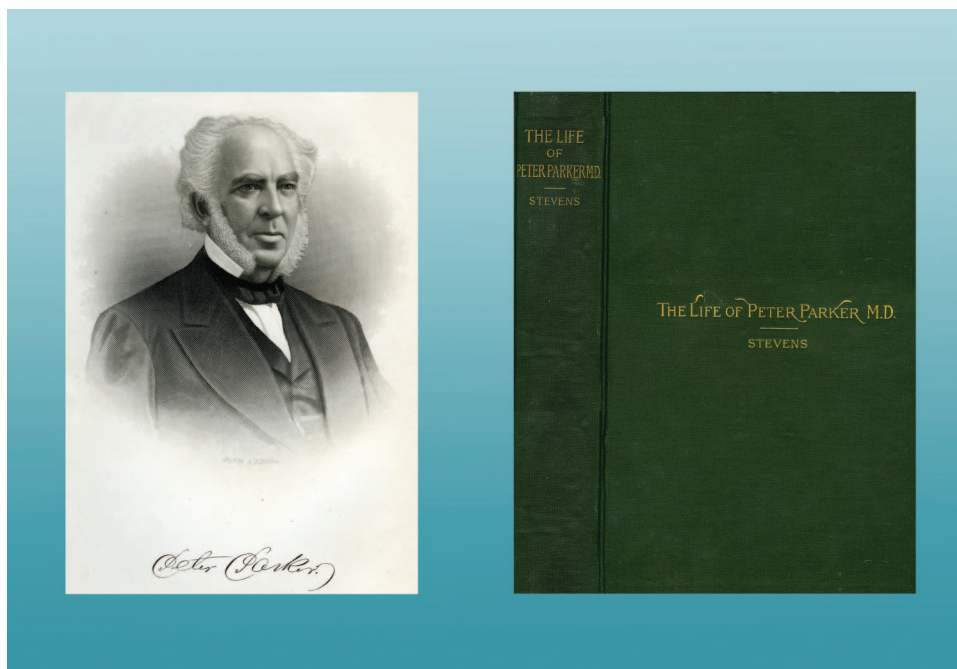


## The Ethereal Peter Parker, M.D., D.D.



“Peter Parker” is regarded as the alter ego of the fictional character Spiderman by many younger physicians; however, older professionals may recognize “Peter Parker” as the name of the Presbyterian medical missionary who introduced surgical anesthesia to China. Indeed, Rev. Dr. Parker (1814–1888) was etherizing Chinese patients for surgery as early as the summer of 1847 and was chloroforming others by the following year. In later years, Parker’s likeness (*left*) was captured by engraver A. H. Ritchie. In 1896 a Yale professor named Rev. George B. Stevens, M.D., published (*right*) a 356-page biography, *The Life, Letters, and Journals of the Rev. and Hon. Peter Parker, M.D., Missionary, Physician, and Diplomatist: The Founder of Medical Missions and Founder of the Ophthalmic Hospital in Canton*. Biographer Stevens’ reference to Parker as “diplomatist” reminds readers that the missionary also served on diplomatic missions as an interpreter on behalf of U.S. Presidents Tyler and then Pierce in negotiating America’s first treaty with China. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the Anesthesiology Reflections online collection available at [www.anesthesiology.org](http://www.anesthesiology.org).)

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