

THE
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Nervous and Mental Disease

Obituary.

EDWARD CONSTANT SEGUIN, M. D.,

New York.

Dr. Edward C. Seguin, the distinguished neurologist of this city, died on Saturday evening, February 19th. His health began to fail in the winter of 1894-'95; but, in spite of progressive loss of strength, he did not give up professional work until July, 1896. Soon after this time the real nature of his illness became apparent, and from this time he was confined to his home, growing gradually weaker, but retaining his great mental powers almost to the last.

Dr. Edward Constant Seguin was born in Paris, France, in 1843. He was the only child of Dr. Edward O. Seguin, whose brother, father and several relatives of the same name were physicians, chemists, engineers and architects. Dr. Edward O. Seguin devoted nearly all his life to the training and education of idiotic and backward children, in France and in this country. He was the originator of the "physiological method" of education, which method was based (as far back as 1873-'78) upon the principle of training the special senses and the two hands (muscular sense) as the means of developing the cerebral functions. It included in its practical details most of the work now known as "object-lessons" and "kindergarten" drill. In 1850 Dr. Seguin, foreseeing the inevitable success of the policy which culminated in the bloody coup-d'etat of December 2d, 1851, emigrated to this country with his family, and finally settled in Cleveland, Ohio.

There, and in Portsmouth, Ohio, the subject of our sketch received a good public and high school education. One year of this time was given to an apprenticeship at the wheelwright trade in Portsmouth. Circumstances made it impossible for him to go to college. In 1861, then residing at Mt. Vernon, New York, he began the study of medicine with his father, attended three courses of lectures at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York (the Medical Department of Columbia University), and was graduated therefrom in the autumn of 1864. Meanwhile, from May, 1862, Dr. Seguin had entered the medical department of the army, serving for the first two months (when less than nineteen years old) as "dresser" in the hospital steamships of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, in the Pamunkey and James Rivers. In July he was appointed a Medical Cadet in the regular army, and served two terms, till August, 1864. During much of this time he had, practically, the charge of the patients in the wards to which he was attached, performing all the duties of surgeon, except the doing of major operations. In this service, living in the hospitals, he developed non-tubercular phthisis in the spring of 1864, from the effects of which he did not recover for several years. From September, 1864, to June, 1865, he served at Little Rock, Ark., as Acting Assistant Surgeon, and during the last two months as Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Volunteers. From 1865 to 1867 he passed through the grades of interne and house physician in the New York Hospital, then at Broadway and Duane street. Early in 1868 symptoms of phthisis reappeared, and he applied for a position in the medical department of the army. By special courtesy of the Surgeon-General he was assigned to duty in New Mexico, and there served as post surgeon at Forts Craig and Selden. In the summer of 1869 he returned to New York entirely cured (as the result showed) of his pulmonary trouble.

The winter of 1869-'70 was spent by Dr. Seguin in

Paris, studying privately under Brown-Sequard, Charcot, Ranvier and Cornil, masters whose friendship he always retained. This course of study led him to look forward to making nervous diseases a specialty; but after his return to New York he entered upon general practice in association with Dr. William H. Draper. In 1876 this friendly association was severed, in order that he might devote himself exclusively to the study and treatment of nervous diseases. From 1871 to 1885 Dr. Seguin was connected with the Faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, lecturing upon diseases of the spinal cord and upon insanity. In 1873, with the permission of the Faculty, he founded the Clinic for Nervous Diseases, which, though unavoidably placed upon an unfavorable day (*viz.*, Saturday afternoon), prospered satisfactorily. From 1882 to 1893 Dr. Seguin was in Europe several times, but resumed the practice of his specialty whenever he was in New York.

Dr. Seguin has written many monographs relating to nervous diseases, more especially to their treatment by hygienic as well as by medicinal means, and a number of these were edited in book form, entitled "*Opera Minora.*" Various circumstances, and the belief that there were already too many books upon the subject, prevented him from carrying out a long-cherished plan of writing a formal treatise upon nervous diseases.

He was one of the founders of the American Neurological Association and of the New York Neurological Society, and these, with the New York Pathological Society, received most of his attention. He was also a member of the New York County Medical Society, Academy of Medicine, besides several European medical societies.

Although naturally disposed to the scientific study of medicine, it was always his guiding principle to make everything subservient to the welfare of each patient who intrusted himself to his care. The chief objects of medicine he believed to be the cure, alleviation and prevention of disease.

The Neurological Society records with profound sorrow the death of Dr. Edward Constant Seguin, who died of cirrhosis of the liver on Saturday, February 19th, 1898, aged 54 years.

Dr. Seguin was one of the founders of this society, and its president during 1877-'78, and was for many years a constant attendant at its meetings, taking a leading part in its scientific discussions; his opinions being always listened to with that respect to which his vast clinical experience and his sound judgment entitled them.

For many years Dr. Seguin ranked with the foremost neurologists of the world, and his contributions to science were valued highly.

Whereas, This society has lost by the death of Dr. Seguin one of its original incorporators and an earnest supporter; therefore be it

Resolved, That in his death this society has lost a valuable and honored member. In his professional attainments he was most eminent; enthusiastic in his devotion to his special field of work, in which he was justly esteemed an authority. As an author he was remarkable for his acute observation and logical reasoning, while the clearness of his style gave evidence of the directness of his thought. By his death scientific neurology has lost a zealous and successful disciple, while the community has been deprived of the services of a skillful counsellor and practitioner. The members of the Neurological Society desire thus to give expression to their feelings of respect for his memory and, sympathizing sincerely with his family in their loss, offer them respectful condolence;

Resolved, That this minute be entered upon the records of the society and that a copy be sent to the family of Dr. Seguin and to the medical journals.

J. ARTHUR BOOTH, M.D.,
M. ALLEN STARR, M.D.,
GEORGE W. JACOBY, M.D.,

Committee.