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IN MEMORY
OF
GEORGE YARDLEY TAYLOR, M. D.

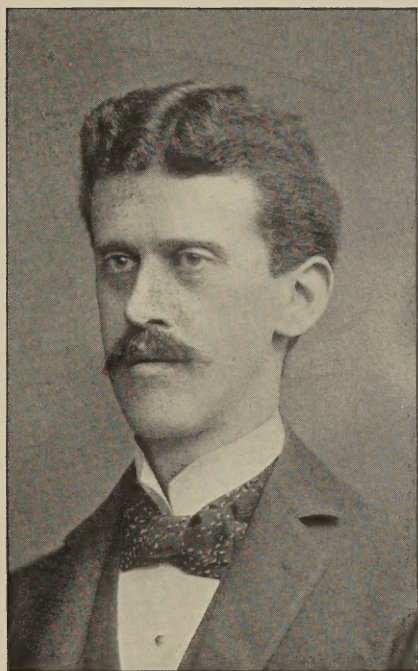


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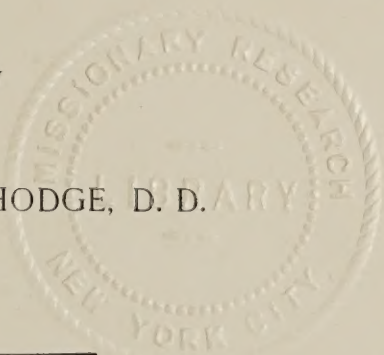
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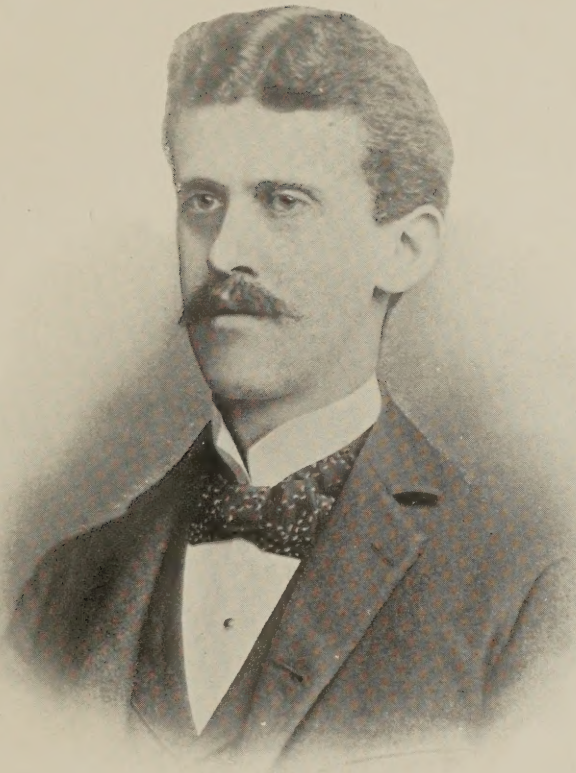
GEORGE YARDLEY TAYLOR, M. D.

BY

EDWARD B. HODGE, D. D.



READ AT THE
MEMORIAL SERVICE
COMMEMORATIVE OF THE PAOTINGFU MARTYRS
IN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BURLINGTON, N. J.
NOVEMBER 26, 1900



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GEORGE YARDLEY TAYLOR, A. B., M. D.

IN MEMORIAM.

“ It is a beautiful instinct,” said the preacher when he began his sermon on the occasion of the death of Elisha Kent Kane, “It is a beautiful instinct which prompts us to lay a flower upon the grave of a friend.” It is with the wish to enjoy a privilege of this kind that I am preparing these lines in memory of my dear friend, George Yardley Taylor, of Burlington, New Jersey.

His widowed mother came into the communion of the Presbyterian Church of Burlington from the Society of Friends, and I had the privilege of baptizing young George at the same time with his mother and the infant brother. He had already in childhood formed the distinct purpose to become a physician, and came to the Van Rensselaer Seminary, a school under the care of the Burlington Church, with this purpose in mind. His studies at Princeton University were pursued with the same end in view. He was one of the most exemplary young men I ever knew; and yet it was not until after his graduation at Princeton that he was prepared to make a public confession of Christ. He did not make the mistake of waiting until he was good enough in his own esteem; but he had such a sense of the grave importance of the step, and was so dissatisfied with the evidences of having passed from death to life, that he felt sure he really was not a Christian, when probably everybody else felt sure that he was. I never knew any one come before the session with a request to be admitted to the Lord's Table with more unfeigned modesty and humility than he displayed when at last he ventured to make his application. Subsequent events showed that he meant all that he said when, before witnessing men and angels he called

Jesus "Lord," and took his vow to be Christ's faithful servant and soldier to his life's end, whatever trials and difficulties might arise on that account. He came promptly to Philadelphia at the completion of his course in Princeton in order to enter upon medical studies at the Universtiy of Pennsylvania.

Although overworked in studying his profession, and teaching in order to earn the money necessary for his education, he entered zealously upon the various activities of the Tabernacle Church, of which the Rev. Henry C. McCook, D. D., is pastor, making himself useful according to his talents. He was a good musician and was glad to be helpful by playing the organ also when attending the meetings for social worship.

When he had obtained his diploma he secured an appointment as resident physician at the Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia, where his duties were discharged with that scrupulous fidelity which was characteristic of the man, and where he acquired that experience which was to be of so much advantage to him in his work in China. Many accident cases were brought to the hospital, a good proportion of which were sent by the Pennsylvania R. R. Co. The introduction of railroads into China brought a new class of accidents to mission hospitals, and Dr. Taylor found his Philadelphia hospital experience standing him in good stead when injured men were brought to him for treatment in that land.

A great crisis came in Dr. Taylor's life when he had completed his course at the hospital. Many attractive propositions were made to him; some of them very earnestly to settle in this country for the practice of his noble profession. It may interest you to learn how he came to choose the life of a missionary physician. I regard the decision which he reached as a direct answer to prayer. The Burlington Church was founded by Dr. Cortlandt Van Ransselaer who devoted the greater part of his ministry to the cause of Ministerial Education, and I often wondered that from the little church which he established candidates for the holy ministry did not seem to be forthcoming. It is true that he had the privilege of inscribing with his own hand in the church record the name of LEVI JANVIER, who went out to India as a missionary, and there died a violent death for the cause he loved. But his name stood

almost alone. It was my privilege to serve the Burlington Church for thirty years. I took pains to teach the people constantly to love the work of the ministry and to pray for its increase. The burden of prayer for many years was to this effect: "Lord, be pleased to take the choicest and the best of our sons and daughters and consecrate them to thy special service." God evidently hearkened to that oft-repeated prayer. He looked down upon us as we appeared before him from Sabbath to Sabbath in his house, and he made his selection according to the terms of our request. He laid his hand upon the head of George Taylor, and we seemed to hear him say, "This man will I choose; for have you any better than he?" But God uses means. Dr. Taylor was constantly under the influence of a missionary spirit in the church, and under missionary instruction. He was also permitted to meet and to hear not a few of the missionaries who were from time to time in this country on furlough. Such men as the veteran Hunter Corbett, of Chifu, China, Nassau, of Africa, with Wynkoop, Kellogg, Heyl, Brodhead and Tracy, of India, doubtless made deep impressions on the mind and heart of this young man. I remember once also putting into his hands, as a book which might interest a medical student, Dr. B. C. Henry's work on China. I thought that the account of hospital work at Canton would attract his notice. The book was read and returned to me without comment. It was one night some years afterward that we sat by the open fire at the Burlington Manse discussing plans proposed for his future. About midnight he startled me by suddenly addressing me on this wise: "Mr. Hodge, had you not some other plan in mind for me?" Before I could well recover from my astonishment, he added, "Did you not intend that I should become a foreign missionary?" Correspondence with the Board of Foreign Missions ensued, the result of which was his appointment to be the associate of Dr. Boudinot C. Atterbury at the An Ting Hospital in the City of Peking. This association was a most happy one, and the two young surgeons labored together most harmoniously and successfully. Dr. Taylor made such rapid progress in the language of the country that he was soon able to dispense with an interpreter in the discharge of his duties, and his

skill as a surgeon won for him the highest praise from Dr. Atterbury, who had the best opportunity for judging. He had opened also a dispensary at a place called the "Hills," about fifteen miles from Peking, and his journeys to and from this post in all sorts of weather exposed his health to no little danger. Indeed his friends in China, alarmed in his behalf, were secretly planning to have him sent home to recruit; but he immediately forbade further proceedings when he discovered what he regarded as their mistaken kindness. He was greatly interested while at Peking in the effort to train native physicians, and one of the treasured pictures we have is that which represents the two American doctors with their class of native students about them.

The time came when a forward movement seemed possible, and through the personal exertions of Dr. Taylor money was secured for the erection of hospital, dispensary and chapel buildings at Paotingfu, a large walled city, the capital of the province of Chili, about ninety miles southwest from Peking. A railroad between the two cities was built and opened for travel in the spring of 1899. His associates in the mission at Paotingfu were his friends, Dr. Atterbury and family, Mrs. Lowrie, widow of the Rev. Reuben Lowrie, of Shanghai; the Rev. Walter Lowrie, her son; Rev. F. E. Simcox and family; the Rev. J. A. Miller and family. The Atterbury house was left vacant after a time by the return of Dr. Atterbury to America. The state of his health was such that he was forbidden by his physician to return to China. When my son, Cortlandt Van Rensselaer and his wife, dedicated themselves to the work of foreign missions I was extremely anxious that the novitiate should be passed with Dr. Taylor, whom I knew so well and trusted so completely. The providential vacancy at Paotingfu seemed to favor such an arrangement; all difficulties were one after another taken out of the way; it seemed clearly the will of God; and I felt extremely pleased when I saw my wishes carried so happily into effect. I little knew what a post of danger was thus selected at the very front of the battle. Dr. Taylor, from the moment he learned that this plan could be carried out, seemed to devote himself to the task of providing in every possible way for the comfort and happiness

of the new-comers. I can never be grateful enough for all his kindness. On his part a new joy plainly came into his life when they appeared and entered upon the duties of the mission. How happy they were in each other's company! What large prospects of usefulness opened before the imaginations of the young physicians who were bravely uniting their efforts for the healing of China's suffering millions! Hopeful letters and reports to the Board told of increasing attendance at the dispensary at the compound, and at the dispensary within the city walls. A tour into the interior to the south had been made in November, 1899, by Mr. Walter Lowrie, Dr. Hodge, and Mr. Killie of Peking, and a site selected for a new station soon to be opened and occupied.

And then came the change. The "Boxers," who had been operating in the province of Shantung, appeared in force in Chili, and kept an encampment for months only a few miles south of Paotingfu. The letters which came home, however, showed no signs of alarm.

And yet there were things which seemed like a presentiment. Expressions appeared occasionally in Dr. Taylor's letters which seemed strange from his pen. There were days when he had had more than the usual burden of labor and care, and which saw him at the close in a frame of mind, produced by weariness, which craved a longer rest than a night's repose. There were evening hours, too, when the missionaries were together and Dr. Taylor's fingers were on the key-board of the organ. He was very fond of the new Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church. The hymns were sung through from cover to cover; but there was one hymn which became particularly associated with our friend, and it was this:

"Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar
 When I put out to sea.
 * * * * *
 Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell
 When I embark.

For, though from out our bourne of time and place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar."

On the 27th of May the situation suddenly became alarming. The Boxers, who had been persecuting the Roman Catholic Christians south of Paotingfu, marched northward and destroyed bridges, stations, and portions of the railroad track on the road to Peking, and the little company found themselves cut off from communication with the rest of the world. A letter sent by special messenger from the A. B. C. F. M. mission station about the third of June to the treasurer of the mission at Peking tells pathetically of the situation: "Talk is now definite that Nan Chuang is to be sacked to-morrow or the next day, then the Roman Catholic Church here, and then our place. * * * We can't go out to fight. We must sit still, do our work—and, if God calls, go to Him. * * * A guard from Peking ought to meet us in two and a half days. North of us are raiders; east, on the river, are the French murderers; south, plunderers; southwest, railway destroyers. Boxers are plenty here. One spark from north, south, east or west and we are gone. * * * Pray for us. In His waiting——"

Alas, there was no help in Peking. There was no help in Tiensin, where Mr. Walter Lowrie was pleading with the consuls for fifty marines that he might cut his way through for the rescue for his associates. But they knew the madness of such an attempt, and there was not a man to spare. And so it came to pass that the two devoted little bands in calmness and fortitude of spirit awaited the end.

On Sunday, the 24th of June, the condition of things was ominous. Yet Mr. Simcox preached as usual, taking for his text the passage which speaks of our being strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The 28th of June was the regular day for the dispensary in the city, and Dr. Taylor, "regular as the sun," was present for his clinic. Only two days later, writes Mr. Lowrie, on the report of a native Christian, the rioters surrounded the mission premises and burned them, and all the foreign inmates, eight in number, passed up into the martyr's home together.

Such was the end of one who was the very soul of sincerity and truth ; a man of unaffected humility and modesty ; a man of most tender affections, at the furthest remove from affectation, loving far more intensely than he was himself aware of ; a man of religious devotion and fidelity, rather than of emotional enthusiasm ; a man to be trusted to the utmost under all circumstances ; a man ready to lay down his life for his friends ; a man who did lay down that life for the Master whom he served.

The call now is for volunteers to take the places of those who have fallen at the front of the battle. I mistake much the character of the young men of our Christian colleges if that call shall be made in vain. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" "Here am I! Send me!"

