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Contributors

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
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PAUL YOER TUPPER

ROBERT E. SCHLUETER, M.D., F.A.G.S., St. Louis, Missouri

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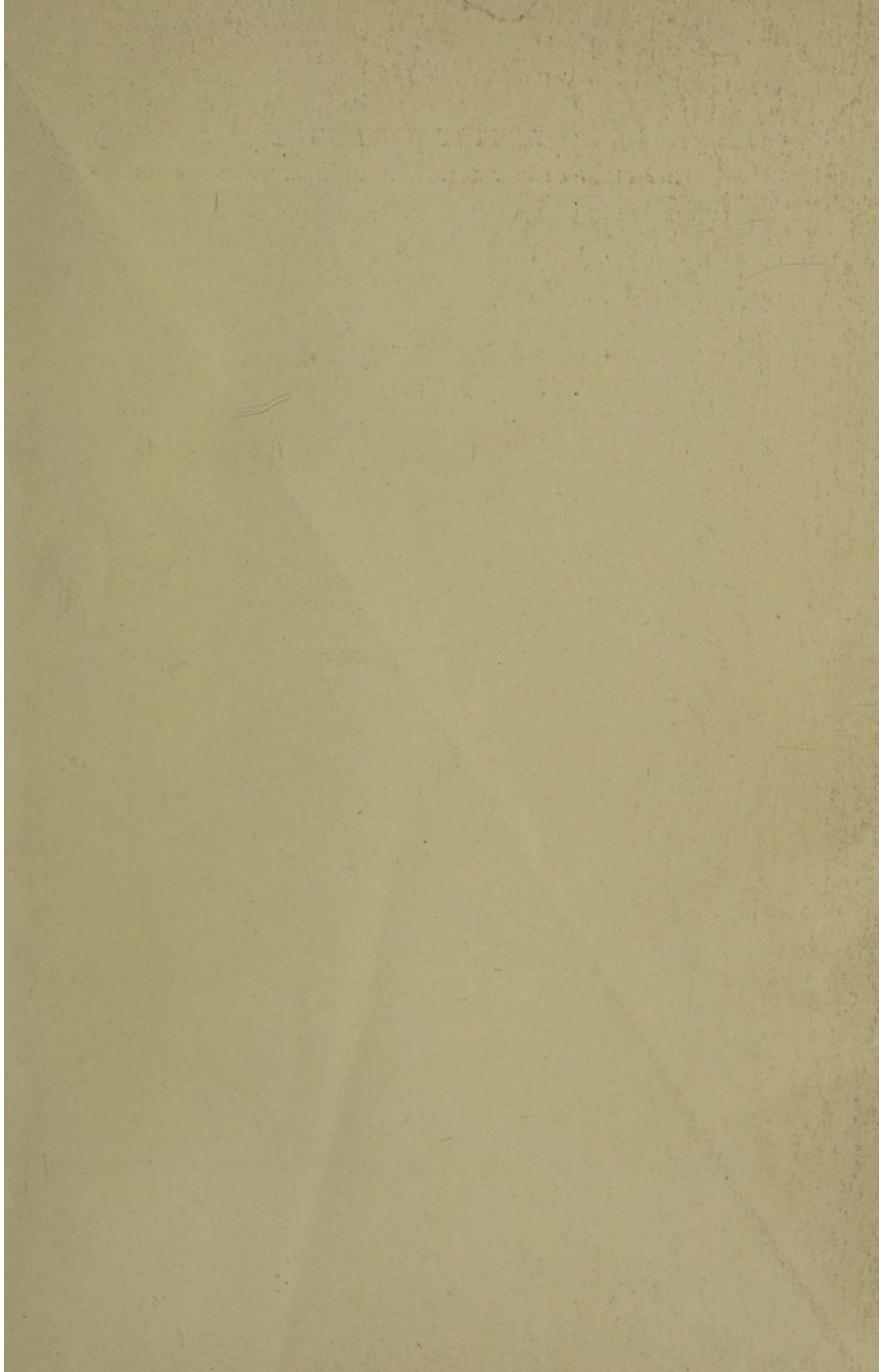
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PAUL Y. TUPPER
1858-1928

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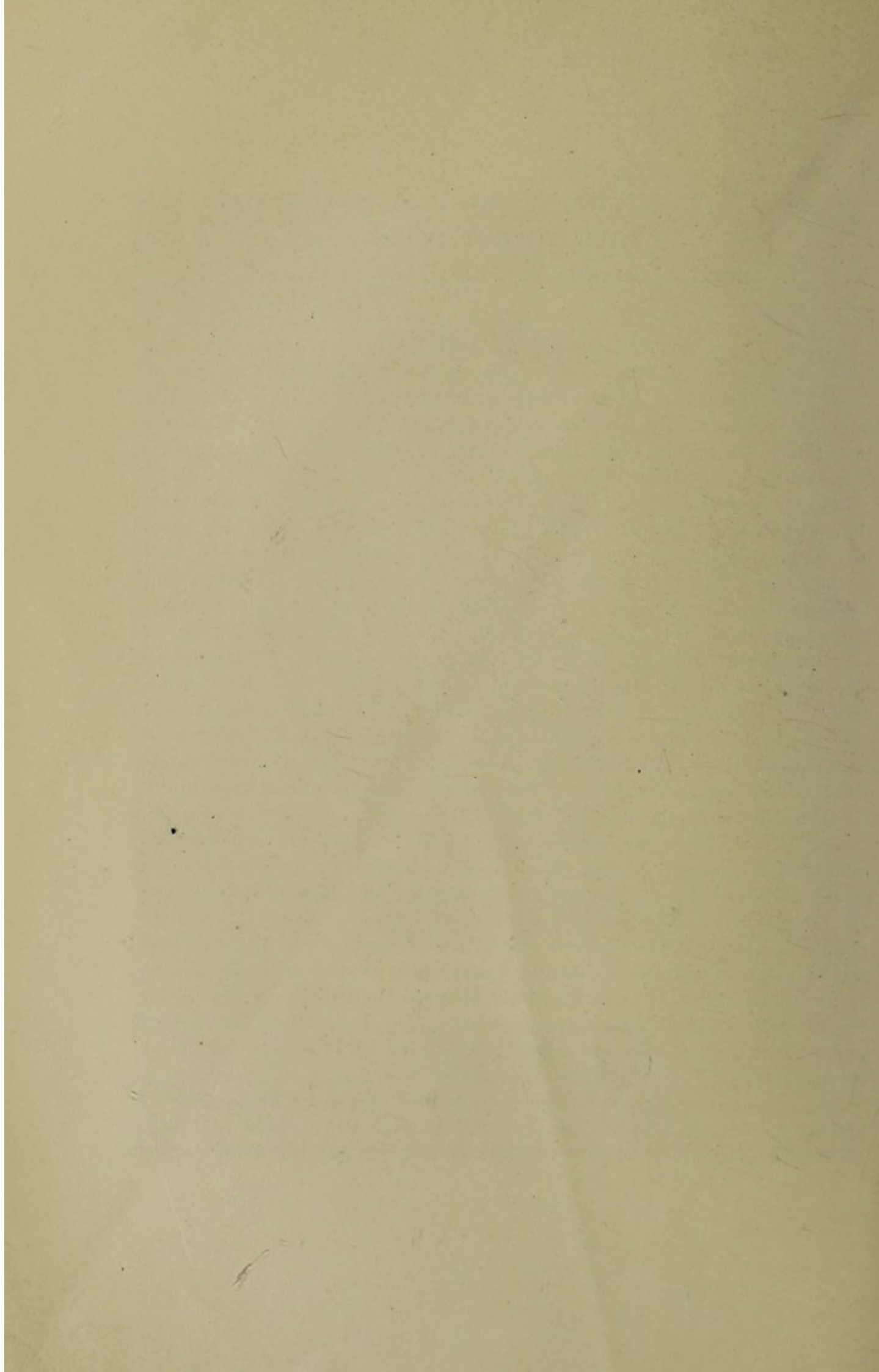
ROBERT E. SCHLUETER, M.D., F.A.C.S., ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

AS one of the youngest in the large family of the Rev. Henry Allen and Nancy (Boyce) Tupper, and of evident Scotch-Irish-English stock, Paul Yoer Tupper was born in Washington, Georgia, on March 1, 1858. His father was a Baptist minister whose calling took him also to South Carolina and to Richmond, Virginia. In the latter city the adolescent young man attended Norwood High School and Richmond College.

In 1878 he matriculated in Hospital Medical College at Louisville, Kentucky (later the Medical Department of the University of Louisville), from which school he graduated in 1880. Throughout the following year he functioned as interne in the Louisville City Hospital; then in the same capacity in the Forest Hill Lying-In Hospital. Resigning from the latter and also returning a commission in the Medical Corps of the United States Navy, he came to St. Louis in 1881.

Soon after finding a location for an office, he was honored by the late Dr. L. Ch. Boisliniere, who called to welcome a newcomer. Probably through the friendship of Dr. Boisliniere, he became assistant to Prof. Elisha H. Gregory, who was then at the height of his eminent career as a surgeon. As chief surgeon of St. Louis Mullanphy Hospital, Dr. Gregory had a vast amount of clinical material at his command, which gave the young Tupper exceptional opportunity for thorough training in clinical surgery. The association with the brilliant Dr. Norman Bruce Carson, also surgeon to Mullanphy Hospital, was a considerable additional advantage. During these years he divided his time between the services of his chief and a growing private practice; still, he took the advice of Dr. Gregory and spent much time in the dissecting room. In 1887 he was appointed instructor in practical anatomy at the St. Louis Medical College, and was promoted to professor of descriptive anatomy in 1890. Nine years later the St. Louis Medical College united with the Missouri Medical College and became the Medical School of Washington University. Dr. Tupper held the chair of applied anatomy and operative surgery in this noted school until he voluntarily retired in 1923 as emeritus professor of surgery.

During his more mature years he endeavored to confine his professional activity to patients at the Missouri Baptist Sanitarium and St. Luke's Hospital. He was surgeon to both of these institutions, and honorary consulting surgeon



to the Jewish, Bethesda, and St. John's Hospitals. He was the foremost and most dependable surgical consultant of the middle section of the Mississippi Valley, conservatively cautious or boldly radical according to conditions. His calm and clear judgment was a combination of accumulated scientific facts and that perfect behavior in the sick-room which is Sir William Osler's "Æquanimitas." The latter's keen sense of humor also found almost an exact counterpart in the ever ready, kind pleasantry of Dr. Tupper. Patients and colleagues soon felt that he could descend or rise to the level of any honest and worthy member of the human race. Nevertheless, with all his graceful courtesy toward decency and uprightness, as becomes a gentleman of typical southern culture, he never tolerated rude discourtesy or even a semblance of dishonest dealings. Then, as a rule, perhaps following the wisdom and example of Socrates, his criticism or anger was expressed by sparing of speech or absolute silence.

A decade or so before the turn of the century, it was customary for recognized surgeons in St. Louis to attend some patients rightly belonging to a general practitioner. Dr. Tupper was among the first to limit his practice to distinctly surgical cases. He attracted promising young men who were encouraged and inspired by his outstanding surgical ability and his sympathetic cheerfulness toward all mankind. As such a man he was actually immune to malpractice suits.

With him, a major operation was a sacred trust. He always considered the patient's welfare and never spared himself. Each evening he would make the rounds of the hospitals. On February 1, 1928, shortly after returning from this regular trip and when preparing to retire for the night, he suddenly exchanged life for death, having been privileged to remain actively at work until the very end. A blessed reward for a true aristocrat!

In 1890 he was married to Miss Marie Papin Moses. His widow and one son, Mr. Gregory Tupper, survived him.

He wrote a moderate number of papers and other articles upon various anatomical and surgical subjects, but modestly withheld much of his valuable experience from publishers and printers. While this might be deemed a fault, it was certainly counterbalanced by his many singularly noble attributes. However well his wide scientific knowledge and operative skill were recognized by his pupils, associates, and patients, he failed to attain a well merited prominence, because he wrote little. This, however, was of his own choosing. He also had a peculiar knack of avoiding office in local and general medical and surgical organizations. Still when an appointment came to him, he did more than his duty.

Unostentatious devotion to professional service, coupled with an extremely rational estimate of all newer developments upon a background of thoroughly established fundamental principles and studiously acquired ability, embodies the highest virtues within the domain of the healing art. Measured by this yardstick, Dr. Paul Y. Tupper was an ideal surgeon.

