

Timothy Field Allen

BY N. L. BRITTON

(WITH PORTRAIT)

Dr. Timothy Field Allen, for many years a vice-president of the Club, died at his residence in New York City, December 5, 1902.

He was born in Westminster, Vt., April 24, 1837. His collegiate training was at Amherst, from which institution he was graduated in 1858. His degree of Doctor of Medicine came from the medical department of the University of New York in 1861, and during the years 1862-1864 he served as an Assistant Surgeon of the United States Army. Returning to New York toward the close of the Civil War, he formed a partnership with the late Dr. Carroll Dunham, and has since been an active practitioner of homeopathy, serving for a series of years as dean of the New York Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital; he was also largely instrumental in the establishment of the "Flower Hospital" and the "Laura Franklin Free Hospital for Children."

At the time of his return to New York from service in the army, or previously, he became interested in botany, and soon became intimately associated with Dr. George Thurber, Mr. William H. Leggett, Mr. Coe F. Austin, Professor D. C. Eaton, Mr. J. H. Redfield, Mr. James Hogg, Mr. M. Ruger, Mr. James S. Merriam, Mr. Isaac Buchanan, and others, who under the inspiration of Dr. John Torrey, were enthusiastically prosecuting the study of the local flora, and met regularly as early as 1865 as the New York Botanical Club; it is recorded that the suggestion for the formation of this organization came from Dr. Allen. As the organization became more formal, and of increasing influence, it was determined to apply to the legislature of the State for an Act of Incorporation, which was first granted April 21, 1871, and amended April 29, 1872, the name "Torrey Botanical Club" meanwhile having been appropriately substituted for the original designation. Dr. Allen served as Curator, and the local herbarium was kept at his residence, the meetings being held in Dr. Torrey's rooms at Columbia College. After the death of Dr.

Torrey in 1873, Dr. Thurber succeeded to the Presidency of the Club, and Dr. Allen was elected Vice-President, an office which he held continuously from that time until his death.

During the early years of the Torrey Club, Dr. Allen was a diligent observer and collector of the plants growing in the vicinity of the city, and was actively interested in the field excursions, which were early established and have been continued consecutively ever since. Many of his specimens are preserved in the present local herbarium of the Club, which now forms the nucleus of the local herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden. He also collected extensively in the vicinity of Litchfield, Conn., which has been his summer home for many years. In June, 1870, he explored Lookout Mountain in Tennessee and Georgia. He became interested in the study of Algae during his association with Professor D. C. Eaton in New York, and soon specialized on the family Characeae. As early as 1871 he records that he had been interested in this group for some years, and his botanical studies of these plants continued until his health failed in 1901. His printed contributions to the knowledge of the Characeae are numerous, and are cited in the appended bibliography: he corresponded and exchanged specimens with students of these plants all over the world, paid the expenses of collectors in North America, South America and Japan, and purchased a great many specimens and a practically complete collection of the literature of Characeae, thus forming one of the most extensive accumulations of information relative to these plants which has ever been brought together. He presented all this material to the New York Botanical Garden in 1901.

Personally, Dr. Allen was a charming associate, generous to a fault, and beloved by all who knew him. His hospitality was delightful; those who participated in the Club's field excursion to Litchfield in May, 1900, will recall their experience as his guests with deep pleasure. His loss is keenly felt, both as a friend and as a scientific worker; there is now no one in America prepared to continue his studies, but we may hope that some botanist may soon be attracted to the fascinating group of plants to which he gave such close attention for many years.

Dr. Allen is commemorated by the grass *Danthonia Alleni*

Austin,* by *Eriogonum Alleni* S. Watson † and by the interesting Sundrops of eastern Long Island, *Kneiffia Alleni* (Britton) Small. ‡

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† *Eriogonum Alleni* S. Watson; Gray, Man. ed. 6. 734. 1890.

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