

# DR. J. MARION SIMS—THE FATHER OF MODERN GYNECOLOGY.

BEING AN ADDRESS DELIVERED OCTOBER 20, 1894, IN BRYANT PARK, NEW YORK, ON THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE OF DR. J. MARION SIMS.

BY PAUL F. MUNDÉ, M.D.,

NEW YORK.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN: You have heard from my distinguished friend, the preceding speaker, who and what manner of man Dr. Sims was. To me has been delegated the honor of enlightening you as to the reasons why he was selected for the peculiar distinction of having a statue erected to his memory. I say "peculiar distinction" because, while in our parks and squares are found the statues of soldiers, statesmen, poets, merchant princes, and clergymen, nowhere until to day, so far as I am aware, does there stand a statue of a physician. There have been several public monuments and busts erected to prominent physicians in other cities, notably a monument to Dr. Ephraim McDowell, the discoverer of ovariectomy, in Lexington, Ky.; a bust to Dr. Benjamin Rush, in Philadelphia, and a monument to the "Discovery of Anæsthesia," the heroes of which are not mentioned in the public garden of Boston. But this statue to Dr. Sims is the first of its kind erected in this country. And why has this great distinction been awarded him? Simply and solely because, among the many eminent physicians and surgeons whom America has produced, he stands pre-eminent as the man through whose genius, perseverance, and energy a special branch of medical science and practice was so renovated, improved, and elevated as to create an era in medicine and raise America from the place of the docile and receptive pupil to the proud position of the teacher of older nations.

This claim is allowed Dr. Sims without dispute, even by those European nations who are most jealous of their own achievements in medical science.

Up to fifty years ago the special branch of medicine to which Dr. Sims devoted himself, as soon as sufficient opportunity offered, had made comparatively little progress. About the middle of the present century three men in Europe, by their individual efforts, each in his own land, raised this branch of medicine to the dignity of a specialty, and placed it on a sound scientific basis. These men were Simpson, in Great Britain, Récamier, in France, and Scanzoni, in Germany. But in spite of their efforts the treatment of these diseases advanced but little, and the one needful factor, the knife, was rarely used. Then, like a meteor, appeared the genius of Sims! In the Southern town where he had for many years followed the practice of a successful general surgeon, as my predecessor has already stated, accident caused him to stumble