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Pioneer Doctor

Lewis J. Moorman



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Pioneer Doctor is the story of a half-century of medical practice, from the early days in Oklahoma Territory to metropolitan conditions. Lewis J. Moorman, M.D., once told a patient who apologized for calling him out late at night, "You must remember, I started with a team of Indian ponies twenty miles from a railroad."

Moorman's experiences run the gamut of human ills and situations—of childbirth in a barn loft, the "faith healer" who infected a whole community with an "itch," the mother who was sure her child had a case of the "go-backs." He tells of encounters with Indians who needed medical help; the horrifying effects of gunshot and knife wounds; and the spiritual response of patients stricken with tuberculosis.

In the literature of medical practice, Dr. Moorman's association with Old Billy, his horse, approaches nearclassic proportions. Obtained as payment for a long-overdue medical bill, Old Billy had a balky disposition—until the good doctor decided to talk things over with him one day. What follows offers a rare account of the relationship between a man and his horse.

Pioneer Doctor stands as an entertaining and informative memoir, but its social and cultural significance is clear. For here is apparent a tremendous transformation as countless young physicians like Moorman went out from Louisville Medical College, covering the plains with horse-and-buggy doctors.

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