Toner (J. M.)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

WASHINGTON L. ATLEE, M. D.

OF PHILADELPHIA

BY

J. M. TONER, M. D.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

REPRINT FROM THE MEMORIAL VOLUME OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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WASHINGTON L. ATLEE, M. D.

ATLEE, WASHINGTON L., M. D., of Philadelphia, Pa., was born at Lancaster, Pa., February 22, 1808. He was the youngest of six children of William Pitt Atlee, Esq., of Lancaster. His paternal grandfather, Hon. William Augustus Atlee, was an active Whig during the Revolutionary war, and one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania from 1777 until his death in 1793. His maternal grandfather, Maj. John Light, was an officer in the Revolutionary Army. At the age of seven his father died, after which he was under the care of his grandparents. At fourteen years of age, after completing the ordinary routine of English studies afforded by the schools of Lancaster, he was placed in a dry goods and grocery store. Becoming dissatisfied at the end of fifteen months, he left that and immediately engaged as a medical student under the preceptorship and in the family of his oldest brother Dr. John Light Atlee, of Lancaster, who is still (January, 1878,) living and in active practice. Feeling the great need of a classical education, he devoted a large portion of his time during the first

two years to the study of languages under private tutors, and also engaged in the study of the natural sciences, and philosophy. During the last three years of his medical pupilage, he spent much of his time in the Lancaster County Hospital, and in practice among the poor of the city, and as an evidence of the extent of his clinical advantages it may be stated that before he had finished his medical education he had attended forty cases of obstetrics. He was very fond of practical anatomy, and gave much attention to the dissection of animal and human bodies, the latter being always procurable at this hospital. He attended two full courses of lectures at the Jefferson Medical College, in the winter of 1826-27, and 1828-29, and graduated in the spring of 1829. His thesis was on "Parotitis Gangrenosa," a title of his own, and a subject furnished in his own experience. While in Philadelphia attending the sessions of the college he was by invitation a private pupil of George McClellan, M. D., Professor of Surgery. During the summer of 1827-28 he actively pursued the practical study of botany, and was a correspondent of Dr. William P. C. Barton, then Professor of Materia Medica and Botany in Jefferson Medical College. He collected about four hundred specimens of Lancaster county plants into the form of an herbarium, accompanied with a written description of each plant. His collection was subsequently presented to the Linnean Society of Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg, Pa. Soon after graduation he located in Mount Joy, a small village in his native county, twelve miles from Lancaster. While here he originated a temperance

society, and a lyceum; delivered a lecture on temperance, which was published; also lectures on the great display of falling stars, November, 1833; a course of lectures on botany, and read several miscellaneous papers before the lyceum. April 15, 1830, he was married to Miss Ann Eliza Hoff, daughter of John Hoff, Esq., of Lancaster. The issue of this marriage was ten children, the youngest having been born in the fall of 1844. Six of them survive—Kate, wife of David Burpee, M. D.; Mary, wife of Thomas M. Drysdale, M. D.; Eliza, wife of John Sheaff, Esq.; Margaret H. Atlee; Washington L. Atlee, M. D.; and Charles L. Atlee, Esq.

In the autumn of 1834 he removed to Lancaster, his native place. He was soon elected to the staff of Lancaster County Hospital, and in 1837 was appointed Treasurer to the Commissioners of Lancaster County. For several successive years he delivered regular courses of lectures on chemistry to private classes, and one public course to the Mechanics' Institute of Lancaster. He was also active in originating an association called "The Lancaster Conservatory of Arts and Sciences," before which he gave a course of lectures on hygiene, besides other scientific and miscellaneous lectures. At the time of the execution of the murderer Moselman, he made out a programme of experiments to be performed upon his body, which was carried out with eminent success. He also aided actively in establishing the Lancaster County Medical Society. Having received an invitation in 1844 to fill the chair of Medical Chemistry in the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College

at Philadelphia, he made a temporary arrangement to lecture during the ensuing session. Afterwards accepting the position permanently, he removed his family to Philadelphia in the fall of 1845, and continued his connection with the College until the spring of 1852. During this period the practice of his profession grew so much upon him that he found the joint labors too great. He therefore resigned his professorship, and has ever since devoted himself actively and solely to the practice of medicine and surgery. In 1853, at a meeting of the American Medical Associaion, held in the city of New York, he competed for one of the prizes. Twelve essays were presented to the Committee on Volunteer Communications contesting for this honor, and his paper was one of two to which it was awarded. He assisted in the organization of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, and of the American Medical Association, and still retains his membership in each. He has always been a general practitioner, but latterly has been forced to relinquish obstetrics, and is fully occupied in the treatment of the diseases of females. He is perhaps best known to the profession for his operations of ovariotomy. At this time (January, 1878) it is believed that the number of his operations exceeds that of any other surgeon in this country, and with one exception in the world. They amount to three hundred and seventy-eight. The following schedule embraces a list of most of his papers and lectures:

"On the Ergot of Wheat," published in Columbia Spy, 1830.

"On certain Cavities in Quartz," American Journal of Science and Arts, 1837.

"Case of Hydrophobia," American Medical Intelligencer, 1839; also in the Transactions of American Medical Association, 1856; also in pamphlet form, with comments on Stoy's Cure. See pamphlet.

"Case of Small-pox, contagion apparently conveyed by letter." American Journal Medical Science, 1840.

"Report on a series of experiments (instituted by Washington L. Atlee, M. D.), made by the Medical Faculty of Lancaster, Pa., on the body of Henry Cobler Moselman, executed in the jail yard of Lancaster county, Pa., on the 20th of December, 1839."

"Meteorological Report" for 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843.

"A review of Sherwood's Theory of Terrestial Magnetism." Public Ledger, of Philadelphia, 1841.

"A case of Congenital Tumor composed of many cysts." American Journal of Medical Science, 1843.

"A case of Molluscum associated with Fibro-cellular encysted Tumor and encephaloid disease." American Journal Medical Science, 1843.

"A case of Ovariotomy." American Journal of Medical Science, 1844.

"Two cases of Perineal operation on the Urethra; in one case, to relieve traumatic stricture; and in the other to restore the cystic, portion of the canal, which had been completely obliterated." *Ibid.*, 1844.

"A case of successful extirpation of a fibroid Tumor of the Uterus by the large peritoneal section." *Ibid.*, 1845.

"A tabular synopsis of one hundred and one operations of ovariotomy." *Ibid.*, 1845.

"On the cause of Malaria." The Medical Examiner and Record of Medical Science, 1846.

"Two cases of protracted Gestation." American Journal of Medical Medical Science, 1846.

"Dr. W. L. Atlee vs. Lancaster County." (A suit brought to test the right to compensation for making a post-mortem examination at the request of the coroner.) *Ibid.*, 1846.

"On the Philosophy of Storms." 15 Nos. Literary Recorder

and Journal of the Linnæan Association of Pennsylvania College, 1846–47.

"Excision of the Cervix Uteri for Carcinomatous Disease." American Journal Medical Science, 1848.

"Ovarian Dropsy cured by the long abdominal incision in 1701." *Ibid.*, 1849.

"Three cases of Ovariotomy." *Ibid.*, 1849, 1850.

"Analysis of one hundred and seventy-nine cases of Ovariotomy." *Ibid.*, 1850.

"Cases of Erysipelas following vaccination." Transactions of the College of Physicians, Philadelphia, 1850.

"Improvement in the operation for excision of the upper jaw-bone." Transactions American Medical Association, 1850.

"On Anæsthetic Agents." *Ibid.*, 1850.

"A table of all the known operations of Ovariotomy from 1701 to 1851." Comprising two hundred and twenty-two cases, and giving a synoptical history of each case.

"A Memoir of William R. Grant, M. D., Prof. of Anatomy in the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College, with a notice of his theory of Fœtal Circulation." Transactions of College of Physicians, Philadelphia, 1853. Also pamphlet.

"On the Treatment of certain Fibroid Tumors of the Uterus, heretofore considered beyond the resources of art." (Being the treatise for which the prize for the year 1853 was awarded by the American Medical Association.) Transactions American Medical Association, 1853. Also in pamphlet.

"Cases of irritation of the Bladder, arising from various causes, in which Hydrangea Arborescens was employed as a remedy" (and supplement). New Jersey Medical Reporter, Vol. vii.

"Case of large pleuritic effusion cured by Paracentesis Thoracis and subsequent injections of Iodine into the cavity of the Pleura." American Journal of Medical Science, 1858.

"On Placenta Praevia." The Medical and Surgical Reporter, Philadelphia, 1858.

"A case of Vesico Vaginal Fistula." American Journal of Medical Science, 1860. Also pamphlet.

"On Hernia." The Medical and Surgical Reporter. Philadelphia, 1860.

"A case of Acute puerperal Tetanus." *Ibid.*, 1860.

"A new cause of Vesico Vaginal Fistula." Reply to Prof. Brickell. Maryland and Virginia Medical Journal, 1861.

"A case of Quadruple Birth." Medical and Surgical Reporter, Philadelphia, 1860.

"Arsenic in Cancer." Transactions American Medical Association, 1868.

"Correspondence with Prof. White in relation to a Uterine Fibroid." Buffalo Medical and Surgical Journal, 1869.

"Numerous cases of Ovariotomy," published in the American Journal of Medical Science, and in the Medical Times of Philadelphia.

"A new clamp in Ovariotomy." American Journal of Medical Science, 1871.

"The Uterine Dilator." *Ibid.*, 1871.

"The use of the speculum in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the Uterus," being the address in obstetrics before the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania. Transactions of Medical Association of Pennsylvania for 1872.

"General and differential diagnosis of Ovarian Tumors with special reference to the operation of Ovariotomy." 1 Vol. Published by J. B. Lippincott & Co. Philadelphia, 1873.

"A Retrospect of the struggles and triumphs of Ovariotomy in Philadelphia," being the annual address before the Philadelphia County Medical Society, by the retiring President, in 1875. Also pamphlet.

"Old Physic and Young Physic." Being the annual address before the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, by the President in 1875. Transactions Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, 1875. Also pamphlet.

"A female with double organs of generation." Transactions of Medical Society of Pennsylvania, 1873. Also pamphlet.

"Reminiscences of the earliest days of Jefferson Medical College." An address delivered before the Alumni Association of the Jefferson Medical College, of Philadelphia, at its third anniversary, March 11th, 1873. Also pamphlet.

LECTURES, ETC.

A paper on "The Treatment of Fibroids of the Uterus." Read before the "International Medical Congress," September, 1876. Transactions of International Medical Congress, Philadelphia.

A paper on "Sarcoma of the Ovaries." Read before "The American Gynæcological Society," Boston, 1877. Transactions of American Gynæcological Society.

"An address on Temperance, before the Mount Joy Temperance Society," 1831, published by the society.

"An address on Temperance before the Lancaster City Temperance Society," 1841. Published by the society.

"On the relation of Chemistry to Medicine." Introductory address before the Medical Class of Pennsylvania Medical College, Philadelphia, 1844. Pamphlet.

"On the chemical relations of the human body with surrounding objects." Introductory Address before class of 1845. Published by the class. Pamphlet.

"Rules for the formation of a good physician." Valedictory before the graduates of Jefferson Medical College, 1847. Pamphlet.

"Hints for the guidance and benefit of the Medical Student." Introductory address before the class of 1850. Pamphlet.

"Physical Education the only solid foundation of moral and intellectual culture and development." An address before the Linnæan Association of Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa., 1851. Pamphlet.

"Correction of the erroneous statements of Henry H. Smith, M. D., published in the Medical Examiner, January, 1855, in relation to a case of Gastrotomy, which occurred in the practice of W. L. Atlee, M. D." Pamphlet.

"A course of Lectures on Botany," at Mount Joy, 1831.

"Two Lectures on Falling Stars of 1833," at Mount Joy.

"Three courses of Lectures on Chemistry," to private classes at Lancaster, 1835, 1836, 1837.

"A course of Lectures on Chemistry," before the Mechanics' Institute of Lancaster, 1837.

"A Lecture on Aerolites," before the Lyceum of the State of Pennsylvania in the session at Lancaster.

"A course of Lectures on Hygiene," before the Lancaster Conservatory of Arts and Sciences, Lancaster, 1840.

"An experimental course of Lectures on the materials used for Illumination," before the citizens of Lancaster about forming the Lancaster City Gas Company, 1840.

"Eight courses of Lectures on Medical Chemistry," in Medical

Department of Pennsylvania College, Philadelphia, from 1844–'45 to 1851–'52 inclusive.

"A Lecture on Placenta Praevia," before Philadelphia county Medical Society, 1858.

"Three Lectures on the Diagnosis of Ovarian Tumors," before the Philadelphia county Medical Society, 1859, 1860, 1861.