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A Short Sketch of the Progress made by Women in the Medical Profession during the last Half Century.*

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THE reformation in woman's position since the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, has been great. A new world has opened to her, in the home and school, church and State, as well as in the industries and professions. Fifty years ago women were on unknown factor in the medical profession, Dr. Harriet K. Hunt, it is said, was practicing medicine as early as 1835. She studied under the direction of the family physician, and practiced without a diploma, there being no Medical School or College that would confer one upon her. Miss Elizabeth Blackwell in 1844, resolved to study medicine. She was born in England, came to this country in early life, was, practically speaking, reared and educated in this country. She wrote to, and consulted six physicians, asking their advice as to what she should do, etc. All with one accord agreed that it was impossible for a woman to procure a medical education. She thought differently, however, and the same year took charge of a school for the purpose of making money sufficient to defray the expenses incident to a medical education. In Charleston, S. C., where she taught music and added Latin to her French and German, she met a physician, Samuel Henry Dickson, a generous, noble man, who received her as a class student, under whose instruction she read medicine and prepared for College. When prepared the question was: Where the Medical School that would admit a woman student? Her application for admission was sent to every Medical School in the U. S., twelve of them rejected her application and rebuked her for her temerity and indelicacy. The faculty of two colleges considered her application, one located in Castleton, Vt., the other in Geneva, N. Y.

* Read at Yates Centre, December 9th, 1897, before the Kansas E. S. A.

The students of Geneva College decided in favor of her admission. In 1847 she entered the college and graduated in January, 1849. Soon she went to France and was, after months of delay, admitted to the School of Obstetrics in connection with La Maternité of Paris. Women without number, from America, England, Russia, Denmark and Germany have since been instructed within the same walls. Dr. Chas. Ricket, the most distinguished Medical Scientist of France, speaks in high praise of women students who have received instructions from him. Dr. Blackwell returned to New York City in 1852 and opened an office and very soon had all the practice she could attend to. She is, as far as any knowledge we have or can obtain, the first scientifically educated woman physician in the world, authorized by a diploma from a regularly chartered Medical College, to practice medicine. Dr. Blackwell's efforts to obtain a medical education inspired a few generous, noble minded persons to consider the matter

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educating women in medicine. The idea of a Woman's Medical College originated with Dr. B. Fussell of Philadelphia. A conferee of his, Dr. J. E. Longshore, approved the plan, and through the influence of a friend of his, secured the charter for the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania on March 11th, 1850, the first chartered Medical College for women in the world. The following October it opened its first session with a faculty of six professors and fifty students, many of them only taking special courses. Eight of them graduated in the spring of 1852. Several of this class became successful practitioners; a few won world wide fame. Dr. Ann Preston, one of the eight, was the one who turned her attention to making the College a success, and was foremost in establishing the Woman's Hospital at Philadelphia for the treatment of women and children, which gave opportunity to the College students for clinical instruction. She was Dean of the Faculty for many years and up to her death. She was very successful in her private practice as well as in her public work. She was a frail, sweet looking, energetic little body, ever striving to improve the instruction for the students and secure new fields for clinical study. At her death she endowed both of the institutions that had been her special care in life, with quite a sum of money, in this

way securing the permanence of both. About the same time of the chartering of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, a Female Medical Educational Society was established in Boston. In 1856, the name was changed to the Female Medical College and chartered; since then it has merged into the Boston University. The Woman's Medical College of the N. Y. Infirmary was established in the autumn of 1868, chiefly through the efforts of Drs. Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell. The Woman's Medical College of Chicago was founded in 1870, through the exertions of Dr. Mary Thompson, a very excellent woman and successful practitioner. The next year the State University of Michigan opened its Medical department to women on the same terms as to men. Since, many Medical Colleges have opened their

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doors to women, making them co-educational. England and Scotland have followed the good example of America and are now educating their sons and daughters in the same Medical Colleges. On the European continent, women study at the Universities of Paris, Upsal, Zurich and Berne. A Medical College has just been opened for the medical education of women in St. Petersburg, Russia. At the opening one hundred and sixty matriculated, many were refused admission for lack of accommodations. Good Hospital instruction is to be obtained by women in Vienna, Dresden and Berlin, Mrs. Anandifai Joshu, a High Caste Hindu woman, was the first to come from India to study medicine in America. She graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1886. It was feared she would lose caste by being so long in this country, but it proved otherwise. It is to be regretted that this talented woman died so soon after her return to India. Schools of medicine have since been established in India, where the native women are educated and are becoming successful practitioners of medicine. American and English women physicians are assisting in this educational work. The daughter of a Mandarin of China, Miss Hu King Eng, has graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. Since her return to China, she has been appointed as first physician to the household of Li Hung Chang, China's Grand Viceroy. There is a co-educational Medical College in Hong Kong where large numbers of young

men and women graduate each year, The College instruction is of the most approved modern system, with good clinical advantages. It has financial support from the London Missionary Society, aided by the Grand Viceroy, and approved by the Emperor. One of Scotland's daughters that graduated in Brussels three years ago, Miss L. Hamilton, M. D., went to Calcutta, opened an office and began practicing when the Ameer of Afghanistan offered her a fine salary to go to Cabul. She accepted his offer and has been successful in treating the sick, also in enlightening the Ameer and his people, till they are adopting modern methods in medicine and surgery.

Mexico has appointed Miss Columbia Rivera, who has been licensed to practice medicine after four years study, as physician to the Woman's ward in San Andres. I see by Dr. Lucy Wait's letter from Moscow, that there were women delegates from Europe, Asia, Africa and America, in attendance at the International Medical Congress held there last August. Women are members of the American Medical Association, where twenty-five years ago men were refused seats because they were holding professional intercourse with the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and consulting with its Alumna. Prof. Henry Hartshorn and Prof. Chas. H. Thomas, were selected by the Faculty to represent the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in the meeting of the American Medical Association that met at Washington, D. C., in 1870. Seats were refused them after a very bitter discussion by some of the most eminent physicians in the United States. Prof. Hartshorn lectured on Hygiene to the students of the Pennsylvania University. After his return, he went as usual to lecture, when he entered the lecture room one lone student was the only representative of his class present. The Doctor inquired the cause for so many empty seats, "Those women", was the reply. The Professor proceeded to deliver the lecture. After listening at the door for a time, the students began to enter and continued to do so till a dozen or so had taken their seats and listened to the balance of the lecture—he did not refer to their conduct. The next lecture was fully attended and so were all successive ones, till the close of the session, with never a word on the subject.

For medical men to be connected with a Woman's Medi-

cal College in those days required firmness of character and nobility of soul, with the Christ like spirit epitomed in the Golden Rule. They will surely receive a reward for their services to humanity. If medical men who aided women were so persecuted by their medical brothers, think what the pioneer women physicians must have endured in trying

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to obtain a knowledge of medicine. There was a very notable incident that transpired in my college life that I will relate, as a specimen of the continued opposition that had to be met and overcome in that not very distant past. After many interviews between the Faculty of our college and the managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital, the managers finally granted the students of the College permission to attend the Clinics. It was arranged that our class would attend the Hospital Clinics on alternate clinic days only, so as to allow ample opportunity for the unembarrassed exhibition of special cases to the other students. Nov. 6th, 1879, was made a memorable day to the students, and college by our reception and subsequent treatment on this, the first day of our attendance of the Pennsylvania Hospital clinics. About thirty-five of the students availed themselves of this opportunity to attend these clinics by securing tickets. Two or three of the Faculty accompanied us. Special seats were assigned for us, also the back stairs so that we would interfere as little as possible with the students that formerly occupied the amphitheatre by themselves. The students from the other colleges hearing the women would be present, turned out in full force, several hundred of them were in the amphitheatre prepared to receive us as we entered, with yells, hisses, mock applause and offensive remarks. Jacob P. Jones, one of the managers and a colleague, Wm. Biddle, just after we were seated, entered and informed those present that he came on behalf of the managers, to inform them, that the women were present with the approval and by the consent of the Board of Managers; they would be protected as far as possible; that any student detected in instituting unbecoming or riotous behavior would have his ticket withdrawn. They called to him: "Hat, hat, hat!" He wore his hat as is the custom with friends; next they hissed him, to which he replied: "I don't care for your hisses." He entreated them to remem-

ber their character as men and gentlemen, took a seat and

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remained until Dr. Da Costa appeared before the class and was greeted with applause, while bowing to the house, then proceeded with his duties. His manner was that of a man of refinement and true nobility. Dr. Hunt succeeded him and recognized only the men, when he addressed the audience. This encouraged the rowdy element again so that during this hour missiles of paper and tinfoil were thrown upon the women in greater abundance than before. Ranging themselves in line, these would-be gentlemen, who expected to be received into refined and cultured homes as medical adviser and friend, assailed us as we passed out, with insolent and offensive language, sang the "Rogues March" as we passed between the lines they had formed by taking the sidewalk on both sides, leaving only a small portion of the roadway for our use. They followed us into the streets where a large number with great fluency of speech joined in insulting us. These gallants divided into parties to suit the different directions the women took and followed until they went into some place of safety and remained till they could go home undisturbed. The evening and next morning paper with the report of the transaction appeared with attractive sensational headlines, some condemning the treatment we had received while others condemned us, for tempting the men to be obliged to do as they did to rid the Hospital clinics of our presence. The week following it was discussed pro and con, not only in the Philadelphia papers but those in other Medical centres. On the next Saturday morning it is probable there never was as many knights of the quill present at a hospital clinic as were to be seen when we entered the amphitheatre, with the hope of a sensational column or two. The Professors of the male colleges held indignation meetings, tried to compel the hospital managers to withdraw our tickets, with the threat of non-attendance of the male students, etc. Dr. Agnew, an eminent surgeon refused to lecture to us, so left the employ of the hospital managers. Six years later he took the position again without mentioning the "vexed question". The agitation at that time placed the question of the propriety of women physicians more fully before the laity and did much toward the recognition of Med-

ical women by Medical men. Another thing this agitation did was to bring before the people in Philadelphia the fact that they had a Woman's Medical College and a Woman's Hospital conducted by women. Many women within six blocks of the Woman's Hospital and College did not know of their existence, as I verified on Sunday following "the event" when I went to visit a patient, after seeing the child, I was invited into the parlor and introduced to some four or five women that had never seen a woman physician and who had never heard of the College or Hospital. Several years later, as I entered my office I found a traveling man in some special line waiting for me. After introducing himself, he remarked, pointing to my diploma, "You were a member of the class of 1869 in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania?" I assented and then he informed me he was one of the students that had conducted themselves so shamefully on the day above referred to. I expressed my astonishment, when he replied: "I have always been surprised, too," and added, "If it would be any satisfaction to you to know it, sixty-five of us were fined Monday morning in police court \$75 each." That fact had been carefully kept from the papers at that time.

MISSIONARY FIELDS.

The various Missionary Boards have sent out large numbers of the Alumnae of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania to India, China, Burmah, Persia, Syria, Congo Free State and Egypt. To-day women physicians are to be found in every part of the civilized globe. A Missionary writes: "Women missionary physicians are working in harmony with their associates in the Zenanos of the east, and crowded abodes of China and Japan, are accomplishing a silent revolution in the condition of women, of which the world at large little dreams." We are occasionally told that it is still an experiment and much doubt exists as to the success of women physicians. Considering the short time she has had good opportunities for obtaining a first-class medical education, we think she has shown an aptitude for the study, and great adaptability in practicing the science. She is occupying positions of importance and responsibility in the medical profession. They are Professors in Co-educational and Post Graduate Medical Colleges, physicians in

public institutions, especially for the insane, resident physicians in and consulting physicians to hospitals, City physi-

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cians, Presidents of Medical Societies, etc. A Woman's Medical Journal is published in Toledo, Ohio, by women. The editor, contributors and business manager are women. The sixth volume has just been completed, it is a success and is on the exchange list of many of the best Medical Journals published. The American Medical Surgical Bulletin, N. Y., says of it: "It is one among our many welcome exchanges. Its contents are always spicy and brilliant. The June number was a particularly fine one and contained a large amount of useful and interesting information, etc." The Medical Sentinel of Portland, Oregon says: "The journal has shown a substantial growth since it began publication. It has demonstrated what women can do, not only in Medicine but in journalism." I could quote many more editorials to show its standing but the journal is its own best recommendation, as all successful journals are.

SUMMING UP.

It is the exception rather than the rule that men refuse to consult with woman practitioners. Could the contrast be greater between the facilities for education women in medicine fifty years ago and today, or the number of women in the profession then and now? Then one lone woman student had been received into a Medical College through the kindness, courtesy and generosity of the Faculty and students—Now co-educational and special Medical Colleges for women are to be found in many countries where a thousand women are studying for the Medical profession. There are at least a thousand women physicians graduates of some good Medical College scattered over the world engaged in the practice of medicine. Some confine themselves exclusively to private practice, some to specialties, while others are in public institutions and missionary fields doing great service to humanity, by helping the women to a better knowledge of themselves and their children's needs. The contrast would appall us if we had not been familiar with the progress as year after year has past along with its increased opportunities.