

**THOMAS SKINNER,
M.D.; A BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCH**

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Thomas Skinner, M.D.; A Biographical Sketch by John H. Clarke

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JOHN H. CLARKE

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Sincerely yours,
Jho. Skinner

THOMAS SKINNER

M.D.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

REVIEW COPY

BY

JOHN H. CLARKE

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PREFACE

30/10/00 - 2/11/00

THE passing of Thomas Skinner marked the close of an epoch in the history of British homœopathy, and the importance of the event was duly recognised by the publication of full obituary notices in the British homœopathic journals at the time. But it has seemed to me desirable for many reasons to put into more convenient and permanent shape a record, however brief, of the life and work of my friend and preceptor.

Dr. Skinner lived to see the victory of his own principles over those of the would-be improvers of HAHNEMANN'S

doctrines. But the victory is not yet as complete as it might be, and I do not think that I can better repay my debt of gratitude to my old friend than by giving to the world this sketch of his life, imperfect though it must of necessity be. By means of a separate volume the lessons of Dr. Skinner's career may be carried more widely and brought home more effectually than is possible in a passing journalistic notice.

It has been somewhere said that a persecuting allopath is better than an allopath who seeks to patronise homœopathy. There are some homœopaths who are never so happy as when an allopath bestows a patronising smile upon them, or pats them on the back. That may do for homœopathic individuals; but homœopathy can no more be patronised than can the law of gravity. Both

the one law and the other will work independently of any one's approval : an allopath who can look favourably on homœopathy should not stop there, but should become a homœopath. There is no middle way : an honest allopath must almost of necessity be a persecutor of homœopathy. Such was Dr. Skinner until a three-years' illness had brought him to despair, and fate drove him into the arms of homœopathy, and homœopathy cured him. And thus it was that the honest allopath became an honest homœopath.

It would have been quite open to Dr. Skinner to say pretty things about homœopathy—to admit that it had done much for him and might possibly do much for others ; and yet to have argued that one swallow does not make a summer ; and that at his time of life it was too late to alter his whole

scheme of practice : this course would have been open to him, but Dr. Skinner was not the man to take such a course as that. The honest persecutor became the honest student ; and at the age of fifty Dr. Skinner did not hesitate to start his professional life afresh.

The first lesson to be learned from the life-history of our departed friend is the lesson of "thorough." Most of us hold our principles so loosely that we never quite know what we do hold and what we do not.

Another lesson we may learn from Dr. Skinner's career, and that is the wisdom of always, when possible, going to the fountain-head. Dr. Skinner learned his homœopathy from the works of HAHNEMANN himself—the *Organon*, the *Materia Medica Pura*, and the work on *Chronic Diseases*. The result of this