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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1894.

THE STATUE OF DR. J. MARION SIMS IN BRYANT PARK.

For the first time in the history of the United States, a public statue has been erected to the memory of a member of the medical profession.

On Oct. 20, 1894, in one of the most beautiful parks in New York City, in a spot of ground selected and set apart for statues of literary and scientific men considered worthy of such honor, there was unveiled a statue in bronze of a man well known in scientific circles, as well in Europe as in America.

The inscription upon the pedestal tells in concise language almost the story of the man whose statue it supports, and why such distinguished honor has been conferred upon a physician.

On it is written:

"J. MARION SIMS, M.D., LL.D. Born in South Carolina, 1813. Died in New York City, 1883. Surgeon and Philanthropist, Founder of the Woman's Hospital in the State of New York. His brilliant achievements carried the fame of American surgery throughout the civilized world. In recognition of his services in the cause of science and mankind, he received the highest honors in the gift of his countrymen, and decorations from the Governments of France, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Portugal." And on the reverse,

"Presented to the City of New York, by his professional friends, loving patients and many admirers throughout the world."

JAMES MARION SIMS was born in Lancaster district, South Carolina, Jan. 25, 1813. He was the son of JOHN SIMS, a farmer, and MAHALA MACKAY; a descendant of people who took a prominent part in the struggle for independence during the Revolutionary War.

Early in childhood, his father selected this son as the one who gave most promise of achieving a career for himself, and being a poor man, not able to give a college education to each of his children, he gave all the benefit of a common school education in their native district, but sent the subject of this sketch to the South Carolina College, through the regular grades of which he passed, and graduated in 1833.

Selecting for himself a career in medicine, he attended the lectures at the Medical College in Charleston, and later on entered the Jefferson College of Philadelphia, from which he was graduated in 1835.

In 1836 he settled in Montgomery, Alabama, in the practice of his profession. There he founded a private hospital for the treatment of surgical diseases, taking a special interest in diseases of women. In 1845 he systematically began and by 1848 he at last succeeded in inventing a method for the cure of vesico-vaginal fistula by the use of metallic suture, the disease up to that time having been incurable.

By 1849 he had devised a number of instruments, ingeniously constructed, which soon became and still remain an indispensable part of the surgeon's armamentarium. In 1851, he published the result of his efforts in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, which attracted such general attention that he was encouraged to seek a wider field of labor. In 1853 he removed with his family to New York City, to establish himself in his profession, and soon after organized the Woman's Hospital Association, which resulted in the construction of the large institution situated at 49th Street and Park and Lexington Avenues, in New York City.

The State Legislature granted a charter to the hospital, the common council of the city gave it a block of ground and an appropriation for its construction.

In 1862 DR. SIMS visited Europe, performing his celebrated operations before large classes of physicians in the principal cities of the old country. So successful were the results that his fame spread rapidly throughout Europe, and with this his services were in such demand that he concluded to remain in Europe for a number of years, located for the greater part of his time in Paris, where he enjoyed a very lucrative practice.

As the result of his operations and demonstrations before the learned bodies of Europe, various Governments conferred upon him the decorations above named. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the Emperor Napoleon, and such was the popularity achieved in the organization and command of the Anglo-American Ambulance Corps in the Franco-German War, that, after the cessation of hostilities, he was made a Commander of the Legion of Honor by the Republic of France.

In 1875, he was elected President of the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, and presided at the World's

Centennial Exposition Meeting of the ASSOCIATION in Philadelphia in 1876, and was also President of the American Gynecological Association. In 1881, he made public his ideas in regard to the treatment of gunshot and other wounds of the peritoneal cavity, which, though not accepted with favor at that time, have since been universally adopted and the ideas evolved by him then may now be said to be the practice of the advanced surgeon of this day.

DR. SIMS married, Dec. 21, 1836, ELIZA THERESA, daughter of DR. BARTLETT JONES, of Lancaster, South Carolina, who survived him seven years. His death occurred on Nov. 13, 1883.

New York in thus placing in public view, the statue of one of the ablest medical men of our time is entitled to the grateful thanks of the medical profession of America. How different the feeling in New York in regard to this great man and his memory, from that dark time in which he founded the Woman's Hospital! That most pathetic autobiography ever printed ("The Story of My Life") tells of the heroic efforts of the almost friendless physician, who with mighty aspirations but feeble fainting frame founded that great charity. The shining metal might well bear upon its escutcheon in letters of gold the legend, "IN ATONEMENT," and those reading the golden letters would learn anew the great lesson of tolerance. The medical profession of the world is the better and nobler for having once had a SIMS, and it is well to thus honor his memory.

#### BRITISH NEWSPAPER DISCUSSION ON VACCINATION.

It is not needful to discuss statistics of smallpox mortality before members of the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION to establish the practical value of JENNER'S discovery; but as a matter of current news it may be well to refer to a series of interesting letters, spiced with a considerable dash of temper, that appeared in the columns of the *Times* (London) during the month of September, concerning which our article of September 22 was written. The writers were MR. ERNEST HART, Chairman of the National Health Society on the one side, and MR. J. T. BIGGS, member of the Leicester Sanitary Committee. MR. WILLIAM TEBB of the Devonshire Club, London, and others of lesser note on the other. The first mentioned lays himself open to attack by giving utterance to an overestimate of the immunity conferred by vaccination. The others triumphantly assail this weak point and carry the war into the enemy's country by an array of statistics which in the minds of many lay readers who do not see wherein lie the fallacies must raise doubts and questionings, if indeed they are not accepted as showing that smallpox is more prevalent and more fatal in the vaccinated than in the unvaccinated. Speaking of the epidemic of the

last eighteen months in various districts of England, MR. HART says that there has not been a single death of a vaccinated child under 10 years of age nor of a re-vaccinated adult. MR. TEBB overlooks the limitation to the recent English epidemic and shows by German statistics of twenty years ago that such deaths have been recorded. He shows that in the city of Berlin in the year 1746 there were 186 deaths from smallpox in an unvaccinated population of 80,000, giving a rate of only 2.3 deaths per thousand living, while in 1871, with a vaccinated population of 823,569 the deaths were 5,085 or 6.2 per thousand, and he shows moreover that more than half of these later deaths occurred in children under 10 years of age. These statistics of vaccinated and unvaccinated Berlin are very striking; but MR. TEBB does not point out that nearly all the deaths in 1746 were of young children because the others of the population had already been rendered immune by previous smallpox. These deaths were merely the regular tax paid annually to the pest. Nor does he point out that 1871 was an epidemic year in which the city was called upon to pay for its carelessness in respect to vaccination, which was not made compulsory until 1874. Nor does he inform us that from 1874 to 1885 (the last published official figures) there were altogether in the whole period of eleven years only 177 deaths. MR. HART, however, was led enthusiastically to assert that children under 10 years of age, according to the official reports of the recent English epidemic, are wholly and entirely immune from smallpox and can not be infected. The replies of the anti-vaccinationists fairly bristle with figures to show, as they sarcastically phrase it, "the kind of immunity which vaccination affords;" but, indeed, they could have convicted their opponent from his own later utterances, for in the issue of September 22, under the heading of "Immunity from Death of Vaccinated Children under Ten Years," he tabulates eighty-four recent cases of smallpox in such children.

The only other application of statistics to anti-vaccination argument which we have space to notice is a bold and startling comparison of some figures from the records of the British Army with the smallpox death rate of the city of Leicester. This latter is stated to have been 89 per million during the late epidemic. "Perhaps nothing," says MR. BIGGS, "is more frequently appealed to in support of the efficacy of re-vaccination than our re-vaccinated army, yet at page 278, Royal Commission Report, No. 2, we find that '3,953 re-vaccinated soldiers in the British Army suffered from smallpox from 1860 to 1888, of whom 391 died of the disease.' This gives a smallpox death rate of nearly 99,000 per million among a strong, healthy and specially selected re-vaccinated adult population. Compare this appalling death rate of 99,000 per million of the 'efficiently vac-