

**THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF  
PROF. ROBERT EMMET ODLUM,  
CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF  
HIS SPLENDID NATATORIUM AT  
THE NATIONAL CAPITAL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649155613

The life and adventures of Prof. Robert Emmet Odlum, containing an account of his splendid natatorium at the National Capital by Mrs. Catherine Odlum

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Cover @ 2017

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**MRS. CATHERINE ODLUM**

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THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES  
OF  
Prof. Robert Emmet Odlum

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

SPLENDID NATATORIUM AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

His Diary—The Swimming Drill, illustrated—Reminiscences  
of Great Swimmers—Stories of the Land and Sea—His  
Great Swims, Jumps, &c., with the Letters of  
Thanks from Persons he Rescued from  
Watery Graves—The Life-Sav-  
ing Service, &c., &c.

Together With Other Valuable Information.

BY HIS MOTHER,  
MRS. CATHERINE ODLUM.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.  
GRAY & CLARKSON, PRINTERS.  
1885.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1885 by Mrs. CATHERINE  
ODLUM, in the office of the Librarian of Congress.

GV 837  
0404

TO THE FRIENDS OF MY LAMENTED SON,  
WHOSE DEVOTION TO HIS MEMORY AFTER DEATH  
PROVED THEIR TRUE FRIENDSHIP,  
THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR.

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## PREFACE.

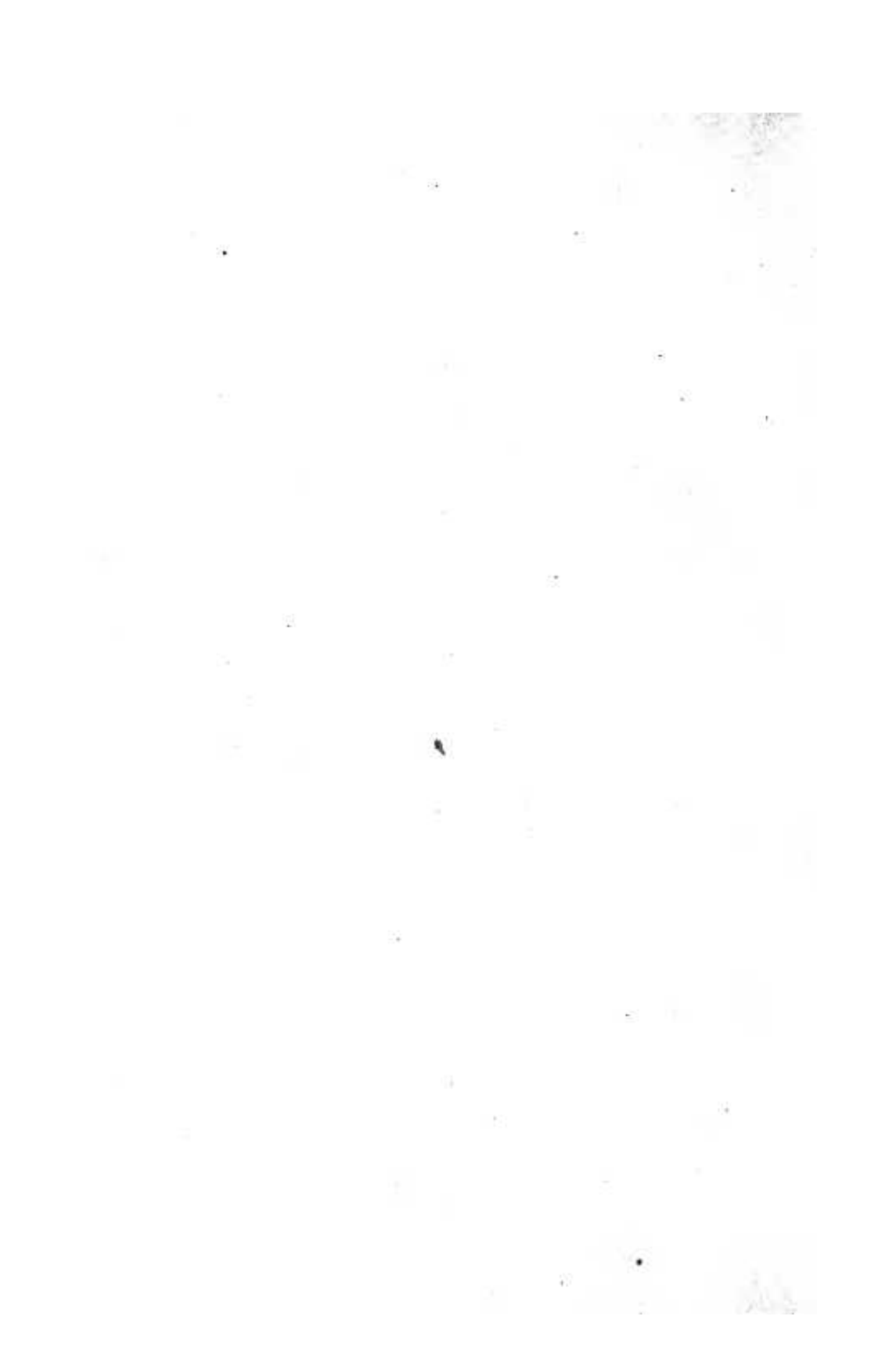
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Though many notices have appeared in the public press of the country of the late Robert Emmet Odlum, nothing approaching to a life of the deceased has been published. That task has been assigned me. I am his disconsolate mother, and having access to all his papers and memoranda, preserved by him with great care, I am enabled to place an authentic biography before the reader.

A pride for his profession and a desire for pecuniary gain, which would better his fortunes and free him from the embarrassments of financial trouble, may have impelled him to make the fearful leap; but it was no foolhardy act, for a nobler motive also actuated him, and he has left the world the wiser for his daring deed.

The bravery he displayed will be a matter of history, and in after years, when the story of the great bridge connecting the two mighty cities is told, the tale will be incomplete without recounting the sad legend of Odlum's leap.

CATHERINE ODLUM.



## INTRODUCTION.

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At this time, when the sorrow-stricken relatives and mourning friends stand by the newly-made grave of Robert Emmet Odlum, the world asks: "What motive had he for the act of jumping from the Brooklyn bridge?"

A man is supposed to have a motive for everything he does. Certainly Professor Odlum had one, and he made it known to his friends more than two years ago.

It has been accepted by many, even those learned in the sciences, that death would result from passing through the air in falling or jumping from any considerable height—that life would be extinct before reaching the surface of the earth. This Professor Odlum denied. He contended there was no danger in the air in jumping from any ordinary height into the water, but that the injury, if any, resulted from a contact with the water, in failing to strike it feet foremost.

"In cases of fire," said the Professor, "persons might jump from the roofs of any building in any city, or even be thrown from the windows, into a net-work (which all public resorts and tenement-houses should keep on hand) with comparative safety. It would cost but little," said the Professor, "and thousands of lives might be saved every year. But for the fear of being killed in the air they are afraid to jump."

Apart from the fact of his pride as an athlete, and of his longing to perform a feat of daring which