

In Memoriam.

ISAAC BARTON.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE
TO THE CLASS
OF THE
WOMAN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

(North College Avenue and 22d St., Philadelphia.)

Delivered at the opening of the

Nineteenth Annual Session, Oct. 15, 1868,

BY

RACHEL L. BODLEY, M. L. A.,

PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY AND TOXICOLOGY.

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PROF. RACHEL L. BODLEY:

At a meeting of the Corporators of the Woman's Medical College, held on the 20th inst., a resolution was unanimously adopted, requesting you "to furnish a copy of your introductory address to the present course of medical lectures of the College."

Believing that your fitting tribute to the memory of our late esteemed friend and coadjutor, Isaac Barton, contained in that address, should be preserved in a durable form, and expressing to you our gratification in having listened to it, we respectfully ask a copy for publication.

With great respect,

WM. S. PEIRCE,

EDWARD LEWIS,

A. PRESTON,

Committee.

Philadelphia, Oct. 30, 1868.

HON. WM. S. PIERCE, EDWARD LEWIS, and ANN PRESTON, M.D.:

Dear Friends,—The address, a copy of which you request for publication, was prepared for the small audience which our lecture rooms can accommodate, composed of persons thoroughly interested in our cause.

To these I spoke of our departed friend with the simplicity of speech and freedom of reminiscence which characterize household bereavements. For this reason, the tribute seems to me inappropriate for general perusal; but, yielding to your wish so kindly expressed, I waive my reluctance, and place the manuscript at your disposal.

Respectfully yours,

RACHEL L. BODLEY.

Philadelphia, Nov. 2, 1868.

At a regular meeting of the Corporators of the Woman's Medical College, held June 6th, 1868, the following resolutions were adopted :

Resolved, That in the death of Isaae Barton this College has lost a most earnest and efficient friend.

Resolved, That the deep interest he took in the advancement of the cause of the medical education of women, and the untiring constancy with which he watched over the welfare of the College, devoting to it time, labor and means, sustaining it in the dark days when its friends were few, and endowing it at last with so much of his worldly goods, have largely contributed to its success, and have linked his name forever with the history of the cause.

Resolved, That his simplicity and purity, his modesty and integrity of character, his love of knowledge, and his large-hearted interest in all efforts for improving the condition of society, are a perpetual example to us who remain; and in paying this small tribute to the memory of our beloved friend, we would express our sense of personal loss in the absence of his valued counsel and sympathy."

INTRODUCTORY.

As we assemble to-day, corporators, faculty and students, to inaugurate the work of another session, there is a seat vacant, not before unfilled for a long series of years.

So faithful, so true, so valuable a friend to our College in time of need was this deceased good man, whose place in the Board of Corporators is now vacant, that I have been deputed by the Faculty to offer upon this occasion a tribute of respect and affection *in memoriam*. To twine the green laurel wreath and to place it upon the grave of a cherished friend is a welcome task, especially when, as in this case, the silent sleeper would never in life permit praise of his works.

ISAAC BARTON, the subject of this memoir, was the son of Isaac and Sarepta Barton, and was born at Springfield, in Burlington County, New Jersey, October 3d, 1795. He had a birthright in the Society of Friends, in whose communion he continued until his death.

His parents both died when he was quite young, leaving him and an only sister orphans. This sister, Bathsheba, was the companion of his life, and for many years was his efficient assistant in business. She died fifteen years before him, and for her memory he always cherished the tenderest affection.

At an early age he came to Philadelphia, and entered the store of a prominent dry goods merchant. When the business of his employer was to be given up, before Mr. Barton was of

age, his guardian paid over to him the small fortune left him by his father, which he invested in the same business and commenced on his own account. His guardian was censured for paying the money to a minor, thereby making himself responsible for the loss of it; but the future life of Isaac Barton proved how wisely the guardian had judged the integrity and business capacity of his ward. By strict attention to the wants of his customers, following out in all its details the same honorable course that he had previously pursued, he soon began to realize the benefit of his early mercantile education, building up for himself an extensive business, and gaining the esteem of his fellow merchants.

After a prosperous business career, which extended over a period of fifty years, in 1867, Mr. Barton, realizing that time and disease were making inroads upon his constitution, retired from commercial life, and on the twenty-fourth day of April, 1868, after a brief but painful illness, he rested from earthly labors.

As we turn to contemplate the character of our friend, we instinctively recall the form so familiar to the occupants of these lecture rooms of late years. Figure slight, erect, rather tall; hair and beard white, countenance florid. The face was the face of a philanthropist. It declared purest thoughts within, and unselfish motives; in it love, pity and forgiveness were harmoniously blended. If we would be faithful in our portrayal, we cannot pass without recalling that shrinking from observation which always impressed one when he met Mr. Barton socially. This peculiarity is mentioned because without a knowledge of it we cannot fully appreciate the heroism of one who suffering thus acutely from sensitiveness, yet devoted a whole life, to *doing* no less than to *giving*, for the alleviation of misery and the elevation of mankind. Mr. Barton's health was delicate for many years previous to his

decease. At one time he was compelled to spend several successive winters in the south on account of a pulmonary affection; at another time he spent a year in Europe in pursuit of health. His large, well-appointed home on Second street, neatly furnished and thoroughly comfortable, affords his friends many pleasant reminiscences; for here he always received those whom he truly esteemed with a large-hearted welcome.

Mr. Barton was connected with many of the benevolent and scientific societies of Philadelphia, and was a useful and by no means inactive member of each. He was also for some years a member of City Councils. In early life he was one of a little circle of professional and mercantile young men who formed a debating society. Among these young aspirants for fame, several of whom in after years attained reputation and position in the world of letters and science, Mr. Barton's taste received a bent which the cares of trade were never able to remove; and throughout his life he was to be found attending the meetings of learned societies and the lectures of scientific professors with a zest which seemed to increase rather than diminish with his years.

Among the benevolent societies with which he was connected, there was perhaps no one in which he was more deeply interested than the "Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons." The object touched the chord of pity in his compassionate heart, and he labored assiduously in furthering its interests.

To this society he bequeathed all his personal clothing upon his decease, for the use of discharged prisoners from the Eastern Penitentiary. To the same society he also left a bequest of \$2,000, the interest of which he directed should be "expended upon discharged prisoners, in procuring suitable employment, more especially in the country, for deserving persons after their

discharge from prison, and in holding a kind and encouraging correspondence with them in order to their future well being."

Those words of the bequest, "*kind and encouraging correspondence,*" what insight they afford us into the donor's inner life! His heart comprehended all—the load of shame, the obloquy heaped upon the convict; he needs kind and encouraging words! How often such persons have received them in the trembling chirography of that trembling hand, only the pitying Lord who reads the secrets of all hearts knows. And now that the wearied hand rests, it is provided that by proxy it shall still write on kind and encouraging words until time shall end.

Joseph R. Chandler, Esq., well known in Philadelphia, offered a tribute to Mr. Barton's memory at the meeting succeeding his death, which is so just in its estimate of character that I make a brief extract.

"Mr. Barton was for many years a member of this society, to which he was attached less by his love of social intercourse than by his deep, practical sympathy in the motives of the association, and his hearty assent to the plans and means by which the society seeks to secure its ends. His presence in our midst was wont to be an encouragement to additional good resolves, and his services were always examples of cheerful sacrifice and faithful labor in the cause of pure humanity." * * * * * "Most of us remember the moderate counsels of our deceased member, and his gentle but effective advocacy of measures that he regarded as right — *right* not, always from his own experience, but often because they were recommended by those whose services he honored and whose integrity of purpose warranted the confidence he reposed in their greater experience, even to the relinquishment of his own propositions; for Isaac Barton was not only a philanthropist and an honest man, but he was, in the fullest sense of the word, a *modest man*. Fixed and

sincere in his principles, but yielding and compliant in their application; gentle in the advocacy of his views, earnest and energetic in the execution of whatever plan he resolved to aid. Clear and prompt in the expression of his appreciation of any measure, he never failed of courtesy to those who might advance and defend variant propositions."

During the year 1854 Mr. Barton was elected a member of the Board of Corporators of this College; and with his characteristic persistency and consistency he labored in our cause from that date until his death.

Whatever he may have been to the city and community at large is of general interest to us as citizens; but it is his devotion to the cause of woman's elevation and to her advancement in paths of usefulness and honor, that demands this tribute from us to-day.

We should be glad to set forth the particular incidents in this noble life, which stamped its possessor ever after the friend and champion of feminine education; but this we are unable to do.

In contemplating the munificence of Matthew Vassar, bestowed upon the young women of America, we inquire curiously for the circumstances which impelled the poor boy who, at the age of fourteen, went forth to seek his daily bread with his wardrobe wrapped in a bandana, in later years to devote his princely fortune to the education of woman, but we inquire in vain. The secret inspiration of Barton and Vassar has descended to the grave with each.

We may, however, and we do thankfully accept results, and as we do so we rejoice that the solitary household life of each was gladdened in declining years by the consciousness that through many generations daughters would not be wanting to rise up and call him blessed!

In the absence of personal incident we have a glimpse into

the sanctuary of a good man's thoughts in Vassar's first address to the Trustees of Vassar College. I quote because the written experience of the one benefactor is without doubt the unwritten experience of the other. Vassar says:

"It having pleased God that I should have no direct descendants to inherit my property, it has long been my desire, after suitably providing for those of my kindred who have claims on me, to make such a disposition of my means as should best honor God and benefit my fellow men. At different periods I have regarded various plans with favor; but these have all been dismissed, one after another, until the subject of erecting and endowing a college for the education of young women was presented for my consideration. The novelty, grandeur and benignity of the idea arrested my attention. The more carefully I examined it, the more strongly it commended itself to my judgment and interested my feelings. It occurred to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development. I considered that the mothers of a country mould the characters of its citizens, determine its institutions and shape its destiny." * * * * *

"It also seemed to me that, if woman were properly educated, some new avenues to useful and honorable employment, in entire harmony with the gentleness and modesty of her sex, might be opened to her."

It was this latter thought that Mr. Barton grasped in 1854. He accepted as feasible the idea of useful and honorable employment in entire harmony with the gentleness and modesty of the true woman. In the study and practice of medicine he believed women had found the noblest avenue to usefulness possible for them.

He scanned the whole subject carefully, considered woman's needs objectively and subjectively, her great want of thoroughly

skilled medical advisers of her own sex, and on the other hand her need of employment in a field where more remunerative harvests might be reaped than were possible in the over-crowded school room or workshop.

The cause of medical education for women was, at the time of his identification with it, exceedingly unpopular. The clouds are not yet wholly dispelled, but there are rifts through which the clear light shines: but popularity does not seem to have entered his thought—the cause was right—it deserved the sympathy and watch-care of good men—it should have his! And thus he went forth, strong in a righteous resolve to sow beside all waters.

I may be pardoned for introducing a personal reminiscence in illustration of this quiet, effective labor. It was in the summer of 1856, when making a tour of the northern lakes with a brother, that I first met Mr. Barton. It was the second week of our voyage, and we sat, a little party of four, on the forward deck, enjoying the fresh breeze as our steamer ploughed the crystal waters of Lake Superior. The subject of conversation, changing frequently, chanced at length to be education for young women. The words of our reticent friend were few, but to the purpose, revealing careful thought upon the subject. After a time, rising, he excused himself from the party and went below. In a few moments he returned with a pamphlet in his hand, which he quietly handed to me, requesting the favor of a perusal. This pamphlet was the Seventh Annual Announcement of this Medical College, and conveyed to me, a Western woman, my first definite knowledge of the institution. Its perusal brought me here, some years after, as a student, and I have ever felt that whatever of blessing the institution may have conferred upon me, in whatever capacity, was the upspringing of that seed silently dropped upon the steamer's deck years before its germination.

Like the "kind and encouraging correspondence" with the convict, of which no human eye took cognizance, the dissemination of information respecting the medical education of women in the way just indicated, was doubtless wide-spread, and we who remain may expect to reap after many days!

But why should I linger in my attempt to portray the influence of a good man in a good but unpopular movement? Because, I reply, the influence was of that character which it is possible for every true friend to exert, and which our cause has so sorely needed and still needs. I am reminded, as I attempt to sum up what Mr. Barton *living* did for us, of an estimate of his business character by one of his intimate friends. "Mr. Barton," he said, "was industrious, economical, upright and punctual, with remarkable habits of order and neatness."

There was, then, in our behalf no lavish expenditure of money, but a silent, unobtrusive contribution of means whenever and wherever it was necessary and wise to give. There was industry in our behalf, a sleepless vigilance which never tired, a carefulness in little things, so often more important than the performance of great deeds, a watchful care which encircled and enveloped us, and bestowed the sure consciousness of a protector and friend. Shall I be pardoned if in this presence I particularize a few of the great little things to which I have referred?

In addressing medical women by the written or spoken word, or in speaking of them, he *never* omitted to do them honor by giving each her title. In his reading of the current literature of our own and other countries, when he met with a passage bearing in any way upon the movement, he took pains (and oftentimes it was done in feebleness and pain,) to transcribe the passage and send it or send the printed column itself, when practicable, to some member of the faculty. Our Dean has in her possession many such tokens of interest in the cause.

These influences, which seem so simple in the recital, proved as the dew and sunshine; they refreshed and they strengthened — how much we cannot know until we have worked a while without them, as we begin to-day to do.

At our last Commencement in March Mr. Barton was unable, through increasing infirmity, to be with us. One month later he was called from labor to reward, his work well done, and the path of his going illumined by the sure light which leads to Eternal Day!

It was on the twenty-eighth day of April that a large concourse of relatives and friends followed his remains to South Laurel Hill Cemetery. We committed his sleeping dust to the earth when Nature was awakening at the voice of beautiful Spring. The violets everywhere dotted the sod that day, and as we laid to rest the brother beside the sister, and the violets covered both, it did not seem so fearful a thing to rest after toil — to live seemed more solemn than to die!

When Mr. Barton's will was published, the friends of the College were rather gratified than surprised at his liberal bequest to the institution of his love. His immediate purpose had been kept secret, but his interest, obviously increasing with the years, could not be kept from us. As I approach, in conclusion, that portion of my tribute which refers to what Mr. Barton dying has done for our College, I am seriously embarrassed. On the one hand I wish to escape the imputation of seeking to glorify with indiscriminate praise an individual simply because he saw fit to make the College a legatee of his will; while, on the other hand, I desire to rid our institution of the charge of undignified rejoicing over an event which is not of unusual occurrence with older and wealthier corporations devoted to the instruction of young men.

It is natural that he who has known the sore inconvenience

of poverty should rejoice at the appearance of a benefactor, who exclaims, with illustrated emphasis, "Be ye warmed and be ye filled!" The wan toiler is the symbol, to-day, of nearly every institution designed for the instruction of women throughout our land. Until the noble benefactor of Poughkeepsie took the initiative step, there was not a single endowed woman's college in the United States. But the forward movement, in which he was a leader, promises glorious results. Already Vassar College does not stand alone in the matter of endowment. The old Wesleyan College of Cincinnati, recently established in her palatial home, the princely gift of large-hearted munificence, sends greeting across the mountains to her sister upon the Hudson. The ample fund left by George Howland, of New Bedford, Mass., for the "thorough, moral, intellectual and religious training of young women," which has been applied to the endowment of "Howland School for Young Women," on Cayuga Lake, N. Y.; the sum of eighty thousand dollars bestowed upon Elmira College, N. Y., by the late Simeon Benjamin; and our own bequest of perhaps sixty thousand dollars; all these assure us that the better day is dawning, and that women are henceforth to exchange for securely-founded, amply-equipped institutions of learning, the crippled, poverty-stricken colleges, falsely so called, which have been and are a disgrace to the system of American education.

We shall not, then, be misunderstood as in this little company of friends we speak of the good gift which has enriched us, and which encourages us to hope that others will in like manner remember us, until the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania shall stand upon a firm footing, and every facility be afforded our students which abounding wealth can command, and which, added to the prestige already ours from the earnest toiling of self-sacrificing toilers in years past, may attract stu-

dents from north, south, east and west, until halls more ample than these shall overflow!

Another has appropriately remarked, "that Mr. Barton's will is a model, in that it displays such just and due proportion in the distribution of an estate to objects of morals, religion, education, charity, literature and science, and in the manner in which the testator has selected, as the recipients of his generous gifts, those institutions whose important claims are most generally neglected."

Fifteen out of twenty legatees of the will, relatives and near friends, are women, and six out of fifteen public institutions remembered are in the exclusive interests of women, and all located in Philadelphia.

The range is comprehensive—from the Rosine Institution, to which the pitying heart of the philanthropist bequeaths \$3,000, to that ornament of our city, the "Philadelphia School of Design for Women," and our own College, of noble aim and loftiest purposes.

The will, which we have reason to believe is the testator's own composition, contains many little touches of beauty and kindness which are not without interest to us. For example, a sum is left to a lady relative "as a token of my remembrance of her kindness during my sister's last illness." To the contributors of one of our public hospitals the sum of \$4,000 is bequeathed, to insure the maintenance, including clothing, during his life, of an inmate who is not a relative, but the son of an early friend.

In bequeathing his valuable library to the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia, he adds, "provided that the students of the Woman's Medical College shall have the privilege of using the books, under proper regulations, to be agreed upon between the two institutions."

It may afford gratification to our students, especially to those

who, to-day, for the first time, share our family joys, to hear the bequest to our College and Hospital. I quote from the will :

“To the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania I bequeath \$25,000, which I direct to be kept invested in bonds and mortgages, adequately secured on real estate, and the interest only is to be used for the purposes of the College, unless, with the aid of others, an adequate fund shall be raised to purchase or construct a college building, in which case \$10,000 of said legacy may be used for such purposes.

“If the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the said Woman’s College shall concur in the opinion, that it will be best for their mutual interests so to locate a building of the latter for a museum, lectures and other purposes of the College, then I direct my executors to pay to said Woman’s Hospital \$5,000 in purchase of a lot for said Woman’s College, part of the premises of the Woman’s Hospital on College Avenue and Twenty-second Street, Philadelphia, about sixty by one hundred feet, as the said institutions may agree ; but should the said institutions not concur in said location, then my executors will pay the said sum of five thousand dollars to the said Woman’s Medical College, to be held and invested as directed in respect to said twenty-five thousand dollars.

“To the Woman’s Hospital I bequeath one thousand dollars, to be added to the endowment fund of that institution.”

* * * * *

“If there should be a residue of my estate, it is my will that my foregoing legacies shall be paid without deduction of tax to the state or United States, which will then be paid out of such residue. But if my estate from any cause shall prove deficient to pay all the legacies, then it is my will that all my legacies to persons shall be paid in full, and that no greater deduction be made from the bequests to the Woman’s Medical College and the Woman’s Hospital than the collateral and succession taxes ; and that any further deficiency be deducted *pro rata* from the remaining legacies to institutions.

“If my estate should prove more than sufficient to pay all the legacies with the taxes thereon, and leave a surplus, then all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate I give, bequeath and devise unto the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania and the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia, in the proportion of three-fourths thereof unto the former and one-fourth thereof unto the latter.”

This liberal bequest is not lightly given ; it is made by the

donor a sacred trust, solemnly bestowed and solemnly to be received. He continues:

“The sums of money above bequeathed to the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, as well as such as may accrue from the residue of my estate, I devise to said corporation, as a *sacred trust*, to be used with great care and prudence, so that no part thereof shall be wasted, lost or injudiciously applied, but the whole be made as conducive as practicable to the great purposes for which the College was organized, namely, the physical, intellectual and moral elevation of woman.”

The profound earnestness and entire confidence embodied in these farewell words of our departed friend, thrill all hearts to-day as we begin anew the work of accomplishing “the great purposes for which the College was organized.” As a loving benediction they descend upon us, imparting strength against future days of toil, and cheer against hours of despondency.

Our simple wreath, twined from leaves only, without the perfume or the splendor of flowers, we lay upon Isaac Barton's grave, and with sorrowing but thankful hearts turn to assume the sacred trust imposed upon us.

Thus doing, I congratulate the members of the Faculty that we enter upon our duties with each chair filled, and forming a complete and harmonious corps for the work of instruction during the incoming session; and further, that in addition to the complete Faculty, we are to have associated with us as Lecturer one whose name is known and honored throughout our own country and in foreign lands.

I congratulate you, ladies of the class of 1868-69, that you assemble with us at a time so auspicious in the history of our College. Lady students of medicine are no longer a wonder or a by-word in the community. The standard of feminine education, which for the last thirty years has been steadily rising in the United States, has culminated naturally and triumphantly in an acknowledged necessity for a professional education which shall enable the student to make her studies

a life-work and the garnering of their fruits a life-reward. In the most natural way possible you seek to supplement the course of a literary and scientific institution with a course of medical instruction. But you are likewise impelled, we trust, by a higher motive than a mere desire for knowledge. May that motive fill each soul and inspire to the last degree the mental and moral faculties of each!

We believe you will find in connection with this institution facilities for study and observation in your chosen profession superior to those afforded women elsewhere — facilities which will satisfy your need and even gratify your laudable ambition. The way is arduous, but you will be assisted by those competent to guide you, and during the present session will be afforded helps which have not heretofore been available; for the rest, a determined soul within will conquer every difficulty!

We bid you welcome, therefore, thrice welcome to these halls! There lingers here the memory of your predecessors, the *alumnæ* of this college, to inspire you by the enthusiasm which carried them triumphant over every obstacle; there come back at this hour from the world without, where they are successfully laboring, words of cheer to impel you onward to take your place side by side with them.

Resolute, cheerful, hopeful, then, we reverently enter the portals introducing us to our great work. Let us not forget, as at this moment the solemn realization possesses us of our individual weakness, to invoke upon our labor the blessing of Him without whose aid they labor in vain who build!

WOMAN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA.

North College Avenue and 22d Street.

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