

IN MEMORIAM.

ALEXANDER JOHNSTON CHALMERS SKENE, M.D., LL.D.

(With plate.)

In the death of Dr. Skene on July 4, 1900, at the age of 62, American gynecology loses one of the last of its famous pioneers, and his city mourns for its greatest physician. He was born in Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, June 17, 1838, of a family that has made its name known in Scotch history for nine centuries. His schooling was in Aberdeen and Kings College. He came to America at the age of 19, began the study of medicine three years later at Toronto, matriculated at the University of Michigan in 1861, and was graduated from the Long Island College Hospital in 1863. In that year and the following he served as acting assistant surgeon in the United States Volunteers at Port Royal, Charleston Harbor, and David's Island, prominent in plans for army ambulance work. He kept up his interest in military matters in the National Guard of the State as surgeon to the Twelfth Regiment and First Division, and as lieutenant-colonel on the staff of General Molineux (1884-5).

In 1864 Dr. Skene entered practice in Brooklyn, and within a year had begun his hospital and college work in obstetrics. Professor of both branches of gynecology at 31, he gave his best strength to the Long Island College Hospital, as teacher, as operator, and as dean and president (1886-1893), until the last year of his life. It was he who was most active in securing practical and beautiful plans giving adequate expression to the great Polhemus gift of a college and clinic building. The college owes its most famous alumnus a debt it can never repay.

Dr. Skene was professor of gynecology in the New York Post-Graduate Medical School, 1883-6, and consultant to various hospitals and dispensaries. He was one of the founders of the American Gynecological Society and its tenth president (1886), and founder and honorary president of the International Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics. He had been president of the Medical Society of Kings County, of

the New York Obstetrical and of the Brooklyn Gynecological Society, and was a corresponding or honorary member of many foreign societies, such as those of Paris, Leipzig, Brussels, Edinburgh, London, etc. Aberdeen University conferred on him the degree of LL. D. in 1897.

His books are these: "Diseases of the Bladder and Urethra in Women," 1878 and 1887; "Treatise on Diseases of Women," 1888, 1892, and 1898; "Education and Culture as Related to the Health and Diseases of Women," 1889; "Medical Gynecology," 1895; and "Electro-Hemostasis in Operative Surgery," 1899.

Dr. Skene wrote from a large experience. For thirty-seven years there is hardly a twelvemonth without its paper, and many years show six. He wrote in the hours before breakfast, to avoid interruption, and in writing, as in teaching, his method was clinical, detailed, practical. His huge capacity for work was due to a magnificent physique—his chest girth was forty-four inches. His eye always twinkled with the memory of "last in class, first in field sports." Thus he was able to carry the burdens of college teaching, hospital operating, medical society duties, the large private sanitarium, and an extensive practice. Two days before he died sixty patients came to the office.

Dr. Skene married Annette Wilhelmine Lillian Van der Wegen, of Brussels, Belgium, who survives him. They had no children.

His country home was at Highmount, in the Catskills, where his love of the mountains had full scope, and where he could indulge his affection for animals. There he had more leisure for modelling. His life-size portraits in marble are indeed noteworthy, in view of the scantiness of the time he could give to sculpture.

If one were to attempt an appreciation of Dr. Skene's work, one might select certain items, such as the insistence on gynecological and surgical methods in obstetric work (1877); the well-known observations on the urethral glands, a source of intractable trouble until recognized (1880); the many new instruments devised, the systematic hemostatic treatment of blood vessels and pedicles by heat of moderate degree that dries and does not char (1897)—but these would be but examples of hundreds of worthy contributions swallowed up in the rapid sweep of surgical progress, the import and freshness of which, for their time, we who have benefited by them have little leisure to turn back to consider.

In him progressiveness and originality were balanced with caution and clear sense. Two instances will suffice. In the days when we planned to cure most pelvic pain by removing the ovaries, he was credited with timidity because of his careful restriction of this universal remedy. Again, he was said to be behind the times during the epidemic of vaginal hysterectomy. Yet the profession has come back to the conservatism from which he would not swerve.

Breadth of view was his. From the early days when he was Austin Flint's assistant, he studied his patient as an individual, and overlooked nothing in her general condition nor any detail of constitutional treatment. Such detailed care prepared the patient for operation (or saved her from it, often) and watched her throughout convalescence. His technique was so quiet and seemingly simple that only a brother surgeon appreciated its speed and thoroughness.

Few men concealed more generous deeds. Strong in his likes and dislikes, tenacious of purpose, keen of insight, full of apt anecdote, tactful, discreet, hopeful, inspiriting, his impress was strong on those about him. Indeed, throughout all his life runs this personality and force that makes greatness. Character escapes characterization. Personal magnetism eludes biographies. The impress of vigor and simplicity, the attraction of kindness and heartiness—these things may not be written. But the love and devotion he inspired follow after him.



ALEXANDER JOHNSTON CHALMERS SKENE, M.D., LL.D.

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M.D., LL.D.

Men whose names are honored and held in high veneration by the medical profession, and who were born, or practised the healing art on Long Island: Valentine Mott, M.D., LL.D., John Jones, M.D., Wright Post, M.D., Samuel L. Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., Valentine Seaman, M.D., Frank H. Hamilton, M.D., LL.D., Alfred C. Post, M.D., LL.D., James L. Little, M.D., Daniel Ayres, M.D., LL.D., and Joseph C. Hutchinson, M.D., LL.D.; these and many others have not alone made a record for themselves in the profession, but their labors were of that character as to be an incentive to higher aims by those who were to follow after they had completed their life work among us. Long Island, and in particular the city of Brooklyn, has been benefited by their connection with us. The practise of medicine and surgery was but in its infancy in this country when these men first entered the profession of medicine; the record of their work and accomplishments is recognized to-day as the foundation upon which the present system of surgery has been in a large degree erected. In order to extend its usefulness and to simplify the different methods of operation, it required some master mind in each department, some one particularly adapted by nature and education to explain the different methods of procedure, and at the same time to be able to demonstrate in a practical way the cause and results of each operation.

In the department of gynecology Dr. A. J. C. Skene possessed this happy faculty. His lectures were practical and comprehensive in every particular. In illustrating his subject he often made use of any convenient object, thereby making a deep impression upon the mind of the student. In this particular he was often likened to the late Prof. Corydon La Ford, M.D., LL.D.,

for many years professor of anatomy. Many of us will remember that, after examining a patient at his clinic, he would turn around and draw upon the blackboard a diagram of the conditions found; his knowledge of the standard of health, his observation of diseased conditions of the human body, and his keen perception of things generally, made him master of his subject. The late Prof. Samuel G. Armor, M.D., LL.D., was particular to impress upon the minds of the students that, in order to arrive at a correct diagnosis, it was necessary to go through the process of elimination; by this he meant that the different systems of the body should be carefully examined, those that were found to be in health eliminated, those in disease noted. Dr. Skene not alone understood this method of examination, but his keen vision was able to detect deviations from the normal standard. He was uniformly kind and gentle, and seemed to be in possession of a most charming disposition.

Few operators have been able to handle surgical instruments with more dexterity than he; his fame in this particular was not confined to our own country, but has spread to the medical centers of the world. Like the late James Marion Sims, M.D., LL.D., of whom Dr. Skene was a great admirer, his reputation as a gynecologist was international.

We, as members of the medical profession, bow in humble submission to the inevitable law of nature, and the power of Him who rules all things; many of us feeling that we have lost a friend, teacher, and adviser. Still, were it not that such men as Dr. Skene had lived and labored among us, many of us would not be able to accomplish results such as are evident in our everyday practise, as compared with the work of the general practitioner of twenty-five years ago.

As an alumnus of the Long Island College Hospital, that institution has lost one of its brightest ornaments; for thirty-three years he occupied the position of teacher, during which time over 1600 students of medicine received the degree of M.D. at the Long Island College Hospital, and we feel that the voice of the alumni is "We are proud of our teacher."

Dr. Alexander J. C. Skene was born in the parish of Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, June 17, 1838, and died at Highmount, Catskill Mountains, N. Y., July 4, 1900. The funeral services were held at the family residence, 167 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., the Rev. Edward P. Ingersoll, A.M., D.D., officiating; the interment being in Rockland Cemetery, N. Y.

His father was Johnston Skene, and his mother Jean McConachie, both of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Dr. Skene was married to Annette W. L. Van der Wegen of Brussels, Belgium; they having no children except an adopted daughter, Miss Mignon Skene.

His early education was received in the schools of Aberdeen and Kings College.

During the winter of 1896-97 Jonathan S. Prout, M.D., called upon the Secretary of the Historical Committee and requested a copy "by title" of his scientific papers, and the different colleges he attended. This information was for the University of Aberdeen, Scotland; this institution conferring upon him the degree of LL.D. in March, 1897.

He entered upon the study of medicine in 1860 at Toronto, Canada, with Alexander McKinnin, M.D., as preceptor, and matriculated with the University of Michigan in 1861-62, graduating M.D. from the Long Island College Hospital in 1863, having selected as preceptor in this city William Gilfillan, M.D.

In July, 1863, he entered the United States army as assistant surgeon, and was stationed at Port Royal, Charleston Harbor, and later at Decamp's Hospital, David's Island, until June, 1864. During this time he evolved a plan for an army ambulance corps, which was the beginning of that system which is now recognized as so essential to the welfare of the army. During the years 1884-85 he held the position of lieutenant-colonel and surgeon in the Second Division, National Guard, State of New York, on the staff of Gen. E. L. Molineux.

Dr. Skene entered upon the practice of medicine in the city of Brooklyn in 1864, where he remained during his entire professional career. In connection with the late William M. Thallon, M.D., he opened a private sanitarium on President Street, near Prospect Park, in 1884. In March, 1899, the question of organizing a Hospital for Breadwinners in this city was presented, the name being changed in the same year to that of Skene's Hospital for Self-Supporting Women; it is now proposed to call it the Skene Memorial Hospital for Self-Supporting Women. This hospital was incorporated August 3, 1899.

During his professional life he was called upon to fill the following positions:

1877-78. Consulting Surgeon, Brooklyn Central Dispensary.

1866-99. Gynecologist, Long Island College Hospital.

1893-1900. Consulting Gynecologist, Kings County Hospital.

1866-70. Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Diseases of Women, Long Island College Hospital.

1870-99. Professor Gynecology, Long Island College Hospital.

1886-93. Dean of the Faculty, Long Island College Hospital.

1893-99. President of the Long Island College Hospital.

1883-86. Professor Gynecology, New York Post-Graduate Medical School.

His connection with the different medical societies was as follows:

1865-1900. The Medical Society, County of Kings; Vice-President, 1872; Trustee, 1889-93; President, 1874-75.

1868-75. Long Island College Hospital Journal Association.

1871-1900. Brooklyn Pathological Society.

1890-1900. Brooklyn Gynecological Society; President, 1891-1892.

1892. One of the founders of the Belgian Periodical Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Brussels.

1893. Member of the Periodical Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Rome, Italy.

1896. Honorary President of Periodical Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Geneva, Switzerland.

1900. Member of the 13th International Congress of Medicine, Paris, France.

1892-1900. Brooklyn Medical Book Club.

1880-1900. Alumni Association, Long Island College Hospital; first President, 1880. New York Physicians' Mutual Aid Association.

1879-1900. New York Academy of Medicine. New York Obstetrical Society; President, 1877-79.

1876-1900. American Gynecological Society; President, 1886-1887 (one of the founders).

1899-1900. The Associated Physicians of Long Island. The Practitioners' Club, Brooklyn, N. Y.

1872-76-81-82. Delegate to the American Medical Association.

1900. Société Royale des Sciences Médicales et Naturelles, Brussels.

1895. Honorary Fellow, Edinburgh Obstetrical Society.

Corresponding Member.—British Medical Society, Boston Gynecological Society, Detroit Gynecological Society, Paris Obstetrical Society, Leipsic Obstetrical Society.

Honorary Member, Baltimore Medical Society.

Skene's Urethral Glands.—This is a distinction that has never come to any physician located on Long Island: to have his name connected with any part of the human body. Dr. Skene discov-

ered these glands in 1880; their history and pathology were presented in a paper by Prof. Joshua M. Van Cott, Jr., M.D., in 1888.

MEDICAL PAPERS, BOOKS, ETC.

1883-84. Associate Editor, *Archives of Medicine*.

1884-89. Associate Editor, *American Medical Digest*.

1891—. Associate Editor, *The New York Gynecological and Obstetrical Journal*.

1884. Introduction to David B. Hart's "Atlas of Female Pelvic Anatomy."

1887. Article, "General Therapeutics, American System of Gynecology."

BOOKS.

1878. "Diseases of the Bladder and Urethra in Women," second edition, 1887; 8vo, pp. 374.

1888. "Diseases of Women"; third edition, 1898; 8vo, pp. 966.

1889. "Education and Culture Correlated to Women," 12mo, pp. 127.

1895. "Medical Gynecology," 8vo, pp. 529.

1899. "Electro-Hæmostasis in Operative Surgery," 8vo.

1897. "True to Themselves" (novel), 12mo.

MEDICAL PAPERS AND ADDRESSES.

1863. "Measurements of the Lower Extremities in Cases of Fracture; with a Series of Experiments."

1864. "Feigned Disease and Its Diagnosis as Occurring in Military Practice."

1865. "Cases of Thoracic Disease Showing Extensive Pulmonary Lesions with Little Constitutional Derangement."

1866. "Inhalation of Lime-Water in Croup."

1869. "A Modification of Sir James Y. Simpson's Uterine Sound."

1870. "A New Uterine Sound and Scarificator."

1870. Pathology of Endometritis: Subinvolution and Sclerosis Uteri."

1870. "Malignant Disease of the Neck of the Uterus; Its Diagnosis and Treatment."

1871. "A New Handle for Introducing the Sutures in Rupture of the Perineum."

1871. "Diagnosis and Symptomatology of Corporeal Endometritis."

1871. "Prolapsus Uteri, with Illustrations of Its Surgical Treatment."
1872. "Sclerosis Uteri."
1873. "The Treatment of Uterine Disease."
1873. "Drainage through the Cul-de-Sac of Douglas after Ovariectomy."
1873. "Natural and Artificial Dilatation of the Os; Uterine Parturition, Either Premature or at Term."
1873. "Areolar Hyperplasia and Sclerosis Uteri."
1874. Inaugural Address, President of the Medical Society, County of Kings.
1874. "Deranged Menstruation from Imperfect Development of the Reproductive Organs, and Diseases of the General System."
1874. "Deformity of the Uterus, with Especial Reference to Antelexion."
1875. "Treatment of Abortion."
1875. "Urocytic and Urethral Diseases of Women."
1876. "Cicatrices of the Cervix Uteri and Vagina."
1877. "The Old and New in Uterine Pathology and Therapeutics."
1877. "A Second Successful Case of Gastro-Elytrotomy."
1877. "The Principles of Gynecological Surgery Applied to Obstetric Operations."
1878. "Treatment of Laceration of the Cervix Uteri."
1879. "Relation of Diseases of the Sexual Organs to Phthisis in Women."
1880. "Diseases of the Glands of the Female Urethra."
1880. "Reproductive and Nervous System in Women."
1880. "Gynecology as Related to Insanity in Women."
1880. "The Anatomy and Physiology of Two Important Glands of the Female Urethra."
1880. "Report of Sixty Cases of Hystero-Trachelorrhaphy."
1881. "An Unusual Case of Incontinence of Urine."
1881. "The Relation of the Ovaries to the Brain and Nervous System."
1881. "Causes of Puerperal Hemorrhage."
1881. "The Treatment of Wounds in Gynecology."
1882. "Clinical Observation on Cystitis in Women."
1882. "The Essentials of Success in Ovariectomy."
1883. "Some Diseases of the Female Organs of Generation Characterized by New Growths."
1883. "Malpositions of the Uterus."
1883. "The Essentials of Success in Laparotomy."

1883. "Five Cases of Ovariectomy."
1883. "Frequent and Painful Micturition."
1883. "The Practice of Gynecology in Institutions Designed for That Purpose."
1884. "Injuries to the Pelvic Floor."
1884. "Vaginitis and Vulvitis."
1884. "Anemia and Its Relation to the Sexual Organs."
1884. "Frequent Miscarriage; Its Pathology and Treatment."
1885. "Amenorrhoea."
1885. "Dysmenorrhoea."
1885. "A Successful Case of Laparo-Elytrotony."
1885. "The Utility and Efficiency of the Medical Department of the National Guard, State of New York."
1885. "Membranous Dysmenorrhoea."
1886. "Samuel G. Armor, M.D., LL.D., Place in the Medical Profession."
1887. Address, President American Gynecological Society.
1889. "Pelvic Cellulitis."
- Paper read in May, 1900, in Washington Status of Gynecology from 1876-1900.
1890. "Intraligamentous Ovarian Cystoma."
1890. "Injuries to the Uterus During Labor."
1891. "Removal of Tubes and Ovaries; Acquired Ante flexion of the Uterus; Ventral Fixation of Uterus."
1891. "Modern Method of Closing Wounds and Controlling Bleeding Vessels."
1891. "The Old and the New Ways in the After Treatment of Laparotomy."
1891. "Discussion on Pelvic Inflammation in Women; Notes on the Pathology."
1892. "The Treatment of Injuries of the Pelvic Floor and Cervix Uteri."
1892. "Treatment before and after Laparotomy."
1892. "Notes on the Galvano-Cautery in the Treatment of Urethral and Vesical Disease."
1892. "Chronic Ovaritis and Its Treatment."
1892. "Amenorrhoea, Endometritis and Metrorrhagia; Curetting and Drainage in the Treatment of Endometritis."
1892. "Hernia of the Bladder."
1892. "The Relation of the Diseases of the Sexual Organs of Women to Insanity, and Affections of the Nervous System."
1892. "Ovariectomy with Complications."
1893. "Prolapsus of the Bladder."

1893. "Prolapsus of the Ovaries, Oöphoritis and Pelvic Peritonitis; Abdominal Section."
1893. "Atresia of the Vagina; Retention of the Menstrual Fluid."
1894. "Some Defects in Surgery, as Practised and Taught."
1894. "Removal of the Tubes and Ovaries."
1894. "Senile Endometritis."
1894. "In Memoriam—Corydon La Ford, M.D., LL.D."
1894. "Ovarian Neoplasms."
1894. "The Technic of Laparotomy."
1894. "Vaginal Hysterectomy and Its Limitations."
1895. "Miscarriage Caused by Endometritis."
1895. "Epithelioma of the Uterus; Removed by Vaginal Hysterectomy."
1895. "The Invalid Habit among Women: Cause and Treatment."
1895. "Removal of Ovarian Cystomata; Cancer of Both Ovaries."
1896. "Thomas Keith, M.D., England. Biography."
1896. "Singular Case of Patency of a Gärtner's Duct."
1896. "Surgical Treatment of Retrodisplacement of the Uterus."
1897. "Notes on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases of the Urinary Organs in the Female."
1898. "The Hemostatic Forceps in Exsecting the Appendix."
1898. "The Treatment of Neoplasms of the Skin and Mucous Membranes with the Galvano-Cautery and Electrolysis."
1898. "The Treatment of Incomplete Development of the Uterus."
1898. "Address at the opening of the Polhemus Memorial Clinic."
1898. "The Treatment of Bleeding Vessels with Pressure and Electricity."
1898. "Reports of Edwin N. Chapman, M.D., Gynecological and Obstetrical Clinic, Long Island College Hospital, 1865-66."
1900. "Cleanliness in Minor Gynecology."

SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Skene's buttonhole scissors, cervix needles, compression forceps, counterpressor, curette, cystocele pessary, double perforated catheter, elevator and curette, endoscope, fissure knife and probe, Folsom's speculum, hemorrhoidal clamp, hawk-bill scis-

sors, instillation tube, needle forceps, ovariectomy cautery clamp, perineum needle, pessary for prolapsus of the bladder, reflux catheter, seizing forceps, self-retaining catheter, sound and scarificator, tenaculum forceps, urethral speculum, urinal cup pessary, uterine sector, uterine sound, vulsellum forceps, wire écraseur.

WILLIAM SCHROEDER, M.D.,
Secretary of Historical Committee.

ALEXANDER J. C. SKENE, M.D., LL.D.

At a meeting of the officers of the Long Island College Hospital Alumni Association, held July 5, 1900, for the purpose of taking action in relation to the death of Dr. Alexander J. C. Skene, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

Dr. Skene was graduated from the Long Island College Hospital in 1863, and it seems providential that among the first graduates of the institution there should be one whose life work has shed luster on the name of our alma mater. During the thirty-one years that Dr. Skene served the Long Island College Hospital as Professor of Obstetrics and of Gynecology his influence with the alumni has been far-reaching and beneficent.

Dr. Skene's career terminated while he was yet at the zenith of his powers; but it is firmly believed that his work will continue to serve as an object lesson for the guidance of those among us who desire to profit by the example of a noble life.

Resolved, That by the death of its first President, the Association has sustained an irreparable loss the full appreciation of which cannot be expressed in words. Be it further

Resolved, That the foregoing be entered on the records of the Association, and that a copy be furnished Dr. Skene's widow, whose sorrow we share, and to whom we wish to convey the assurance of our sympathy and a friendship which is more enduring than life, because it is not terminated by death.

GLENTWORTH R. BUTLER, M.D., '80,
President.

B. B. MOSHER, M.D., '90,
Secretary.

JOHN HARRIGAN, M.D., '74,
L. GRANT BALDWIN, M.D., '86,
R. L. DICKINSON, M.D., '82,

Committee.

EDITORIAL.

ALEXANDER JOHNSTON CHALMERS SKENE,
M.D., LL.D.

The death of Dr. Skene removes one who in the medical profession of Brooklyn was *facile princeps*. That he has for many years occupied the position of the most prominent physician of our city will, we think, be acknowledged by all. When the writer was about to enter upon the practice of medicine, a then well-known physician asked him where he intended to begin. When the answer was "In Brooklyn," he said: "Do not do it. No Brooklyn physician has ever made a ripple that crossed the East River." While this may have been true in 1872, it has been far from the truth in recent years. And to no one more than to Dr. Skene has been due the disturbance of the water which has resulted not only in ripples that reached the metropolis, but in waves that have traversed the broad Atlantic. No American physician ever achieved a wider reputation than he; it was both national and international, as is evidenced by the extensive mem-

bership in American and European societies to which he was elected.

The professional success which he achieved was due to many causes, so many indeed that it would be impossible, even for those who knew him best, to name them all. First and foremost was, perhaps, his love for his chosen profession. In its mastery no one was ever more zealous or industrious than he. It was for him his life work, and he never permitted himself to be led away from it by allurements of any kind. His genius for sculpture was fostered and encouraged not mainly for the love of art, but because of the training which it gave to both hand and eye, and thus made him the better fitted to observe disease and to handle the surgeon's knife. His ability as a sculptor is known to but few. That he possessed it in a high degree will be at once conceded when an inspection is made of his marble bust of J. Marion Sims, which has for years adorned his parlor.

His reading was extensive, but always pursued with the end in view of improving his own style of speaking and writing, never for the mere gratification which came from the books themselves, although he recognized that the human mind needs relaxation, especially the mind of the active medical practitioner. To this end he was fond of humorous stories, and he took great delight in such books as "David Harum" and "Mr. Dooley:" books in which combined with humor is a large amount of human experience and knowledge of men and their frailties.

Another secret of his professional success was his loyalty to his brother practitioners. We boldly make the claim for him that no physician ever called him in consultation to experience subsequently either the loss of his patient or the diminution of his respect. Would that this could be said of all consultants!

To one more element of his success we cannot forbear referring. It was his knowledge and practice of general medicine before he began his work as a specialist. To no part of his professional life was he more fond of looking back than to that which he spent as an assistant to Austin Flint, Sr., who was at the time, about 1866 and 1867, Professor of Practice at the Long Island College Hospital. He was proud of the skill which he then acquired in the diagnosis of cardiac and pulmonary diseases, and attributed much of his subsequent success in the treatment of his patients to his ability to recognize the existence of disordered conditions other than those of the sexual organs, and to his appreciation of these conditions. Too often now-a-days the specialist

emerges full-grown from the medical college, lacking oftentimes any general experience whatever either in hospital or private practice, and as a result his patients suffer and his reputation is often but ephemeral.

In the complete and admirable biography which the Secretary of the Historical Committee has prepared for the *JOURNAL*, and which is published in this issue, the immense amount of work which was crowded into his professional life, extending through forty years, is for the first time recorded, and its perusal excites wonder and admiration, and explains, to some extent at least, the shortness of that life.

But Dr. Skene had another side than the professional one, and it is this we imagine which will live when the remembrance of the other is faded and dim. While he was admired and respected by his colleagues for his ability in diagnosis and his skill in operating, he was equally beloved and confided in by his patients. Few men have the entire confidence of his patients to as great a degree as did he. Women would trust themselves to him, even to the extent of lying down upon the operating-table and submitting themselves to capital operations, without wishing to know either their condition or what the operation was to be, placing their lives in his keeping with a serene and perfect confidence. The writer knows that this confidence was not peculiar in the case of Dr. Skene; it is, thank God, common to all conscientious surgeons, but he believes that it was manifested towards him in an uncommon degree.

This confidence was due to many causes. One was his personality. He was of magnificent physique and commanding presence. And yet his touch was as gentle and his nature as sensitive as those of a woman. To see him was to be inspired with trust and confidence. When in his presence, the patient felt that for the moment at least all his powers were at her disposal and enlisted in her behalf. His skill in eliciting the clinical history was one of his striking characteristics; and when the patient returned for further treatment his memory of all the details which she had previously communicated to him made her feel that his interest in and knowledge of her were considerable and personal. This retentive memory was cultivated in the early years of his practice, when his patients were few, by the habit of going over in his memory at the close of each day the clinical histories of the cases seen that day, filling in any gaps by reference to his notes, until a complete picture of each case was fixed in his mem-

ory. In later years this was impracticable, but the exercise of previous years had made his memory more plastic and retentive. Patients whom he had not seen in years were often astonished at his thorough knowledge of them when they returned for consultation.

His generosity to the poor was unbounded. We doubt if there are many physicians whose visiting lists would show so much professional work done with so little pecuniary compensation. He was always at the service of those unable to pay for his services, and to them he gave of his best, making no difference in the quality of his care or the exercise of his skill. To how many of his professional brethren and their families he gave freely of his time and his skill, only they will ever know. It is, however, a characteristic of Brooklyn physicians which in our experience is more highly developed here than elsewhere. The writer has never heard of a physician of this city making a charge for professional services against a brother practitioner, but he has often heard of it as occurring in New York, and it is said to be a common practice abroad. Dr. Skene's generosity in this regard was the common generosity of his colleagues, only the greater in his case because of his greater skill and experience and the consequent greater appeal to him for succor and help.

Dr. Skene's death occurring in mid-summer, when so many persons were absent from the city, did not produce the shock it would have produced had it occurred at any other season of the year, but when the fall comes on and families return to their homes, and sickness makes its appearance and the necessity for medical help arises, then the loss which Brooklyn has suffered will begin to be appreciated; then will hearts which have been accustomed to be brightened by his cheery and sympathetic voice be desolate, not knowing where to go for comfort and consolation. For all, the time will be long before an adjustment of relations between patients and their new family physician will take place; for some, it will never occur.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

PREPARED BY WILLIAM BROWNING, M.D.,
of the Historical Committee.

In view of the great services rendered by the subject of this sketch to the profession of Brooklyn, and more particularly of the academic honor just conferred upon him, the present seems an opportune occasion to put on record an outline of his work and achievements.

I. BIOGRAPHY.

1838 (June 17), born at Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

1857, removed to America.

1861-1862, studied at the University of Michigan.

1863, Assistant Surgeon (Volunteer Service) at Decamp's Hospital, David's Island.

1864, Assistant Surgeon at Port Royal and Charleston Harbor, S. C.

1864, settled in Brooklyn.

His history at the Long Island College Hospital and Medical School is as follows :

Matriculated at L. I. C. Hospital, 1862 and 1863.

Graduated at L. I. C. Hospital, 1863.

Adjunct, 1865.

Assistant to Chair of Obstetrics, 1866.

Physician to Hospital, 1866.

Instructor in Clinical Obstetrics, 1867.

Instructor in Clinical Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children, 1868.

Professor of Diseases of Women and Clinical Obstetrics, 1869.

Professor of the Medical and Surgical Diseases of Women and Clinical Obstetrics, 1870.

Professor of the Medical and Surgical Diseases of Women and Diseases of Children, 1876.

Professor of Medical and Surgical Diseases of Women, 1882-.

Surgeon to Hospital, 1885-.

Dean of Faculty, 1886-1893.

President of College, 1893-.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF KINGS.

1865-, member of.

1874-5, 1875-6, President of.

1874-1878, 1892-1895, Delegate to the New York State Medical Society.

1889-1894, Trustee of.

1876, one of the founders of the American Gynecological Society.

1877-8, 1878-9, President of the New York Obstetrical Society.

1883-1886, Professor of Gynecology at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School.

1884-1885, Lieutenant-Colonel and Surgeon, Second Division, Staff of the National Guard, State of New York.

1886-1887, President of the American Gynecological Society.

1891-2, President of the Brooklyn Gynecological Society.

1893-, Consulting Gynecologist to the Kings County Hospital.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING FOREIGN SOCIETIES.

1890-, Société Royale des Sciences Médicales et Naturelles de Bruxelles.

1891—, Die Gesellschaft für Geburtshülfe zu Leipzig. [At the celebration of their four hundredth session.]

1892—, Société Obstetricale et Gynécologique de Paris.

1895—, Edinburgh Obstetrical Society (Honorary Fellow of).

II. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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22. "Notes on the Galvano-Cautery in the Treatment of Urethral and Vesical Diseases." Pp. 8. From the *N. Y. Jrnl. of Gynclg. and Obstr.*, 1892, November.

23. "Pathology and Treatment of Injuries of the Pelvic Floor." New York, pp. 15, *ibid.*, 1893, September, reprint.

C. PAPERS, ARTICLES, LECTURES, ETC.

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