

TONER (J. M.) • McMURTRY (L.S.)

A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

JOHN D. JACKSON, M. D.,

OF DANVILLE, KY.,

BY

J. M. TONER, M. D.,

OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

L. S. McMURTRY, M. D.,

OF DANVILLE, KY.

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FROM JANUARY NO. RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL, 1876.

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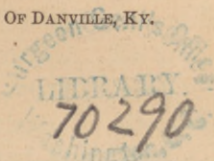
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J. M. FOSTER, M.D.

J. B. MURPHY, M.D.

1887



## BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN D. JACKSON, M. D.

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John Davies Jackson, M. D., of Danville, Ky., was born in that place on the 12th day of December, 1834. He was the son of John Jackson, and Margaret, daughter of John and Margaret Spears, of Fayette County, Ky. The ancestors for three generations were residents of Kentucky.

The subject of this sketch was the eldest child of his parents. He has at this time two brothers and three sisters living. His father is also living, aged about seventy-five years. His mother died August 9th, 1849.

Dr. Jackson received his academic and classical education at Centre College, Danville, Ky., where he graduated in 1854. He was possessed of quick perception, a clear judgment, a philosophical turn of mind, and a wonderful amount of industry and application, so that his mental training and exact knowledge on leaving college were greatly in advance of most students on completing an academic course.

Having selected medicine as a profession, he at once entered upon its study in the office of his uncle, Dr. Thomas W. Jackson, a practitioner of Danville. He attended his first course of lectures in the Medical Department of the University of Louisville. The following winter he attended the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1857. His thesis was entitled "*Vis Conservatrix et Medicatrix Naturæ*," and exhibited much literary merit and careful observation.

Having brought to the study of medicine a trained mind, with great energy and enthusiasm, he received his degree with more practical knowledge than is usual at this period.

The inducements to locate in his native place were such that he at once returned there and opened an office. He was very modest and retiring in his manners, and scorned to avail himself of the arts and tricks by which practice is too often courted.

He determined to deserve success, and devoted himself to systematic and laborious study in his office. Success came very slowly, but as his skill and ability were gradually discovered, he was rewarded with employment.

On the breaking out of the war between the States, he had established a good practice, which he abandoned and entered the Confederate service as a surgeon. He was commissioned on the 29th of September, 1862, and served continuously until the surrender at Appomattox. During the first two years of the war, he was with the Army of the Tennessee, and the remainder of the time with the Army of Northern Virginia. His work was that of surgeon, though he frequently acted in the capacity of brigade and division surgeon. He was in the field the whole time, except when confined in hospital for a short period by severe illness, and he served with distinction. A report upon vaccination among the troops, made by him to the Surgeon-General at Richmond, was ordered to be printed and issued to the Medical Corps of the Army.

The labor and exposure at, and just after, the battle of Chickamauga brought on a severe attack of illness, which compelled him to go into hospital for a time, and indeed nearly cost him his life. As soon as he recovered sufficiently, he promptly resumed his duties in the field.

After the surrender of the Southern armies, he obtained his parole and returned to his home at Danville. Upon his return he was urged to resume practice, and in a short time he again opened an office in Danville. Very soon after his return, he corresponded with one of the Ministers to South America with a view of removing there. Happily, he became fully employed in his profession, and determined to remain in his native place. He soon acquired the leading practice in Danville, and became the favorite consulting physician and operating surgeon of that portion of Kentucky. He devoted his whole time to his profession, the intervals between his engagements being employed in close and careful study. He supplied himself with recent valuable books and periodicals. Being a close reader, it was seldom necessary for him to review a page to obtain the author's meaning, although he read quite rapidly.



The winter of 1870-71 he spent in the city of New York in the careful study of special diseases, operations, and modes of cure in the large hospitals of that city. To the study of the best treatment, medical and surgical, of the diseases of the eye and ear, he gave close attention. The leading surgeons, too, both general and special, were followed closely. At this time he was making numerous additions to his already well-selected medical library.

In the following spring he returned to Danville, and in less than a week his time was fully occupied with general practice, consultations, and operations; many of the latter being upon persons from a distance. His mind was very active at this period in the study and acquisition of the available knowledge of the Profession. He supplied himself with the most recent works of the best medical writers among the English and French. His naturally strong mind had been so well trained that he could possess himself of the views of an author in a very short time, while attending to the arduous duties of his profession. His ambition would not permit him to be ignorant of what the best informed in the Profession were doing. Having previously devoted considerable time to the study of the French language, he read numerous works in that language, and translated for publication a number of Jaccoud's valuable clinical lessons. With many demands upon his time, he was a regular attendant at the bi-weekly meetings of the Boyle County Medical Society, and the quarterly meetings of the Central (Ky.) Medical Association, discharging his duty promptly and efficiently, and doing all in his power to add to their interest and usefulness.

About this time he received into his office several young men as pupils, and to the close of his career he had one or more students under his supervision. With him the relations of preceptor and pupil involved the conscientious discharge of duty with systematic labor. He inspired his pupils with a love for their profession; elicited their profound respect and admiration; taught them to respect their calling, and instructed them in the ethics of the Profession both by precept and example. He gave instruction by recitations, demonstrations, dissections, and frequent illustrations from private practice.

In May, 1872, with a view to still further prosecute his professional studies, he sailed for Europe. He visited all the chief hospitals and medical institutions of Great Britain, France, and Germany. His letters of introduction and his own fine address, gentlemanly deportment and intelligence, enabled him to form the acquaintance of many of the leading surgeons, practitioners, and teachers in Europe. He attended the annual meeting of the British Medical Association at Birmingham, as a delegate from the American Medical Association. While abroad, he made large additions to his medical library, and added to his surgical armamentarium instruments of the most recent and improved construction. During the eight months which he spent abroad, he was enabled to observe the practice and operations of the leading physicians and surgeons of the old world, and in this manner he added greatly to his already large fund of exact and practical knowledge.

In December, he returned to his home in Danville, and at once resumed his large and responsible practice, which always seemed to be awaiting him there. About this period he received communications with regard to taking a chair in the Medical Department of the University of Louisiana. A similar compliment had been paid to his ability previously by a medical Institution of his own State.

In 1873 he was invited to deliver the address before the Association of the Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, but poor health and pressure of business compelled him to decline the honor.

In April, 1873, while suffering from a cold, he met with some accidental scratches in making a post-mortem examination, by which his system was seriously poisoned. Angioleucitis of the arm and hand with glandular swelling in the axilla of a threatening character resulted. He was confined to his room and suffered greatly for some days, but slowly recovered, though with slight cough.

In May he attended the annual meeting of the American Medical Association at St. Louis, where he contracted a cold which was accompanied with severe laryngitis. Pain in the chest with a low form of intermittent fever followed. He



always referred to the dissecting wounds as the commencement of his ill health.

During the summer of 1873, he was in poor health, and spent most of the warm months at the springs in Bath and Nicholas counties, Ky. In the fall he resumed practice, much improved in health, but toward spring took a severe cold and suffered a return and aggravation of his chest troubles, with acute laryngitis.

In June, 1874, he attended the meeting of the American Medical Association at Detroit, but it was evident to all his friends that his health was seriously impaired. He was urged to visit New York, and there consult with gentlemen eminent in the treatment of diseases of the chest, as to the best course to be pursued in order to regain his health. Accordingly he proceeded to New York, and was the guest of his personal friend, Dr. J. Marion Sims, while in that city. He was visited by Drs. Flint, Sr., Loomis, and Metcalfe, and by their advice he gave up all professional labor and proceeded to Alexandria Bay to spend the summer. While there, he was ten or twelve hours of each day in the open air hunting and fishing, and free from all labor and care. He gained considerably in strength during the summer, and returned home in the fall quite hopeful of further improvement. After remaining several weeks at home, he proceeded to Florida, where he spent the winter, living much of the time in the open air. He was much improved by his stay in the South.

While returning to Kentucky, in the latter part of April, he stopped at Nashville, Tenn., for a few days, and there contracted a cold, which brought on severe congestion of the lungs. This attack confined him to bed for some days, and his strength was rapidly reduced. Although in Louisville during the meeting of the American Medical Association in May, 1875, he was not able to attend any of the sessions, and was confined to his room during the whole time. Resolutions of sympathy for his affliction were passed by the Association, and the personal expressions of regret for his illness were universal. At this meeting he was elected First Vice-President of the Association for the ensuing year.



On the 8th of May he left Louisville in company with a medical friend for Danville, arriving at home without great fatigue. Upon his arrival at Danville, he at once repaired to the residence of his brother, where he remained, with the exception of a few weeks, until the time of his death. He was quite feeble during the entire summer and autumn, but regained his strength sufficiently to ride out without great fatigue. During the summer he visited the Crab Orchard Springs, Ky., and after spending a week there, returned somewhat improved in strength. Later, he spent some days with a friend near Stanford. Early in October he visited Cincinnati for a short time, and returned home with an aggravation of all his troubles. From this time his strength gradually declined with frequent and intense suffering. On the 8th day of December, while in a paroxysm of coughing, he expired.

His mind was clear during the whole time, and for many weeks previous to his death he knew that the end was near at hand. He spoke calmly and without fear of his approaching death, and with the sweet consciousness of duty performed, he entered upon the long journey, entrusting the future to his Maker.

He was buried at Danville, where he had lived so nobly and labored so faithfully. His funeral was conducted, as he had requested, in a simple and unostentatious manner, amid manifestations of respect from the entire community and from the Medical Profession of Central Kentucky.

Dr. Jackson always manifested an active interest in every measure for the advancement of medicine and that which would diffuse knowledge among practitioners. He was one of the founders of the Boyle County Medical Society, and of the Central Kentucky Medical Association. He was a member of the Kentucky State Medical Society and of the American Medical Association, a corresponding member of the Obstetrical Society of Louisville, a member of the Gynæcological Society of Boston, and an honorary member of the California State Medical Society.

The following are some of his contributions to medical literature: Trichiniasis; American Journal of the Medical Sciences,

January, 1867, p. 82. Rhigolene; *Western Journal of Medicine*; republished in *Journal of Pharmacy*, Philadelphia, 1866, Epistaxis; *Western Journal of Medicine*. Gun-shot Wound of Bladder and Rectum—Recovery of patient under remarkable circumstances; *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*. January, 1869, p. 281. A case of Varicella with some commentaries on the Identity of Varicella and Variola; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, vol. vii., 1869, p. 20. A Case of Tetanus treated with Calabar Bean—Death; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, vol. viii., 1869, p. 260. Lessons from the Medical Clinic at the "Hospital de la Charité," given by S. Jaccoud, Translated by John D. Jackson, M. D., Danville, Ky.; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, vol. ix., 1870, p. 197. The same continued in vols. ix., x., xi., xii., xiii. Medical Office Pupilage, *Transactions of Kentucky State Medical Society*, 1871. Critique on Lister's Germ Theory, and the use of Carbolic Acid as an Antiseptic in Surgery; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, vol. xiii., 1872. Hygiene; *Transactions Kentucky State Medical Society*, 1872. Loose Cartilages in the Knee-joint and the Operation for their Removal with a case; *Cincinnati Lancet and Observer*, vol. xiv., 1871. The Inoculability and Transmissibility of Tuberculosis; *Transactions Kentucky State Medical Society*, 1868. Agoraphobia; *The Clinic*, Cincinnati, 1872, referred to in several European journals. Tracheotomy in Diphtheria and Croup, with two cases; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, vol. xvii., 1874. Bloodletting; *Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery*. Biographical Sketch of Ephraim McDowell; *Richmond and Louisville Medical Journal*, 1873. The Black Arts in Medicine; Cincinnati, Robert Clarke & Co., 1870. Ligation of Arteries, by Dr. L. H. Farabeuf, Translated by John D. Jackson, M. D.; Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874.

During the last two years of his active professional life, Dr. Jackson devoted much labor and time in vindicating the claims of McDowell to priority in the operation of ovariectomy, and in establishing some memorial of that great surgeon. In recognition of these valuable services he was made chairman of the McDowell Memorial Committee of the American Medical



Association, and in May last was appointed by the Association a trustee of the McDowell Memorial Fund. The success which this enterprise has attained is due for the most part to his exertions in its behalf.

With a naturally superior mind, retentive memory, and unconquerable energy and application, there are few men in America more familiar with medical literature than was Dr. Jackson. In the study of the classics and history of medicine he had few equals, while as a writer he was concise, clear and thorough. But it was as a general practitioner of medicine and surgery that he more especially excelled. By his superior judgment, clear ratiocination, thorough knowledge, and inspiring presence, he wielded an immense power in the sick-room for the benefit of his patient. Those who have observed and received the benefit of his services will most appreciate this element of his character as a physician.

As a surgeon he was cool, prompt, and judicious. He was an accomplished anatomist, and perpetuated his knowledge of this fundamental department of surgical science by frequent dissections. He was possessed of the steady hand, the clear eye, and the tender touch. He was very accurate in diagnosis, examining every part and considering every possibility. In the after-treatment of surgical cases he was particularly attentive, endeavoring to anticipate every threatened danger.

Both in the practice of medicine and surgery he was eminently conservative, but when the indications for interference were evident, he acted boldly and with decision.

He twice performed the operation of gastrotomy, once for the removal of an immense fibroid tumor of the uterus, and again in ovariectomy. The cases in both instances were complicated and far advanced, and both resulted fatally. He twice performed tracheotomy, and in both instances recovery followed. He successfully operated for vesico-vaginal fistula, and did many other of the important operations in surgery.

In his intercourse with patients, as in all his professional labors, he kept constantly before his mind the responsible nature of his calling, and the duty which he owed in consequence. He never sought practice, and would connect himself with no case except



in an honorable manner. The greatest fairness characterized his dealings with his professional brethren. He was unassuming in his conduct, and would protect his colleagues from unjust censure often to the extent of self-sacrifice. Although he did a great deal of consulting practice for a number of years, the writer has never heard his veracity, honor, or ethical conduct questioned in any instance. He was a man of chivalric feelings, and quick to observe any insult or intentional slight. He was dignified and polite in his bearing, and socially he was exceedingly agreeable. In the circle of his intimate friends he was true and faithful under all circumstances. He was eminently a generous and charitable man.

In the death of Dr. Jackson, science has lost a devoted follower, the Medical Profession an earnest laborer, society a valued member, and the State in which he lived one of its most useful citizens. Many eminent members of the Medical Profession throughout the United States will learn with profound regret of his untimely death.







