

MASTER SURGEONS OF AMERICA

WARREN STONE

WARREN STONE was born at St. Albans, Vermont, February 3, 1808. His father, Peter Stone, was a farmer, and his mother, Jerusha Snow, from whom he inherited his physical development and the high intellectual and moral tone that spurred his ambition on to fields of noble enterprise beyond the limits of his narrow home. When he died, December 6, 1872, at the age of 64, this venerable mother survived him. To her he owed his remarkable physique and from her he derived, says one of his biographers, truth, honesty, philanthropy and self-reliance so conspicuous throughout his life.

These qualities, in spite of his meager opportunities for education, enabled him to reach a high degree of eminence as citizen and member of the medical profession.

His primary education was the scanty schooling of a fatherless boy in New England. His mother, however, supplemented these deficiencies, aiding him materially in his preparation for the study of medicine. He graduated from the Medical School of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1831, and began the practice of medicine in Troy, New York. Here he attended the first cholera case brought to Troy by emigrants from Quebec and Montreal, fleeing to the states by way of Lake Champlain. Dr. Stone recognized the disease and attended the first victim. Thirty-five years later in a paper on cholera he wrote: "It so happened that my professional life and the cholera in this country commenced together." Fortunately, for New Orleans and the South, his career did not end with the cholera. This was but the prelude to his exciting experience with this disease on the cholera ship "Amelia," on which he embarked for New Orleans where he wished to settle and practice. The brig left New York with 108 passengers. Four days out a great storm necessitated the closing of the hatches to keep the vessel from sinking. When the storm abated Dr. Stone found twenty-five of the passengers in the second stage of cholera. The ship was beached off Folly Island, near Charleston, and the disease was carried to the island. The island belonged to Mr. Alexander Milne, who opened his house to the sick and destitute, generously furnishing them with supplies. Charleston quarantined the island but sent down physicians to look after them. Dr. Thomas Hunt, a native of Charleston and born in the same year as Dr. Stone, was put in charge and was ably assisted by young Stone.

Here they met for the first time and here was formed that friendship which continued during their lives. Another ship was chartered and Dr. Stone continued his journey to New Orleans where he arrived in December, 1833, with one pi-cayune in his pocket, which he often said he preserved for the sake of a nucleus. In that year cholera had claimed six thousand victims in a population of fifty thousand, at a time when yellow fever was also prevalent. Through the kindness of one of the physicians, Dr. Stone was appointed at first to a subordinate position in the Charity Hospital. A few months later Dr. Hunt, his acquaintance and friend of Folly Island who had moved from Charleston to New Orleans, became house surgeon. Through his recommendation largely Dr. Stone became a year later assistant house surgeon, under Dr. Harrison, house surgeon on the resignation of Dr. Hunt, who had conceived the idea of founding a medical college in New Orleans. Dr. Hunt, Dr. Harrison, and Dr. Stone were all born in 1808. They all became practically and closely associated in the medical college. Medical education at this time was at a low ebb. Colleges were the product of private enterprise, organized as stock companies, composed of medical graduates. Their maintenance was dependent solely upon the number of medical students and the amount of their fees. Naturally standards had to be arranged to increase the number of students. The medical college of Louisiana, the germ of Tulane University, was just such a stock company, the outcome of Dr. Hunt's enthusiasm and energy. He delivered the introductory lecture in September, 1834. Although the requirements were low, the excellence of the faculty was largely instrumental in building up the attendance.

Dr. Stone was a huge, rugged man; his unusual height and weight were made more conspicuous by his massive head and his imposing features. He filled the position of demonstrator, lecturer and professor of anatomy during the first few years of the college, and in 1839 was made professor of surgery, which chair he held until his resignation early in the year of his death.

Dr. Stone was a very conservative surgeon, but by his sound common sense did much for surgery. In his lectures and conversation he displayed a faculty for anecdote and quotation. He was genial and frank, but not hilarious. He was not gifted with original wit or humor, but thoroughly appreciated it in others. He had a dislike for presumption and pretention, but was always generous in his estimate and treatment of others. He was himself modest and unpretending but not oblivious of his own merits. Dr. Stone's memory was unsurpassed and his reading extensive. In his lectures and addresses, he did not use memoranda, depending entirely upon his memory. He wrote little, so that, unfortunately, we have little record of his vast experience. He was, however, formidable in discussion, so vivid were his recollections, and so keen was his logical power of expression. He had the *tactus eruditus* remarkably well developed. He was editor of the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* from 1857 to 1868. A

few articles published in this journal comprised his contributions to medical literature, such as "Amputation of the Mammæ," "Ligature of the Femoral Artery," "Ligature of the Carotid, Ligature of the Vertebral, and the Treatment of Wounded Arteries." "Hernia and Obstruction of the Bowels," some clinical memoranda and notes from Dr. Stone's lectures, were published by his son, Dr. Warren Stone, Jr., just before his death.

No surgeon of the South ever enjoyed a more widespread reputation with the profession and the general public. As a man he was noted far and wide for his wisdom and by his patients he was affectionately regarded. He was very charitable but unostentatious. Professor S. D. Gross once called him "The Great Commoner of Medicine" and so great was his name in the city and so beloved was he by the people of New Orleans that when he died, December 5, 1872, the District Courts were adjourned as a mark of respect, the flags of shipping stood at half mast, and many of the stores were closed during the funeral.

Though a native of New England he sided with the state of his adoption when it seceded from the union and won the admiration of her people and the respect of her enemies.

FREDERICK W. PARHAM.