

Judson (E. C.)

copy for

In Memoriam.

ANN PRESTON, M. D.



Judson (E. E.)

Prof

---

ADDRESS

IN MEMORY OF

ANN PRESTON, M. D.

DELIVERED, BY REQUEST OF THE CORPORATORS AND FACULTY OF THE  
WOMAN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

MARCH 11th, 1873,

BY

ELIZA E. JUDSON, M. D.

Surgeon Genl's Office

44171 S.

---



# ADDRESS

IN MEMORY OF

## ANN PRESTON, M. D.

---

It is fitting that we assemble on the eve of the Annual Commencement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of one who, in life, was so closely identified with its history and interests; but, if we have caught the spirit of this meeting aright, something more than a formal acknowledgment of our appreciation of the public services of one rarely gifted is intended. Many here to-night were bound to Dr. Preston by no common ties of affection, and mourn the loss, not only of a public benefactor, but of an intimate, personal friend. Many of you labored with her during a long series of years, for the advancement of a common cause, and with sad hearts took up the work where her hands faltered. With others her name was a household word, and its mention brings back to you tender, grateful recollections of days gone by, and you realize your loss, as you could not, on that bright April day, when we buried her where the birds will sing, and the violets blossom above her grave, through all the glad spring-times.

We have no flattering eulogium for her whose loss is our common sorrow. She needs none. Her life, great in its simplicity, was known to you all. They in the end are most generous, who from the beginning are most just; so "we can only speak right on, telling you that which ye yourselves do know."

Times of peace have no historians, and the life of Dr. Preston presents few of what men call events, but it naturally divides itself into two distinct periods. To the first, for the better appreciation of the harmony of the whole, we apply the term preparatory discipline; to the second, life work. The first, while it was fitting her for the peculiar responsibilities of the second, had its separate work, faithfully, completely, and harmoniously performed. The second, deriving from the first remarkable self-discipline, had its own distinct preparation and culture. The first was spent in the quiet seclusion of a country home, and has left blessed memories in many distant households; the second, amid the varying activities of a restless city, and its results none can number. Both come to us laden with ripe fruits, and wine of rare vintage.

Ann Preston, daughter of Amos and Margaret Preston, was born in West Grove, Chester County, Pennsylvania, December, 1813. In the quiet old homestead where her grandfather lived, where her father was born, lived, and died, she spent the first thirty-six years of what then promised to be an uneventful life.

Her father was a birth-right member and minister of the Society of Friends. A man of unusual ability, enthusiastic in the pursuit of truth, faithful to his convictions of right, and keenly alive to the wants and interests of others, he was unusually loved and trusted.

Her mother was an intellectual woman, refined in thought and feeling, and delicately appreciative of the beau-

ful in nature and in art. She was of a long-lived family, and combined great strength of will with a sensitive nervous organization.

Those acquainted with Miss Preston cannot fail to see that she possessed the constitutional traits of both parents. The same innate love of truth, sublime faith in the ultimate triumph of the right, quick insight into the motives and impulses which move men, ready sympathy with suffering, rare intellectual gifts, and a delicate constitution combined with extraordinary tenacity of life and persistence of purpose.

Circumstances rendered her early life one of close application and grave responsibility. The delicate health of her mother, and the early death of an only sister, forced upon her many of the cares of a large family. Although Amos Preston's government of his household was that of mutual love and confidence, it was no light burden that fell thus early on the shoulders of his fair, young daughter.

Six boys in a family—what a picture of restless activity and excitement! As we see them to-day they are all grave, middle-aged men; but doubtless they once went coasting and boating with all the wild enthusiasm of youth, while they taxed their sister for the solution of their difficult problems, and sought from her the sympathy that ever brings healing alike for the headaches and heartaches of childhood. While she, with an innate love of the humorous, which time, and care, and physical suffering failed to destroy, and a warm, loving, social nature, found much that was congenial in the free, young lives around her. It was an inspiration from her childhood days that later in life made her write,

“Sweet gales from Eastern lands may bless  
 The sailor, far at sea;  
 But of all fragrant gifts of earth,  
 The new-mown hay for me.”

It was a vision of her childhood that made her paint in perennial green the beautiful June landscape; in softer tints the hazy sunshine that rests on hill and streamlet through all the dreamy days of Indian Summer; and later still, the brown, russet and golden hues that make the forest one mighty bouquet, set among the immovable hills.

Could any one, born and bred in a city, have painted the following wonderful word-picture of country child-life? It was a chill October morning; the first streakings of daylight were just coming up over the Eastern hills, when the little family group eagerly hastened to the old chestnut tree, where young neighbors were also wont to assemble. How musically each gust of wind brought the ripe nuts pattering down!

“Regardless of hunger and cold,” she writes, “we bent down, and walked round and round, turned over and peered under the rustling leaves, ever and anon shaking basket and tin, or exhibiting the swelled pocket, in triumph, as we passed each other in our busy search. Then came the comparing of successes, and measuring in the old tin cup, and plays of ‘hull gull’ and ‘odd or even,’ and perchance, in the generosity of our good fortune, we filled up the tiny cup of some aggrieved little one, who had paddled around in his bare feet among the pricking burrs, only to find a few ‘cheats.’”

Those were exciting times; great energies were expended, and gladly, as the day drew to its close,

“They sat beside the open door,  
And watched, as all have done,  
That olden beauty, ever new,  
The setting of the sun.”

Confined somewhat closely at home, her early education was not what is usually called liberal. Her attendance at



school was limited to the excellent one near her country home, and a short time spent at a boarding-school in West Chester. Her quick perceptive faculties and retentive memory enabled her easily to maintain a position at the head of her class; and her persistent determination to know the reasons of things, often taxed not only the knowledge, but the ingenuity of her teachers. "Gentle and obedient, I yet found her a most difficult pupil," said one who was her school-mate, teacher, and life-long friend. "Her close cross-questioning tested my ability to the utmost, and it was often doubtful which would succeed in maintaining her position." She sought not controversy, but she loved truth for truth's sake.

The neighborhood of her home was one of much intellectual and moral culture. A valuable public library furnished her with well selected reading. A Lyceum and Literary Association, of which she was a member, did much to cultivate her taste for literature. Her intense love of nature, made her its attentive student. Bird, and bee, and blossom, the sunny hill-side and dark green wood, each taught its lesson well. 'Mid Pennsylvania's beautiful hills and valleys, she studied art as it came from the hand of the great Master. With a nature so organized as to be capable of continuous growth, this was a culture that widened and deepened with every added year.

Miss Preston, however, never ceased to regret the lack of the rigid, mental discipline which she felt that an early classical education would have given her. So settled did her conviction of its necessity become, that, later in life, she commenced the study of Latin, and, as she had leisure, pursued it with interest and success. For years it was a favorite custom with her, each Sunday afternoon, to read a chapter in the Latin Testament.

She early became interested in the leading philanthropic

questions of that time, and thought and wrote carefully concerning them. The issues of the present crowd so rapidly upon those of the past, that it is with difficulty we can realize that ten years ago we were in the midst of a national conflict, for national unity and individual liberty. Divested of political bias and personal interest, freedom seems so undeniably man's birth-right, that we may well wish to forget the scenes of which, for so many years, slavery made America the theatre; but for the honor of the nation let not the devotion of the men and women who marched in Liberty's van-guard be forgotten.

So far as known to us, those who have written concerning Miss Preston have made little or no mention of her work in the anti-slavery cause. Her love of liberty and justice, her reverence for human nature, even in its lowliest fortunes, allied her in thought and feeling with those who labored for the emancipation of the slaves.

Prior to the convention held in this city, in 1833, which organized the American Anti-slavery Society, she had become a member of the Clarkson Anti-slavery Society, which was formed in the neighborhood of her home. It held its meetings quarterly, at different points in Chester and Lancaster Counties. As this was one of the first and most active of such associations, its meetings called together much of the talent of the anti-slavery cause; and those were the days, when the eloquence of Garrison, and Phillips, and Giddings, roused all lovers of liberty to action, and struck fear to hearts made callous by long indulgence in injustice.

Miss Preston enlisted in the work with all the ardor of a warm, sympathetic nature, and soon becoming known as a forcible writer, it devolved on her to write reports, addresses and petitions of the society, some of which are still extant, and are models of clearness, strength and simplicity. In

the Lyceum, of which she was a member, the same subject not infrequently claimed the service of her pen, to the acceptance of some, but to the no small discomfiture of others.

In 1838, she attended the meeting held in this city for the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall, a building erected for the purposes of free discussion. As is well known, before the meetings were concluded, the building was forcibly entered by a mob, deliberately set on fire, and burned to the ground. She witnessed the conflagration, and, like many others, from that terrible night her detestation of the cause of so fiendish an outrage, and her determination to labor for its overthrow, became deeper and stronger than ever.

In a poem entitled "The Burning of Pennsylvania Hall," in glowing words, she gave expression to the thoughts which that unprovoked act of vandal violence was calculated to inspire in every heart not hardened by the influence of slave power. This poem was one of two, selected from several hundred, for publication in the "History of Pennsylvania Hall." The Rev. John Pierpont, writing over his own signature, was the other successful competitor.

Although not on the direct line of the Underground Rail-road, she did much for the relief and protection of those who were fleeing from bondage. An interesting incident is related of her in this connection, showing the same fearless courage, and wise adaptation of means to ends that characterized her later actions.

During the absence of her father and mother, who were attending a Friends' meeting, at some distance from home, a fugitive slave woman was forwarded to their house. Miss Preston concealed her in a closet in the garret, fed and made her comfortable, and waited, we may imagine, with

no small degree of interest the time of her removal to the next station.

One morning a man came running with the information that the slave-catchers were in the neighborhood. His house, the point at which the woman was last concealed, was being searched, and they would be there next. To Miss Preston's question as to what she should do, he replied that she must devise her own expedients, as he could not remain to advise or assist, but must hasten on and arouse the neighborhood, to assist in the rescue.

Miss Preston was alone, but with great coolness and forethought she locked the woman into the closet, went to the pasture, caught a horse, harnessed him to the carriage, then hastily dressing the woman in her mother's plain shawl and Quaker bonnet, carefully adding the two veils often worn by plain Friends when riding, she started with her in the direction from which the slave-catchers were expected, with the ostensible purpose of attending meeting, it being Sunday morning.

Soon the slave-hunters came in view, riding rapidly towards them, came close to the side of the carriage and peered curiously in; but seeing only a young girl and an apparently elderly woman, in the dress of a plain Friend, leisurely going to meeting, they rode rapidly on, to continue their search elsewhere. The great danger was past; Miss Preston carried the woman to the house which had been recently searched, where she was comparatively secure. She eventually reached Canada in safety.

We can but admire the ready forethought which devised the plan, the cool courage which executed it successfully, and the shrewdness which suggested taking the route from which the enemy were expected, and finally going to the house they had just searched.

Although she regarded the cause of emancipation as



having the first claim on her time and energies, she yet found leisure to do much in support of the temperance movement. In 1848 she was elected Secretary of the Temperance Convention of the women of Chester County. The following year, by order of the Convention, she prepared a memorial to the Legislature, asking for the enactment of a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, at least within the limits of Chester County. She was one of the three delegates sent to Harrisburg to present it. The memorial was able, but they failed at that time in securing the object desired.

To become identified with an unpopular cause was more of a sacrifice for Miss Preston than it is for most persons. Sensitive to public opinion, she greatly desired the approval of those she loved and respected. Approbation was not distasteful to her, and public censure not to be lightly incurred. It is only in view of these facts that we can fully appreciate the integrity of purpose that made her whole life one of opposition to wrong and injustice, and often to popular opinion.

Thus, with heart alive to questions of reform, and hands busy with home cares, she was, year by year, developing into mature womanhood. She lacked the system and manual dexterity essential to complete success in physical employment. Housekeeping, with its monotonously recurring cares, was not to her the satisfying occupation it is to some women; but love sanctifies the humblest office, and lends a constant charm to the cold, hard name of duty.

Miss Preston was closely attached to her friends and kindred. Her love for her father was strong, deep and unchanging; for her mother, less even, but at times more intense, concentrated, even impassioned in its tenderness. Nowhere else did the sun shine so brightly—nowhere else were the songs of birds so sweet as around her childhood

home. Years afterward, when the cares and responsibilities of public life weighed heavily upon her, she often looked toward it as a haven of repose.

We count that man blest whose youth was guarded, refined and enriched by the love of a pure, noble-minded woman. Miss Preston's ready sympathy with the interests and pursuits of her brothers gave her great influence over them, and to-day they regard their lives as richer and better for the precept and example of one so loyal to purity and truth.

Amid these more practical duties she was cultivating a refined taste for literature. Her writings evince purity of sentiment that found many appreciative readers, and justify the belief that, had she at that time devoted herself to literature, instead of subordinating her talent in that direction to other and more practical aims, she might have attained to eminence as a writer both of prose and poetry.

From earliest childhood she possessed the ability to express her thoughts with grace and facility. "I think she could not have been more than ten or eleven years old," writes an elder brother, "when she surprised me one day by showing me a few verses she had composed, written on the slate which we jointly used in writing and arithmetical exercises. Of course, they were not very profound in thought or finished in style, and I can now recall only two or three of them, but I then thought them a most wonderful production."

In the year 1848 she published a small book of poems for children, entitled "Cousin Ann's Stories," designed to convey useful moral lessons. Several of these poems, republished in school books, and declaimed by nearly all the children in the land, have become classic in child literature.

Many of her poems manifest that ideality, so characteristically her own, which in later years lent an indescribable

charm to the sternest realities of her life. The following poem, suggested by the statement of Wendell Phillips, that "God never permitted us to form a theory too beautiful for His power to make practicable," illustrates this point, as we with our clumsy prose could not:—

"THE IDEAL IS THE REAL.

We make this life a mournful, empty dream,  
 And stones for bread we give,  
 And know not that the soul's realities  
 In its Ideals live.  
 These are the stars that shine within its night,  
 The angel ones it sees,  
 And evermore, unconsciously, it learns  
 Its possible from these.  
 There are no limits to the Real,  
 Save those that bound the pure Ideal.

The thoughts of beauty dawning on the soul  
 Are glorious Heaven's gleams;  
 And God's eternal truth lies folded deep  
 In all man's lofty dreams.  
 'Twas first in Thought's clear world that Kepler saw  
 What ties the planets' bound;  
 And through long years he searched the spheres, and there  
 The answering law he found.  
 Men said he sought a wild Ideal;  
 The stars made answer,—*it is Real.*

Paul, Luther, Howard—all the crowned ones  
 That star-like gleam through time,  
 Lived boldly out before the clear-eyed sun  
 Their inmost thoughts sublime.  
 These truths, to them, more beautiful than day,  
 They spoke to quicken men;  
 And deeds at which the blinded gazers sneered  
 They dared to practice then,  
 'Til they who marked their young Ideal  
 In meekness owned it was the Real.

Thine early dreams, which come like 'shapes of light,'  
 Come bearing prophecy;

And Nature's tongues, from leaves to 'quivering stars,'  
 Teach loving Faith to thee.  
 Fear not to build thine eyrie on the heights  
 Where golden splendors lay,  
 And trust thyself unto thine inmost soul  
 In simple faith always;  
 And God will make divinely Real  
 The highest forms of thine Ideal."

Changes in her family relieved Miss Preston of many of the responsibilities that had rested upon her for years, and enabled her to turn her attention more directly to intellectual pursuits. At this time she was engaged during a portion of several years in teaching school, an occupation for which she proved herself eminently qualified.

While her course for the future was still undetermined information reached her of the proposed opening of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The subject engaged her thoughtful attention, and commended itself to her judgment as meeting a vital want in society. The justification of this cause is now complete. The time for argument is past. The decision to study and practice medicine now involves only the question of personal interest and fitness. Then the experiment was untried. Many doubted its expediency, some questioned its rightfulness. The thoughtful must wait to consider, and the thoughtless and unprincipled hesitated not to condemn.

Having decided for herself that the study and practice of medicine were both right and womanly, and adapted to her moral, mental and physical constitution, she accepted the work without hesitation, but not without discouragements. It is evident that she came to this decision without any premonition of the work that was before her. Her simple statement, "I have only followed as I have been led," told the whole story of her beautiful life.

The College opened in the fall of 1850, under somewhat



favorable auspices, with a full corps of Professors. Institutions, like individuals, learn discretion by experience, and it is not impossible, that the attitude assumed by the young College, of necessity defensive, may have, in some instances, induced the opposition with which it contended.

While this is possible, it is an undeniable fact, that as soon as a new idea assumes tangible form, claims recognition as a living truth, it inevitably meets opposing forces. Often suspicions, jealousies and animosities are not wanting. Wise men and honorable women give their voice against it, for prejudice warps the minds and mars the character of many of the best of men, calumniates the motives of founders of institutions, the most disinterested and benevolent, and in time past, followed with persecution and death, those who dared to stand out in the full light of heaven and declare the liberty of the human soul.

Miss Preston was one of the first applicants for admission to the college as a student. For some time previous she had been pursuing the study of Physiology and Hygiene, with the intention of fitting herself as a popular lecturer on these subjects. She graduated at the first annual commencement, at the close of the session of 1851-2.

With the doors of all hospitals closed against them, the early graduates obtained clinical advantages with the greatest difficulty, "some in other cities and across the ocean, some by long continued efforts in various ways at home." Dr. Preston, feeling that her attainments were still insufficient for the life-work she had chosen, remained in attendance upon lectures at the College during the entire winter after her graduation. With the Spring, came the urgent request that she accept the chair of Physiology and Hygiene then vacant. To this after much hesitation, on account of what she regarded as her unfitness for the work, she at last consented.

Thus at the age of thirty-nine, she entered upon the great work of her life.

Prior to this, she had commenced delivering popular lectures, a work she continued for some time during a portion of each year, speaking in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and many smaller cities and towns, being often invited to re-visit the same place. Believing that Physiology should be to all an open book, her lectures to women embodied a faithful exposition of such hygienic laws as are based on physiological facts and sanitary experience. They were attended by large and intelligent audiences, and doubtless did much to introduce better hygienic measures into many homes. That they met a want in society is attested by the fact, that those who listened to them years ago, still speak of her with unabated enthusiasm.

They also introduced her to the public, thus greatly aiding her in obtaining a medical practice, many of those who listened to her lectures becoming her patients. Delicate health compelled her to decline obstetrical cases, night calls, and finally to limit her professional work mainly to an office practice.

She spent the winters in the city, lecturing at the College, attending to her practice, and the many duties, that even then devolved upon her; but a portion of every summer was spent with her parents in West Grove. These summer vacations were the yearly Sabbaths of her life, looked forward to with joyful anticipation. She loved the old time places and associations, and the old time friends were never forgotten. If they were poor or unfortunate, by her gentle kindness she ever recalled the brighter dreams of bygone days. She realized that God's sympathy, the sympathy that meets our human wants, is sent through human souls.

It was during one of these long summer vacations, that the following amusing extract from her journal was penned:

“Two ideas I have had of the perfection of physical pleasure. One was eating strawberries and cream, which have always seemed to me akin to the nectar and ambrosia of the gods; the other was sailing in a little boat, away down, down a smooth stream. During the past week I have had my full satisfaction of both, and find them closely allied to vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Her journal, kept at irregular intervals from the time she was twenty-three years old, contains much that is beautiful in thought and expression. No one can read it, without being impressed by the purity and integrity of its author. It reveals the child-like faith that was the result of deep experience; and tells the tale of a life-long joy, that was as well a life-long sorrow; but it is no mission of ours, unbidden, to enter the inner temple of any human soul.

Each year, the absolute necessity for clinical instruction, in connection with the didactic teaching of the regular college course, was becoming more and more apparent. All successful work was crippled without it. True, some sought and obtained hospital advantages in New York, and others in Boston, but the need was still imperative. At that time, for a woman to gain admission, as a medical student, to any hospital in Philadelphia, was impossible. There was no alternative; if the College hoped to increase its influence, we might almost say maintain its existence, a hospital, “one of whose objects should be the education of women as Physicians,” must be founded.

To obtain a charter, raise funds for defraying necessary expenses, find competent women willing to serve as Managers, and skillful physicians who would act on a Consulting Board, was no inconsiderable work; but added to this was the difficulty of a woman’s obtaining the requisite experience which would fit her for the responsible position of Resident Physician. To this end, with equal devotion to the cause,

one of the two women then members of the College Faculty left family and friends to spend a year in the Maternité Hospital at Paris, and the other remained to work with untiring zeal at home.

Dr. Preston's efforts were nobly seconded by many liberal, true-hearted men and women; but so highly do the Managers of the Woman's Hospital value the work she, at that time, performed in its service, that in their last Report we find the following statement:—"To her efforts more than to all other influences may be traced its very origin." She said in speaking of it, "I went to every one who I thought would give me either money or influence."

When, at length, the Hospital was opened for the reception of patients, her joy was that of one who, having labored and waited, was permitted to enter into fruition. She was appointed a member of its Board of Managers, Corresponding Secretary, and Consulting Physician—offices she held until the time of her death.

Thus the years wore on until the ever-memorable Spring of 1861, when the lowering war-cloud, which for years had sullenly hugged our whole Southern horizon, suddenly assumed gigantic proportions, and, ere we were aware, war's wild tempest was upon us. All minor ambitions and interests gave place to the excitement of the hour. In the pursuit of the art of war, the arts of peace were forgotten. Educational institutions languished. The fate of our College was but the common fate of all.

For Dr. Preston this was an especially trying hour. During eight years, marked by many changes in the Faculty, and memorable in College history only for the discouragements, opposition, and pecuniary embarrassment encountered, she had stood faithful at her post.

The labors of the preceding Winter, which had been unusually fatiguing, her ready sympathy with suffering, and



intense interest in the affairs of the nation, combined with anxiety for the future of the institution, whose prosperity was so dear to her heart, would, doubtless, have been a heavy drain on her powers of endurance; but added to this was the care and anxiety of long-continued and serious illness in her family. Her mother suddenly became almost helpless from paralysis. With filial tenderness Dr. Preston remained with her, and ministered to her wants, during all the weary suspense of that first Summer of the war.

With the Fall came the question of discontinuing lectures. So ruinous to the prospects of the College did Dr. Preston regard this step, that she earnestly urged their continuance, even if there should be but one paying student. She yielded, however, to the decision of the majority, and the College was closed for the session of 1861-62. It was at this time that the following extract from her journal was penned:

“Oct. 8th, 1861.—I have been sad for my country, because it is so slow to learn the wisdom which would bring prosperity; sad for my disabled mother and desolate home; sad in the prospects of the Institution to which I have given so much of my time and strength, for there now seems no possibility of success; and I fear that, after all these years of toil, we may be doomed to succumb to the weight of opposition. But even now, when the burden of this disappointment is heaviest, there is consolation in the conviction that this labor has not been wasted—that, perchance, it is the needful preliminary to a more prosperous endeavor—that no true, right work like this can be in vain, although it may be regarded by the world as a failure. To-night the inward encouragement is, do thy best; work where the work opens; applauded or condemned, speak and write thy grandest inspiration, thy noblest idea, and sing hosanna, for thy work has been no failure, and the Everlasting will preserve it, and attest it forever.”

During the entire Winter she remained by the bedside of her sick mother. Spring found her over-worked, languid, and with no power of recuperation. A long and extremely painful attack of acute articular rheumatism completed what over-work and anxiety had commenced. Complete prostration, mental and physical, terminated in brief intellectual aberration. This Dr. Preston ever regarded as the delirium of extreme exhaustion and innutrition.

Gradually she regained her health and former mental vigor, and by mid Winter had so far recovered as to be able to resume her work in the College, "lecturing," as she expressed it, "with as much ease and concentration of thought as ever." In the ten years that followed she did much of the best work of her life.

The war was still in progress, but alternate victory and defeat had taught the people fortitude and self-control. They pursued the quiet avocations of peace, in strange juxtaposition with the danger and tumult of civil war.

The Woman's Hospital, then in successful operation, gave to the College a new impetus; but its prospects were still far from flattering. The class was small, the difficulty of obtaining suitable Professors great, and their compensation of necessity limited; still there were a few brave hearts that never faltered.

In 1866 Dr. Preston was elected Dean of the Faculty. In 1867 she wrote her ever-memorable reply to the preamble and resolutions adopted by the Philadelphia County Medical Society, to the effect that they would neither offer encouragement to women becoming practitioners of medicine, nor meet them in consultation. To the honor of the profession, be it said, that many of its ablest members refused to be bound by the action of the Society.

So calmly and completely, point by point, Dr. Preston met and answered the arguments put forth by the Society,

and then so fully vindicated the cause of woman, that no reply was attempted. Clear, concise, and powerful, this was, in many respects, the ablest of her literary productions, and we regret that we have time only for its closing paragraphs. She writes:—

“Ours is the post of restful duty—the place assigned to us, as we believe, in the order of Providence, and we can do no other than maintain it.

But, on behalf of a little band of true-hearted young women who are just entering the profession, and from whose pathway we fain would see impediments and annoyances removed, we must protest, in the sacred name of our common humanity, against the injustice which places difficulties in our way,—not because we are ignorant, or pretentious, or incompetent, or unmindful of the code of medical or Christian ethics, but because we are women.”

In 1867 Dr. Preston was elected a member of the Board of Corporators of the College. Soon after this the munificence of Isaac Barton, and the generosity of others, relieved the College of the pecuniary embarrassment under which it had hitherto labored, and enabled it to add much to its facilities for usefulness. The constantly increasing size of the class gave evidence that the cause of the medical education of women was taking secure hold on the confidence of the public. The opening, about this time, of several of the leading hospitals of the city for the admission of women to clinics, made it an era in College history.

If to any one it should seem that, in speaking of the life of Dr. Preston, we have given undue prominence to the College, we can only say that to speak of one, and not of the other would be impossible, since, for the last twenty years, they have been inseparable.

To students and recent graduates this retrospect of College history has surely not been in vain. “The lines are

fallen unto us in pleasant places," and it is with difficulty that we can realize the price that has been paid for that which we so quietly enjoy. The fact that our Alma Mater has come up through much tribulation should make us all the more faithful to her interests, and jealous of her honor.

Dr. Preston possessed many qualities which especially fitted her for a pioneer in an unpopular cause. Many persons fail of accomplishing the good they desire on account of the blundering way in which they attempt it. They do a good deed in an unwise, impolitic manner, and then comfort themselves with the thought that they are suffering persecution for righteousness' sake, when the truth is, they are only reaping the direct and legitimate results of their own imprudence. There have been more martyrs to man's indiscretion than to his conscience.

With wide tolerance for differing opinions, just and generous judgment of men and things, an almost intuitive perception of the good that is latent in each opposing party, Dr. Preston combined an honest and most hopeful insight into the progressive movements of the times, with the calm assurance of one who had reached "the post of restful duty." True to her motto, that "only those can sustain others who are themselves self-sustained," she was hopeful under the most depressing circumstances, patient under rebuffs and reverses, and often gained by gentle persistence what others would have lost by noisy controversy.

She combined much natural talent for teaching, with rare interest and enthusiasm in her subject, and while imparting instruction gave much pleasure to her hearers. Who of all those who listened to her lectures will ever forget the artlessness with which she folded her arms on the desk in front of her, and leaned earnestly forward, as she lost self-consciousness in her interest in the subject which she was presenting? If, at times, her teaching lacked system, it was



doubtless attributable to the absence of early systematic training. More than most persons, she required the stimulus of attentive listeners. Eloquent at times, she could not resist the depressing influence of an unappreciative audience. One who knew her well says :—

“I found her ready to accept the demonstrated facts of physiological science, and without superstition or bigotry; not suspicious of ulterior or final results, provided only it was the light of *truth* that fell across her pathway. Liberal and advanced in her views and culture, her teaching as Professor of Physiology to women embodied a fair and faithful exposition of the science as now understood by the medical profession.”

Her introductory lectures and valedictory addresses, now a part of College History, are, many of them, especially able. The last, delivered three years ago, is replete with beautiful thoughts and wise suggestions to those going forth on a difficult mission.

In practice Dr. Preston was successful. Keenly alive to the wants of the sick and suffering, she was unusually loved and trusted. She approached the bedside of the lowliest of “God’s suffering ones” with a pleasant word and gentle touch that brought healing. The unfortunate instinctively sought her as one who would at least give them sympathy in their hour of extremest need.

Those who knew Miss Preston in youth describe her as small, lithe, artless, and graceful. As we remember her, she was below medium height, with delicately moulded form and features. At fifty-eight her beautiful brown hair showed scarcely a trace of silver. In her face, the lines that indicated strength of will and firmness of purpose were delicately blended with those which revealed refinement of feeling and purity of thought. In her manner there was a child-like artlessness that was above all art; in her presence, an inde-

scribable charm that lent to the real much of the beauty and grace of the pure ideal.

Life, to her, was something more than the dull routine of duty; and humanity more than the result of an inflexible law. She was a close student of nature, human and external, and it needs not that one of deeply thoughtful mind be passionate, in order to divine all the secrets of passion. Only those to whom it was given to see the under current of her life, realized to the fullest extent, her love for purity, truth, and goodness; yet with this extraordinary appreciation of the beautiful in character, she neither despised nor condemned the weaknesses that make so large a part of human lives.

For years Dr. Preston was an inmate of the household of one of whom she ever spoke in terms of affectionate remembrance; but never marrying, she had long looked forward, with pleasure, to making a home for herself. In 1864, she gathered around her a pleasant family circle. Several years later she writes :

“I live in my own home, and am surrounded by many comforts. The need for airy rooms, pleasant outlooks, and quiet, comfortable chambers seems more imperative as we grow older. I do not live with my kindred, but my home is often brightened by the presence of my brothers, and their children love to come to my city dwelling as to a pleasant place. Some dear friends live with me in harmonious relations, and do much to make this an orderly home circle.”

Composed of men and women following different pursuits, and interested in different lines of thought and action, with wide tolerance for differing opinions, and full liberty of thought and expression, this family offered rare social attractions. Each member contributed to the general interest, that which was ripest and best in his or her thoughts and experiences. Thus their intercourse did not take on the

narrow bias, which often characterizes that of persons following a single profession. Of this, Dr. Preston had the keenest appreciation. She held that persons of true culture, never publish their special callings in common conversation, and often expressed regret that there was a tendency among those pursuing any profession, to become so entirely engrossed in its interests that they lost sight of the broad fields of culture that must ever lie outside of the most liberal profession. Nowhere was the rare charm of Dr. Preston's life more beautifully manifested than in this home circle. Mentally and morally so strong to do and bear, yet personally so child-like in her dependence upon others; courageous and hopeful where strong men faltered, she was one of the gentlest and most affectionate of women; and proved it no Utopian dream, that a woman may be both strong and womanly.

During the spring of 1871, she was again visited with acute articular rheumatism. Her recovery was slow and incomplete. With the opening of the college session in the fall, however, she resumed her usual duties, but performed them with less than her accustomed vigor. Work exhausted her as it had not formerly done. It soon became evident that her health was rapidly failing. A renewed attack of the disease followed, less severe, however, than that of the preceding spring; and her friends entertained sanguine hopes of her recovery. She became so far convalescent as to be able to walk around her room and see a few friends.

It was at this time that "with fatal facility" for overwork, she prepared the Annual Announcement for the College session of 1872-3. It was the last work of her life, performed slowly and painfully; but so clear, strong and forcible were its statements, so brave and hopeful was its spirit, that in reading it, no one would suspect the frailty of the hand that penned it.

It is feared that this exertion brought on the relapse which terminated in complete nervous prostration, from which she died April 18, 1872.

When Dr. Preston's will was published, the friends of the College and Hospital, found that both institutions had been remembered. Ever the friend of women dependent on their own exertions, her bequest to the College is characteristic, and will prove a blessing to many who are striving to open up for themselves the way to a broader and more complete culture. We quote from the will:—

“My manikin, instruments and medical books I desire to have given to the Corporators of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, for the use of medical students.

“After my debts are paid, and a sufficient sum becomes available, I desire one thousand dollars to be paid to the Managers of the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia, as a part of the endowment fund of that institution.

“The interest of four thousand dollars, I desire to be used annually and perpetually, to assist in the medical education of one good, capable woman, who may not otherwise possess sufficient means to pursue medical studies. The Corporators of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania shall select, from names that may be proposed, the person to receive this assistance; but if one of my nieces should incline to attend medical lectures, she shall take precedence of other applicants.

“The interest of this four thousand dollars to be paid annually, to the Corporators of the College, until the sale of my house, after which I desire the principal to be paid to the Corporators of the Woman's Medical College, provided they will receive it for the purpose named, and keep it as a separate fund, sacred to the one object.”

To the cause of woman, her work and example were invaluable. Her personal character was so high, her ability



so great, her judgment so accurate, her nature so truly feminine, her success as a physician so universally acknowledged, that her life was an unanswerable argument against those who would exclude women from the medical profession.

In attempting to form a just estimate of Dr. Preston's part in the work of placing the medical education of women on its present thorough basis, we have met many obstacles. Others became identified with the work earlier. To Elizabeth Blackwell must ever belong the honor of taking the initiatory step, and doubtless she has become more widely known than any other.

Faithful and courageous, Dr. Preston yet shrank from public exhibition and criticism.

The fact that her educational life was so closely associated with that of other educators, renders it difficult to decide, in any particular result, how much was due to her agency, and what part she should share with her associates.

The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, was the first ever chartered for its purpose. The number of its graduates exceeds that of any similar institution. Its present class is the largest of its kind in the world. As we have narrated, Dr. Preston early became identified with the institution, and for nineteen years was Professor of Physiology and Hygiene, for six years Dean of the Faculty, and for four years Member of the Board of Corporators.

Philadelphia has long been the acknowledged medical centre in America; a conservative city fostering a conservative profession. While it is true that "the names of those who supported our Hospital and College, are largely the names of those of whom Philadelphia is justly proud, as representatives of her intelligence, respectability and moral worth," it is probable that in no other city in the Union would the medical education of women have met such bitter, persistent, determined opposition. The fact

that, year by year, under such circumstances, the College has steadily and securely gained ground in the profession, has added to its facilities for thoroughness in study, has extended its requisitions for graduation, and without ostentation become well and favorably known at home and abroad, proves the inherent vitality of the cause it represents, and the faithful, untiring devotion of its defenders.

The early advocates of the medical education of women, sought neither self-aggrandizement nor pecuniary advantages. They were sustained by the belief that the cause they advocated was established in the inevitable fitness of things, and in the necessity of society; and that the movement belonged to the revolutions which never go backward; but they contended with the opposition of a profession justly conservative in its acceptance of innovations, although often unjustly illiberal in its methods of testing the fitness of that which is new, and asserting the infallibility of its ancient prerogative.

Dr. Preston entered upon the work on the eve of that reactionary period which comes alike to all institutions and reforms, but more especially to those which run counter to old and long established opinions. Professional ostracism and public censure are powerful weapons in the hands of unprincipled opponents, and it proves no unfaithfulness to our cause, that during the first years of the existence of the College, there were frequent changes in the Faculty and Board of Corporators; but it renders more apparent the faithfulness of the few, who since its inception have labored for the advancement of its interests.

During a long period of years, during the dark days of the College, Dr. Preston made its interests her interests, its honor her honor, shrank not from its obloquy, shared its pecuniary embarrassments, labored to increase its advantages and elevate its standard of scholarship.

We have no desire to over-estimate the results of her labors, or undervalue those of others, but we believe that the facts justify the statement that she has done more than any other person for the advancement of the medical education of women.

With failing health and declining years, she had realized for some time that she must soon relinquish to others the active work of teaching; but her life was just ripening into glad fruition—the hopes of years were being realized, the future looked bright and hopeful, and she anticipated a serene old age of peaceful content. But she was permitted to look over into the promised land; saw opened up for women broad avenues to useful knowledge; heard the significant creaking of College and Hospital doors long closed against them; saw time-honored universities welcoming them to their fullest privileges and highest honors; saw the College, whose interests were so near her heart, taking secure hold on the confidence of the public. But she died when the experience of her years would have added much to the wisdom of its counsels; when the confidence the public reposed in her acknowledged worth and ability would have extended and strengthened its influence; when the presence of one so widely-known and universally respected, growing old so beautifully in its service, would have added much to the dignity of its name.

Doubtless, to many here to-night, with the pain of the personal loss, comes the feeling that Dr. Preston died before her life-work was finished; but, year by year, slowly and painfully, we are learning the lesson that human limitations are not for God,—that whatever *is* bears ever His warrant for its being,—that out of infinite resources He is able to compass all finite ends,—that the call given to any human being to come up higher is His seal upon the work accomplished.











