

Thomas J. Watkins / [Arthur Hale Curtis].

Contributors

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

MEMOIRS

THOMAS J. WATKINS, M.D., F.A.C.S.

By ARTHUR H. CURTIS, M.D., F.A.C.S., CHICAGO

IT is with the deepest regret that the Editorial Board announces the death on April 1, 1925, of Dr. Thomas J. Watkins, one of the founders of *SURGERY, GYNECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS* and a member of its editorial board from the beginning. Apparently in perfect health he was dictating letters at his office when struck down. His death came from what was probably a cardiac angina.

Born near Utica, New York, in 1863, this master plastic surgeon spent his boyhood in hard manual labor upon the farm. Denied such holiday pleasures as fall to the lot of the average country youth his earlier years of life were devoted to unceasing daily toil and drudgery, relieved, when possible, by winter months of study at a country school. Subsequently, after hard-earned preparatory education at Holland Patent Academy and Adams Collegiate Institute, he borrowed funds sufficient to defray the expenses of 3 years' work at the University of Michigan. A medical degree was thereafter obtained at Bellevue Hospital Medical School, this, in turn, being followed by internships in the Utica (N. Y.) City Hospital, St. Peter's Hospital of Brooklyn, and the Woman's Hospital in the State of New York. In the Woman's Hospital he obtained valuable training under the direction of the late Thomas Addis Emmet.

In 1889 Dr. Watkins moved to Chicago and in 1892 was married to Catherine Carman of Poughkeepsie, New York. He joined the staff of Northwestern University Medical School at an early date, and at the time of his death was chief of the department of gynecology in that institution. Numbered among his many pupils are several who have attained eminence in the surgical world.

Dr. Watkins was a master of gynecological technique and possessed unequaled skill in the art of plastic surgery. He was perhaps best known as the originator of the procedure which he termed the "transposition" operation, popularly called by others the "Watkins" or "Watkins-Wertheim" operation for cystocele and uterine prolapse. Elected to the American Gynecological Society in 1896 he was honored with the presidency of that society in 1915, and was the recipient of many other honors. He was a founder of the American College of Surgeons.

Although it is impossible to portray, adequately, the beautiful character of this gentle man who yesterday was in our midst, that which has been thus far said would be but mockery without some added words. He spent a life of labor and unselfishness. He gave freely of himself and of his earnings to every cause which merited. He was generous in praise of others, modest in demeanor, always gentle, kindly, true—a manly man who will be sorely missed.





THOMAS J. WATKINS, M.D., F.A.C.S.

1863-1925

