

IN MEMORIAM

T. GAILLARD THOMAS, M.D., LL.D.

BORN NOVEMBER 21ST, 1831. DIED FEBRUARY 28TH, 1903.

In 1852 a youth of twenty landed in New York from the Charleston steamer. He had little money, few acquaintances and no friends; but he was armed with an M. D. diploma from the Charleston, S. C., Medical College, and his heart and head were full of enthusiasm for his profession, and a determination to accomplish great things in the future. Bellevue Hospital was the pest house of that day; an epidemic of typhus fever was then raging, and the condition of things was deplorable. There were no professional nurses, and the number of doctors had been gravely depleted by death and resignations; few were willing to accept a position which meant almost certain death. However, the subject of this memoir found in this very condition of affairs his opportunity. Being entirely devoid of fear, he made an application for a position on the force of doctors, which was promptly accepted, and he at once began a career which, without a break, was a continuous series of successes to the time of his death.

Dr. T. Gaillard Thomas was born on Edisto Island, S. C., November 21, 1831. He was a lineal descendant of the Rev. Samuel Thomas, who in 1794 was sent by the Church of England as a missionary to establish the Episcopal Church in South Carolina. His father was the Rev. Edward Thomas, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church. Through his mother he was descended from Joachim Gaillard, a Huguenot, who went to South Carolina after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Dr. Thomas was educated in the Charleston, S. C., College, which institution he left in the senior year to enter the Medical College of the State of South Carolina, where he was graduated in 1852.

After completing his internship at Bellevue Hospital (which began, as stated above, during the epidemic of typhus fever) and Ward's Island, N. Y. Hospital, he went to Europe, going over on a sailing ship and returning on a large emigrant vessel as its surgeon. He remained in Europe nearly two years, visiting and

-serving as interne in the different hospitals, giving especial attention to Obstetrics in the Rotunda Hospital at Dublin.

Upon his return to New York, for that day unusually well equipped for the battle of life, he established with Dr. Donoghue, a *quiz* class in connection with the University of New York, which was very successful, and attracted much attention. Later he formed a partnership with Dr. J. F. Metcalf, who was then the leading general practitioner of the city. This association continued for fifteen years. From that time his success was assured, and he rapidly rose to distinction and fame. Though his general practice was very large, he early recognized the fact that the eminence he wished to reach could be better attained through a specialty, and to this end he devoted himself especially to obstetrics. He was Professor of Obstetrics in the University Medical College for eight years, succeeding Dr. Bedford in 1855. In 1863 he was appointed Professor of Obstetrics, Diseases of Women and Children, at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and held that chair for many years, or until the chair of Diseases of Women was established, when he was elected to fill it. His former chair was divided, the Professorship of Obstetrics going to Dr. J. H. McLean, and the Professorship of Diseases of Children to Dr. A. Jacobi. In 1872 he was elected Attending Surgeon to the Women's Hospital, when he practically gave up general practice to devote himself to gynecology. As an obstetrician, his name is identified with the operation of *laparo elytrotomy* as a substitute for the very grave operation of Cesarean Section. But he soon became so well known as a gynecologist that his reputation as an obstetrician was completely overshadowed.

As a gynecological operator, he was bold without being reckless, inventive in his methods, quick in his movements, and resourceful in his means of meeting complications. As a laparotomist he was especially distinguished, and for that day his results were remarkable. As a diagnostician he was the peer of any. As a teacher he had no superior. As an orator, he was the first in the profession, and as an author, was of world-wide renown. One of the most cultured physicians in New York City remarked to me on the day of Dr. Thomas's funeral that he considered the doctor the greatest medical orator he had ever listened to.

To many of the doctor's old friends and admirers it will be news to learn that his first lecture was a failure; but then it was his first and last failure. He recognized the cause of his lack of success, and took advantage of the knowledge to make of himself what his

friend called him—the greatest medical orator of his time. He knew to be a successful lecturer he must not only be able to state medical theories and facts, but that he must present them in a refined and cultured manner. To this end, he studied English literature, the methods of the best masters, took lessons in elocution, and at first often delivered his lecture before his mirror in the privacy of his own room. The result was apparent. His lecture room was always crowded; the students of the other college flocked to hear him, and many a physician with an established position in his profession neglected his practice to join the students in listening to and doing honor to this medical orator.

As a writer Dr. Thomas was fluent and easy—at the same time exact. The first edition of his work on diseases of women established at once his position as the best gynecological writer of the day. It was translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish and even Chinese. It ran through six editions, and was used as a textbook all over the world. Once, when visiting a medical book store in Berlin, he asked to see what works they had on gynecology. The proprietor handed him a book which he said was the best they had, and, in fact, the best published. The doctor found in his hand his own work.

Dr. Thomas, while not carried away by every new idea, kept thoroughly abreast of the times—accepting only what appealed to his judgment, after investigation. He often quoted the lines:

Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

Though acutely sensitive to public opinion, he never allowed himself to be swayed by it when firmly convinced that his attitude was the correct one.

In his talks with his younger associates he often said that to succeed as surgeons they must make it a rule to do always their very best for their patients, endeavoring by study, observation, etc., to make it the best that was in them; having done this, their duty was done, and they must not worry, nor would they be deserving of any blame. In other words, be sure to the best of their ability that they were right, and then go ahead.

Dr. Thomas was a born leader of men; in any walk of life he would have filled front rank. Of a strong but pleasing personality and affable manner, he was enthusiastic, capable of an unlimited amount of work, energetic, persevering and untiring. A *brave* man physically and morally—having the courage of his convictions, even though they might lead him out of the popular

path; never shirking his responsibilities, and often, indeed, shouldering those of his weaker brethren. A *strong* man, and feeling his strength, he could ill brook opposition. In his earnestness and fixedness of purpose, he rode over all obstacles.

In his domestic relations he was peculiarly tender—a devoted husband, and a most affectionate and indulgent father. He was married in 1862 to Miss Mary Willard, of Troy, N. Y., who, with two sons, J. Metcalf and T. Gaillard, Jr., survive him.

In politics a Democrat, he nevertheless supported McKinley and Roosevelt—Bryanism and the depreciation of the currency being antagonistic to his ideas of honesty.

A Southerner by birth, during the Civil War his feelings of sympathy led him to offer his services to the Confederacy, although opposed to secession, and foreseeing that the Southern cause was hopeless. He left New York for this purpose, but happily, on his arrival at Charleston he found his services were not needed, and he returned to New York, only to find that owing to his espousal of the Southern cause, he was expelled from the New York Academy of Medicine. Later, when the bitterness of feeling had died down, he was reinstated.

In 1872 he was appointed Attending Surgeon of the Women's Hospital in the State of New York, where he devoted himself exclusively to his specialty until 1887, when he resigned. He continued to operate in private practice until 1900. On November 21st, 1901, his 70th birthday, the profession of New York City gave him a dinner excelling any ever given an M. D. in this country. At various times he served on the Medical Boards at Bellevue, Roosevelt, St. Luke's, Nursery and Children's, The Strangers and St. Mary (Brooklyn) Hospitals. He was a consultant of the Presbyterian, French, the New York Lying-In, Skin and Cancer and Memorial Hospitals, and the New York Infant Asylum. He was at the time of his death President of the Medical Boards of the Women's Hospital in the State of New York, the Nursery and Children's Hospital and the New York Infant Asylum.

Dr. Thomas was a member of the New York City Medical Society, New York Pathological Society, New York Academy of Medicine, New York Obstetrical Society, New York State Medical Association, American Gynecological Society and American Medical Association. He was a corresponding fellow of the Obstetrical Societies of Philadelphia, Louisville and Boston, and an honorary fellow of the British Gynecological Society.

Socially, Dr. Thomas was strongly identified with the cottage life at Southampton, L. I., being one of the first to build a cottage there as a summer home. He was instrumental in organizing the Village Improvement Association and other associations looking to the growth of the Summer colony and the welfare of the place. He was one of the original members of the Meadow Club, the Golf Club and the Southampton Club.

In New York he was very prominent in The Riding Club from the time of its inception, and maintained his interest in the organization to the end of his life. He was also a member of a number of other city clubs.

Dr. Thomas's story is the story of a complete, well-rounded life—a life lived well and nobly; terminating, as he desired, while his interest and enthusiasm were yet alive. P. F. CHAMBERS.

Requiescat in pace.

On motion, the following resolution was adopted by the Medical Board of the WOMAN'S HOSPITAL OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK at its meeting held on the fifth of March, 1903; and it was voted that a copy of the same be sent to the Board of Governors, and that it be published in the Medical Record and the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF OBSTETRICS, and that a copy suitably engrossed be forwarded to the family of Dr. Thomas:

Resolved: That we record with feelings of the deepest sorrow the death of our associate, Dr. T. Gaillard Thomas, President of the Medical Board and a Consulting Surgeon to the Woman's Hospital, which took place at Thomasville, Ga., on February 28, 1903.

Dr. Thomas devoted the best years of his professional life, from 1872 to 1887 to the service of this Hospital as an Attending Surgeon. During all these years his ability as a diagnostician and his brilliancy as an operator were the admiration of his colleagues. The results of his scientific work added largely to the reputation of the Hospital and greatly broadened the sphere of its usefulness. He merited, and easily won, the confidence of his patients; they trusted him as friend, as well as surgeon. His Assistants and the members of the House Staff found him always most kind and considerate; he would oftentimes spare them, but never himself, when unusually laborious work was to be done. He was honorable, unselfish, a noble man, whose precept and whose example alike inspired many a young colleague to strive after the highest ideals that can be set before a physician.

Full of years and of the honors that had been conferred upon

him, happy in the affection of his friends, his lifework completed, at peace with God and with his fellowmen, he has gone to his reward.

HENRY D. NICOLL.

BACHE McE. EMMET.

CLEMENT CLEVELAND.

P. F. CHAMBERS.

MEDICAL BOARD OF THE NEW YORK INFANT ASYLUM.

At a meeting of a committee appointed by the Medical Board of the New York Infant Asylum held March 30th, 1903, the following resolutions were adopted:

Whereas, The late Dr. T. Gaillard Thomas, for several years, and at the time of his death, was Consulting Obstetrician to the New York Infant Asylum and President of the Medical Board, an office in which he exhibited wise counsel and charming geniality, and

Whereas, Dr. Thomas was a man of great eminence, well known to the medical profession throughout the world, by virtue of whose character and renown much honor was reflected upon this Institution, therefore

Be it resolved, That the Medical Board of the New York Infant Asylum record the death of Dr. Thomas with a sense of deepest regret and inexpressible loss, and further

Be it resolved, That a copy of these minutes be sent to the bereaved family, and to the principal medical journals, and inscribed in the records of the New York Infant Asylum.

Signed:

J. MILTON MABBOTT, M.D.,

GEORGE TUCKER HARRISON, M.D.,
Committee.



T. GAILLARD THOMAS. M.D., LL.D.

T. GAILLARD THOMAS, M.D.

BY CLEMENT CLEVELAND, M.D.,
New York City.

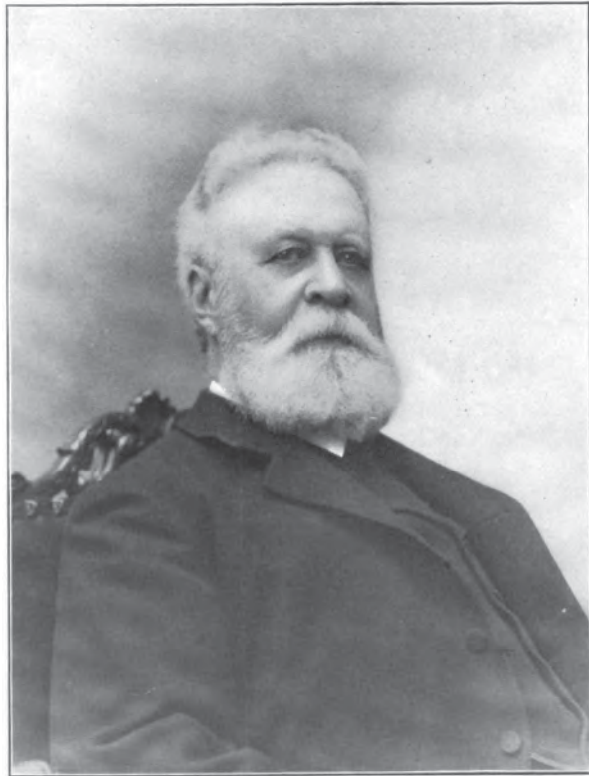
THOUGH at all times it is sad to record the death of such a man as Dr. Thomas, yet it is a satisfaction to know that he died ripe in years, with his life-work done and an accomplished career that is a pride to his family and one of the glories of our profession.

Theodore Gaillard Thomas was born November 21, 1831, at Edisto Island, near Charleston, S. C., and died at Thomasville, Georgia, February 28, 1903, a few months after his seventy-first birthday.

The founder of the family in this country was the Rev. Samuel Thomas, a clergyman of the Established Church, who came as a missionary in 1700. His maternal ancestor was Theodore Gaillard, a Huguenot refugee, who fled from France soon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1678, and settled in Charleston. Tracing the history of the family further still, it is shown that he was descended from a long line of educated, cultured people, a people of refinement and intense religious sentiment, a people who, like the Puritans, abandoned their own beloved country that they might worship God after their own hearts.

The Rev. Ed. Thomas, the father of Dr. Thomas, settled at Edisto Island, and was distinguished as a preacher. His mother was Jane Marshall Gaillard, daughter of Judge Gaillard.

Like all country clergymen, Dr. Thomas' father's pecuniary reward was very slender, yet he desired for his son the best education he could secure. Dr. Thomas was enabled to enter Charleston College at the age of fourteen, where he remained



J. Gaillard Thomas

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but three years, leaving to enter the Medical College of the State of South Carolina, where he was graduated at the age of twenty-one. That thus early he made full use of his opportunities and showed his devotion to study is evinced by the fact that he received the highest honors for his graduation thesis, which had for its subject "The Efficacy of Cod-liver Oil in Consumption," a remedy which had but lately been introduced.

Feeling the need of greater opportunities for study, and being ambitious to make the best of all that was in him, he decided to seek hospital training in New York City. He sailed on a coasting schooner as a common sailor and landed in New York without a single acquaintance. This was in the Spring of 1852. He was admitted as interne in Bellevue Hospital after competitive examination, and commenced his duties on April 1st of that year. He afterward served for six months in the Emigrants' Hospital on Ward's Island. Then followed, for the completion of his equipment, a year in Paris, where he attended the clinics of the hospitals and advanced his knowledge of the French language. After this he entered the Rotunda at Dublin, where he acquired the foundation for the knowledge which later brought him fame as a lecturer on obstetrics. He returned to the United States in 1855, and at once began the practice of his profession in New York City, and continued in the performance of all its arduous duties for a period of fifty years, winning its highest honors, the wise and revered teacher of many pupils.

On his return to this country, with his resources exhausted, he had to meet the momentous question which has confronted many an ambitious aspirant for metropolitan fame, whether to starve in a great city, where the opportunities were unbounded, or at once to make sure of his bread and board in narrower and less congenial fields. It was fortunate for him and the profession that he had the courage to take the risk and settle in New York.

Then began his struggles and toil, his ambition and determination to win his place, to train his powers, and lay the foundation of his full success.

Without waiting for his practice to grow, he at once set to work to employ his time, and established, in conjunction with the lamented Donahae, a "quiz class." This was a success from the start, and made him widely known as a teacher, and

was in reality the stepping-stone to his later advancement in college preferments. The University Medical College soon appointed him as adjunct to the clinic of obstetrics, then held by Dr. Bedford.

About the same time he was made visiting physician to Bellevue Hospital, and this position he held for many years. He there established, what was a unique feature at that time, a clinical course in medical diagnosis. It at once became popular, for the method was so clear and exact that a student acquired more in an hour than he could possibly assimilate from many didactic lectures. There is no doubt that this very breaking away from old methods by Dr. Thomas laid the foundation for the present splendid work done in this line in all the hospitals.

Each student was called down upon the floor of the small amphitheatre then used, and given a patient to examine, under Dr. Thomas' personal guidance and direction, by all the means then known to physical diagnosis. It was a new departure, and was the first attempt to impress upon the mind of the student the importance of accurate diagnosis. The popularity of the work kept up Dr. Thomas' interest and enthusiasm for years.

It is said that a man never does good work without an incentive, and that fundamental incentive is necessity. The competition in medicine was then and has ever been sharp. To live in New York and gain a foothold a young man without means has to make watchful use of all his energies. With Dr. Thomas work was a necessity at that time, and a fortuitous circumstance threw him in the way of one who recognized his capacity and ability. Dr. John T. Metcalfe, at that time one of the most prominent of New York's leading physicians, invited him to become an associate with him in his private practice. Dr. Metcalfe had then, and for many years afterward, a very large and influential clientèle. This close association with this most talented and successful of men at once gave him the start which dispelled any doubt he might have had as to the possibility of remaining permanently in New York. The close intimacy then commenced did not terminate until the death of Dr. Metcalfe only a short time before his own.

In 1857 Dr. Thomas was appointed to the chair of Ob-

stetrics, to succeed Dr. Bedford, and held the position until 1863. This position he resigned to become Adjunct Professor of Obstetrics in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, to the chair held by Prof. Gilman.

In 1865 he succeeded to the full chair, and became Professor of Obstetrics and the Diseases of Women and Children. This position he held until 1879, when he gave up the departments of obstetrics and the diseases of children, and became Professor of Gynecology. For many years he had been narrowing the field of his professional work and devoting his time to gynecology alone, having given up the practice of obstetrics and all general practice besides. In 1881 he became Professor of Clinical Gynecology. These were the years of his greatest triumphs both as a lecturer and as a surgeon. To those who listened to him he was the inspired teacher whose every word carried conviction. His style was clear and concise, and full of sparkle and brilliancy. Every fact was presented with such logical force that no doubt of the truth of his statement ever arose. His lecture-room was always packed with eager listeners, who were not students of the College alone, but men in the active practice of the profession, and of all ages. Few men had such power of holding an audience in sympathetic interest by the charm and sway of eloquence. To say that he was a born orator is not stating the facts in full. He was one by cultivation and study as well. He was a careful student, and studied to present his subject in the clearest, most persuasive language, and also to embellish it with engaging voice and tone. He never strove to establish a reputation as an orator, but studied oratory to enable him to make his words convincing. To those who knew him and watched him he was always a progressive, growing man. He made his professorship a means of further pupilage for himself and verified the saying that the best learning is gained through teaching.

Being convinced that a text-book for the American student and book of reference for the busy practitioner was needed, he undertook the work of preparing *A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Women*, which was first published in 1868. This was the first distinct work on the subject ever published. Gynecology had been making rapid strides in the previous few years, chiefly from the impetus given by Marion Sims, yet the

records of its progress were found "merely in special monographs, journals, transactions of societies," etc. The approbation it received was so marked that the first edition was exhausted within six months and another edition called for. A medical work never received greater commendation and indorsement. The book was translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Chinese, and passed through six editions, and sold to the number of sixty thousand copies, extending his fame throughout the world.

His greatest and best work as a surgeon was done while on the staff of the Woman's Hospital, where he became attending surgeon in 1872, terminating his connection with the hospital by resignation in 1887. Those who served under him during this time learned to cherish the high privilege of intercourse and intimacy with him, and to be grateful to him for many kind offices and favors received at his hands. His delicate courtesy, his readiness to help and advise made him revered and loved by all. His clinics at the hospital were always largely attended. It was the general feeling that there was always something to learn from his work. He was a rapid though careful operator, resourceful in difficult situations, always calm, never rattled by the most unexpected complications. As a laparotomist he was easily first and distinguished above all others for his masterly technic.

He was a born artificer and inventor, and the versatility of his genius is shown in his many instruments and surgical devices and operative procedures. He was a keen observer, always apt in illustration, felicitous in quotation, and clear in demonstration, so that an observer at his operations readily understood each step. He was the originator of many new methods in surgery, some of which are known by his name, and especially the operation of laparotomy.

Among the fellowships and positions held by Dr. Thomas are the following: Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, the New York County Medical Society, the New York Pathological Society, the New York Medical and Surgical Society, a founder and several times President of the New York Obstetrical Society, a founder and third President of the American Gynecological Society, a member of the New York Medical Association, Corresponding Member of the Obstetrical Society of Philadelphia, the Gynecological Society of Boston, the

Medical Society of Lima, Peru; the Obstetrical Society of Berlin, Honorary Fellow of the Washington Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, the Chicago Gynecological Society, the Louisville Obstetrical Society, the British Gynecological Society, the Societe Imperiale de Medicine de Constantinople, Honorary Fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society, Honorary Member of the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Berlin, Honorary Fellow of the London Obstetrical Society. He was consulting Obstetrician of the old Marion Street Maternity Hospital, Nursery and Child's Hospital, and New York Infant Asylum. He was Chairman of the Committee on National Health, Bureau of the Academy of Medicine, during the administration of President Cleveland. He took the deepest interest in the proceedings of this committee, which was for the purpose of influencing the government to establish a department of health. He had the matter very much at heart, and labored arduously to bring it about.

Dr. Thomas was married in 1862 to Miss Mary T. Willard, of Troy, daughter of the late John W. Willard, and granddaughter of Emma Willard, the authoress and founder of the Troy Female Seminary.

This memorial should not be closed without a few words regarding Dr. Thomas the man, as he appeared to those who knew him best, his friends and intimates. He was loved by all of them for his open-hearted generosity, lovable personal characteristics and charm. He had a most kindly sympathetic nature, and no appeal of distress ever passed him unanswered. His tastes were pure and refined, and his aims always lofty. His professional brethren accredit him with the highest qualities of independence, candor and rectitude of mind. He was a man to whom one could always appeal and be sure of an honest reply. As to what manner of man he was in his home life, to those who were dearest to him, much might be said here were it seemly to enter into such privacy. It is sufficient to say he had a most happy and charmed home, and strong indeed was the affection which bound him to wife and children. With such traits of heart and mind, with professional eminence of the highest, his scientific and scholarly attainments, united with such breadth and fulness of intellectual powers, he was not wanting in the love and respect of

the whole profession. He died as he had lived—a Christian gentleman, a devoted lover of his profession, believing in it as “one of the chief bulwarks of society” and “one of the chief factors in shaping the progress and civilization of the world.”

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In Memoriam. John Thomas Metcalfe, No. 947, class of 1838. Died January 22, 1902, at Thomasville, Ga., aged eighty-four years, January 9, 1902.