice of the attending surgeons. Early in his course he manifested that unusual dexterity and delicacy

of touch which have since marked his work. The electric spark of genius was in him, and soon he found himself on the top of the wave of professional success.

His most renowned work has been in the line of plastic surgery, while his abdominal surgery has been especially noted for its thoroughness.

No one man has done more to raise the science of gynæcology to the highest standard of honor and usefulness. His ideas are liberal, yet never radical, and his name is known and his writings quoted throughout the medical world.

Among Dr. Baker's best-known contributions to special literature may be mentioned: "Mechanical Appliances in Uterine Surgery;" "Lacerations of the Cervix Uteri as a Cause of Uterine Disease;" "Malpositions of the Uterus;" "Vaginal Ovariectomy;" "Drainage in the Removal of Submucous Fibroids;" "The Treatment of Cancer of the Uterus;" "Hyperæmia of the Vesico-urethral Membrane;" "Cancer of the Uterus: Its Treatment by High Amputation Compared with Total Extirpation;" "Diseases of the Urethra and Bladder;" "Cancer of the Cervix Uteri: Results of Its Treatment by High Amputation."

His first published medical paper was written in 1872, the year of his graduation in medicine, and entitled: "Amenorrhœa and Its Treatment by Electricity." His second paper was written a year later, and entitled: "Cases of Amenorrhœa Resulting from Undeveloped Uteri."

Dr. Baker is Professor of Gynæcology, Harvard College; Surgeon to the Free Hospital for Women, Boston; Fellow of the American and British Gynæcological Societies; Member Alumni Association Woman's Hospital, New York, and of the Boston City Hospital; Member Boston Obstetrical Society and Massachusetts Medical Society; ex-Vice-President American Gynæcological Society; Hon. President International Congress, Belgium, etc.

His most striking characteristic, perhaps, is an unflinching courtesy and kindness of manner, together with the stamp of genuineness in every word and act.

To his patients he is most sympathetic, always unwearied in his care of them, and shrinks from no exertion in their behalf.

To his students at the medical school he has been a prince among instructors. His clinics were constantly crowded, and his lectures abounded in practical teaching. Many a young physician owes his success to the encouragement and generous assistance which Dr. Baker has given him. Incapable of envy, and never undervaluing the work of another, he is never boastful of his own achievements.

His noble and vigorous nature retains all the happy buoyancy of youth, and his face is like the sunshine itself in the sick-room, his presence alone being a veritable tower of strength.

Loving his profession with an ever-fresh enthusiasm, he still labors in the arena he has so exalted.

SKETCHES OF EMINENT LIVING GYNÆCOLOGISTS AND OBSTETRICIANS OF  
AMERICA.

WILLIAM HENRY BAKER, M.D., LL.D.,

Professor of Gynæcology, Harvard; Surgeon to the Free Hospital for Women, Boston; Fellow of the American and British Gynæcological Societies; Member Alumni Association Woman's Hospital, New York, and of the Boston City Hospital; Member Boston Obstetrical Society, and Mass. Medical Society; Ex-Vice-President American Gynæcological Society; Hon. President International Congress, Belgium; etc., etc.

DR. BAKER was born in Medford, Mass., March 11 1845, and is descended from a Richard Baker who came from England and settled in Dorchester, Mass., in 1630.

Dr. Baker's father was a Congregational clergyman, the Rev. Abijah R. Baker, and his maternal grandfather was also a clergyman, the Rev. Leonard Woods, D.D., LL.D., an eminent man of his day.

Our subject's boyhood was spent in Wellesley where he attended the public schools, and later he was educated at the Atkinson Academy, N. H. Leaving school at eighteen, he was engaged for six years in business in New York, but though successful therein and with good promise for the future, he nevertheless had the wisdom to know his vocation and to embrace it. Hence we find him at the age of twenty-four matriculating in the Medical Department of Harvard University and receiving three years later, in 1872, his degree from that institution. After an internship of one year in the Boston City Hospital, he came again to New York and served the full interne-course in the Woman's Hospital.

Considering his race and birthplace it is not surprising that he should elect as the field of his life's work the city of Boston—that pride and glory and paradoxical outcome of New England civilization—and here we find him at the outset of his career, in 1874, physician to the Woman's Room in the Boston Dispensary.

He first began to disseminate—to use his own words—the knowledge he had just acquired from his masters in the profession at the Woman's Hospital in New York.

About a year later he was appointed Clinical Teacher of Diseases of Women at the Harvard Medical School, and for the past seventeen years he has continuously taught there this subject. He now holds the Chair of Gynæcology. In 1875 he organized the Free Hospital for Women in Boston, which was greatly in need of a special hospital of this kind. He stills holds in this very success-

ful institution the dual post of Surgeon and Member of the Board of Trustees—a most fortunate combination which would in all hospitals tend to their own best interests in better discipline, better care of patients and better medical results.

Among Dr. Baker's best-known contributions to special literature may be mentioned: "*Mechanical Appliances in Uterine Surgery*;" "*Lacerations of the Cervix Uteri as a Cause of Uterine Disease*;" "*Malpositions of the Uterus*;" "*Vaginal Ovariectomy*;" "*Drainage in the Removal of Sub-mucous Fibroids*;" "*The Treatment of Cancer of the Uterus*;" "*Hyperæmia of the Vesico-Urethral Membrane*;" "*Cancer of the Uterus: Its Treatment by High Amputation Compared with Total Extirpation*;" "*Diseases of the Urethra and Bladder*;" "*Cancer of the Cervix Uteri: Results of Its Treatment by High Amputation*."

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It is rarely that a man so young in his professional life and in so populous and old a locality attains to such eminence. This indeed was considered however almost an assured futurity even during his internship at the Woman's Hospital. He very soon attracted the attention of the attending surgeons by his intelligent interest and untiring zeal in his hospital duties. We have had frequent occasion to point out in other *sketches* in this series that opportunity which opens the door in every case to achieved greatness and in the opinion of Dr. Baker himself this opportunity came to him with his service at the Woman's Hospital.

His success is the more marked because it has not consisted in excessive and untiring operating with marvelous results ("records" are so common now, thanks to "asepsis made easy," that they have ceased to excite wonder) but it has had a more solid and individual foundation. Judged by foreign standards which just now are so much in vogue among us he would appear rather conservative. He is an excellent plastic surgeon, while doing much abdominal work, and he has compelled the city of his adoption to recognize his ability step by step and not without opposition, as what a successful man has not, until now his name is known and his writings are quoted all over the medical world.

His most striking characteristic is perhaps an unfailing courtesy and kindness of manner. To those who know him better his

character appears a remarkably well-balanced one, in which energy and order place their stamp upon every act. His executive ability must therefore be excellent and this is well shown in the Boston Free Hospital for Women which owes its inception, its organization, and its preëminent success to him. It required no small amount of courage, energy and clear-headedness to undertake such a scheme after one year of practice. If Boston claims him hers in the list of eminent specialists, it is a satisfaction that ours at least is his Alma Mater.