

THOMAS J. WATKINS, M.D.  
1863-1925

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THOMAS J. WATKINS died of cardiac angina, April 1, 1925. Apparently in perfect health, he was suddenly stricken while dictating letters in his office.

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 three 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 technic and possessed unequalled 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 the Society in 1915. He was invariably present at the annual meetings, where he presented frequent papers and took an active part in the discussions. Dr. Watkins was possessed

of rare balance and good judgment; although fearless in upholding his opinions he was always thoughtful, kindly and open-minded, remarkably free from any trace of rancour or unseemly prejudice.

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.