

**MEMOIR OF  
VALENTINE  
MOTT, M.D., LL.D.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649446452

Memoir of Valentine Mott, M.D., LL.D. by S. D. Cross

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**S. D. GROSS**

**MEMOIR OF  
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MOTT, M.D., LL.D.**



# MEMOIR

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OF

## VALENTINE MOTT, M. D., LL. D.,

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK;  
MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

BY

*revised*  
S. D. GROSS, M. D., LL. D.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.  
NEW YORK: D. APPLETON AND CO.  
1868.  
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## PREFACE.

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FIVE summers ago, while passing a few weeks at one of our celebrated watering places, I had the pleasure of meeting with an old and esteemed friend, a former colleague of Dr. Mott and myself in the same school, although not at the same time. In talking over men and things, our conversation naturally turned upon the Coryphæus of American surgery, and, after mutually paying him some well-deserved compliments, I said, "If I outlive Dr. Mott, as, considering the disparity of our ages, I possibly may, I shall esteem it to be my duty, not less than my pleasure, to prepare a discourse upon his life and character for the benefit and instruction of my pupils." He cordially agreed with me, not only that we owed him a great debt of gratitude for the exalted services he had rendered to the profession, but

that the example of such a man, if properly portrayed, could not fail to exercise a most salutary influence upon our medical youths, in awaking in them habits of industry and a laudable ambition to emulate his many virtues. The great surgeon, in the providence of God, has passed away, with a world-wide reputation and an imperishable name, and I now fulfil my self-imposed vow.

My acquaintance with Dr. Mott commenced in the winter of 1828, in the amphitheatre of Rutgers Medical College, during a brief visit at New York. Having learned that he would meet his class at a certain hour in the morning, and anxious to see and hear a man who, although he had hardly reached the meridian of life, already occupied the highest round in the ladder of fame, I made my way to his private room, where I had the good fortune to be presented to him by his illustrious colleague, Dr. Hosack. His discourse, listened to with profound attention and respect by his young auditors, was upon fractures of the skull, a subject to the study of which, as he

informed me, he had devoted much time and reflection. The exercises ended, a brief conversation ensued, when a cordial shake of the hand closed the interview. Four years after, during the height of the Asiatic cholera, when that ruthless malady was daily sweeping away upwards of three hundred citizens of New York, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Mott again, now as a guest at his house; for a friend had given me a letter of introduction which secured to me all that courtly consideration for which he was so distinguished. In 1850, I was appointed his successor in the chair of surgery in the University of the City of New York, and was again received by him with the same kindness and hospitality which he had extended to me eighteen years before. Our last interview occurred in 1863, when we met as members of an Examining Board appointed by Dr. Hammond, Surgeon-General of the United States Army, to deliberate upon matters of grave interest to our wounded soldiers.

It will thus be perceived that my acquaintance with Dr. Mott, although never intimate, extended



through a period of many years; and, it is hardly necessary to add, that, as one of his countrymen, allied to him by similarity of taste and pursuit, I watched with pride and satisfaction his lofty and brilliant career as one of the great surgeons of the age.

The composition of this biographical sketch was to me a source of unalloyed pleasure. It was like the contemplation of a beautiful landscape, mellowed by the gorgeous rays of the setting sun; or like a walk, in a bright summer's morning, along the banks of a quiet and modest stream, enlivened by the songs of birds, and studded with magnificent trees and flowers, filling the air with their delicious perfume.

It is proper to add that an abstract of this Memoir was read before the Faculties and Students of the two medical schools of this city last December, and soon after, by special invitation, before the Bellevue Hospital Medical College of New York.

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE,  
PHILADELPHIA, March 1st, 1868.

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