

A Brief History
of the
Ontario Medical College
for **Women**



By
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The fundamental, and primal aim, of education is the training and equipment of the young in the inculcation of the principles of mental and moral integrity, the teaching of self-control, self-government, in short, the unfolding and developing of all the human faculties, so that the individual be adequately trained to cope intelligently with social problems and industrial changes, with a minimum expenditure of energy, and maximum amount of return. As the race progressed, and the conviction became a certainty, that higher education was not only desirable but requisite for man, our educational systems changed and enlarged; our facilities increased and multiplied in perfect consonance to the demand. In due time, the thought was re-born, that if education were commendable and necessary for man, it must be equally so for his sister woman; that if an highly developed mental and moral sense be requisite and desirable for man, it was equally essential for woman. What was true for one, must be true for the other. One being but the complement to the other, neither alone a success or perfect develop-

ment; and so after long persistent, and contumacious struggle the fact gradually became accepted that higher education was essential to the happiness, mental and physical well-being of woman; and the then prevalent idea that boy's education should be of such a character as to increase and enlarge his sphere of usefulness in life; while the thought concerning girl's education was merely superficial attractiveness, has happily undergone a metamorphosis revolution; fortunately for woman, and therefore the race, these ideas have been relegated to the past. The arguments against the claims of the higher, or professional education of woman usually fell under two heads; the objections, that arose from the fancied limitations due to the erroneous idea of woman's mental and physical inferiority; and those, that were cited to the imagined dire effects that would ensue in our social structure, if woman's right to higher or professional education were conceded.

The argument that woman, because of her supposed mental inferiority should be debarred from colleges and universities, was not only fallacious but illogical. Education is the best substitute for mental or physical strength, accepted by the world. Education supplements weakness, and enables the individual to compete with strength. The world regards nothing more desirable than usefulness; nothing so displeasing as inability. The main point under review, is that the development of the ethical personality of women, secured by their

higher and professional education, during the last half century, has given an impetus to the march of progress unparalleled in human history.

The advent in Toronto of Dr. Emily Howard Stowe opened the medical profession to women. Dr. Stowe was the first Canadian woman to practice medicine in Canada, born, and educated in Ontario, a teacher by profession. Previous to marriage, Dr. Stowe was a principal in a public school in Brantford, an unique position for a young woman in those days. Subsequent to Dr. Stowe's marriage she determined to carry out a long-cherished purpose, that of preparing for a medical career. To accomplish this result Dr. Stowe was obliged to go to New York City, graduating from the Woman's New York Medical College, she then returned to her native land and decided to settle in Toronto. By temperament, Dr. Stowe was pre-eminently, a pioneer, and reformer; not alone in teaching and medicine, but in all moral and social reforms; her great courage, and fortitude, amidst all discouragements, was truly remarkable; failure in any project impossible, for to her the meaning of the word was unknown. Ever ready to espouse any cause, no matter how unpopular, if that cause were characterized by justice and right. A woman, who lived at a time when but few opportunities presented for women, and who passed her life in a constant endeavor to better conditions for all oppressed classes; but who stood unswervingly, for freer

and larger opportunities for women, as her efforts in opening Toronto University to women will testify. One, who found a world to conquer and who left the world better for her having lived; a truly great reformer.

Dr. Stowe's daughter decided to adopt her Mother's calling, that of medicine, and was the first woman to study and graduate in medicine in Canada, from Victoria University in 1883, and similar to all pioneers, the pathway of the girl graduate was not strewn with roses. These difficulties, made such a direct appeal to one sympathetic, and truly chivalrous beholder, Dr. Michael Barrett, Professor of Physiology, Toronto University, that he espoused the cause of medical women. Dr. Barrett, while convinced of the adaptability of women for a medical career, was averse to co-education in medicine, and thought that separate facilities should be provided. These sentiments held by Professor Barrett and other sympathizers, resulted in the calling of a public meeting, June 13th, 1883, in Shaftesbury Hall, under the auspices of the Woman's Suffrage Club. Hon. Justice Patterson in the chair. Dr. Michael Barratt ably presented the question, and after considerable discussion, Mr. James Beatty, Q.C., M.P., moved,—“that medical education for women is a recognized necessity, and consequently facilities for such instruction should be provided.” This resolution was seconded by The Rev. Dr. King, who in seconding the motion contended,—“that the establishment of

such a school was a public necessity and in the interests of the community." In the course of Dr. Barratt's address, the basis for the new college was fully outlined. There was to be a board of directors to consist of four members of the faculty, and three women; the latter to be chosen by subscribers to the endowment fund. The board of directors to have the nomination, for election by the faculty, of future incumbents of professional chairs, such incumbents may be duly qualified women. It was further moved by Dr. James Carlyle,—“that the organization of the Woman's Medical College, as explained by Professor Barrett and others, meets the present necessity for women's medical education; and this meeting approves and recommends that steps be taken to secure the requisite financial aid.” This motion was seconded by Professor Thomas Kirkland of the Normal School. A committee was appointed consisting of:—

The Rev. John King, D.D.	Mrs. James Gooderham
Dr. James Carlyle	Mrs. A. V. Lauder
James Beatty, Q.C., M.P.	Mrs. S. F. McMaster
Prof. Michael Barrett	Mrs. MacEwan
Mrs. John Miller	

The first board of trustees was duly appointed by subscribers:—

James Beatty, Q.C., M.P., Chairman
Rev. Principal Caven
Dr. Adam Wright
Dr. Irving H. Cameron
Mrs. James Gooderham
Mrs. John Harris
Mrs. MacEwan, Secretary

The outcome, the Woman's Medical College was established and opened October 1st, 1883. Mayor of Toronto in the chair. Opening address delivered by Prof. Barrett. The first faculty appointed were the following:—

- Prof. Michael Barrett, M.A., M.D., Dean—Institutes of Medicine
- George Wright, M.A., M.B.—Practice of Medicine
- I. H. Cameron, M.B.—Surgery
- A. H. Wright, B.A., M.B., M.R.C.S., England—Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children
- A. McPhedran, M.B.—Materia Medica and Botany
- J. T. Duncan, M.B.—Anatomy and Microscopy
- R. A. Reeve, B.A., M.D.—Diseases of the Eye and Ear
- R. B. Nevitt, B.A., M.D.—Sanitary Science
- Augusta Stowe Gullen, M.D.—Demonstrator of Anatomy
- F. Krauss, M.B.—Medical Jurisprudence and Toxicology
- A. R. Pyne, M.D.—Chemistry

The first session started with three students in attendance. In 1887 the college sustained a severe loss in the death of the indefatigable, much beloved Dean, Professor Barrett, whose sympathetic and unselfish kindness could always be relied upon, a warm friend and counsellor, one who sorrowed with sorrow, and rejoiced with joy, whose sudden death was a personal and irreparable loss to many, as well as a great calamity in educational circles. The college was fortunate in securing the co-operation of Dr. A. McPhedran, who was appointed Dean, but who unfortunately, resigned in a

short period, owing to the pressure of professional and academic work. Dr. R. B. Nevitt was chosen successor, and remained faithful to his trust until the closure of the college in 1906. In 1888 the staff was re-organized and the present building erected in 1890; with a professional staff of twenty-four, of whom four were women. Of the self-sacrifice, devotion to a cause, of the years of arduous toil, with little or no monetary remuneration on the part of the faculty, it is not my purpose to enlarge or emphasize; but if the academic record of the graduates, as attested by the honor lists of Trinity and Toronto Universities, if success in medical practice, scientific achievement, public appreciation, and the positions of honor that so many are creditably filling as superintendents of hospitals for mentally or physically diseased, appointments on hospital staffs, and as lecturers and professors in connection with colleges and universities, or as medical missionaries, devoting their energies and their lives, finding their happiness only in work accomplished, sinking, or forgetting, the personal note, in alleviating and bettering the conditions that surround and envelop poor secluded women in India, Persia, Ceylon, China and Japan; if these results are recompense, then indeed, are the faculty abundantly re-imbursed. No greater encomium, no finer eulogy, can be passed. They served humanity, and were of service, but change, constant change, is a law of the Universe; so let us feel no sorrow at the new order of pro-

cedure. The women themselves have abundantly answered all adverse criticism; have proven their right to exist, to recognition, and in all avenues of life where there is need for work, and wrongs to be righted, do we find the scientifically trained mind, and sympathetic hand of the medical woman. Yet in defiance of these facts, after twenty-two years of service, it was deemed advisable to close the doors of the Ontario Medical College for Women in 1906. Various were the determining, and contributory causes, for this radical change, the chief determining factor, that Toronto University was a co-educational institution. The spirit of the age is monopolistic. Small medical, or preparatory colleges, are not consonant with prevailing thought, and their death knell has been sounded. It is conceded that the interests of the student, the profession, and the public, are best attained by university life, and university training. The greater facilities afforded, concentration of work, combined with a reduction of expenditure in time and energy, constitutes an alluring academic picture; and compensates for the loss of the personal interest and help from teacher to taught. Evolution proceeds, through the individual, the evolution of the individual, is ultimately perfection of the whole. Nature is dual, and in all departments and avenues of life, men and women, are intended to be co-workers, co-mates and co-equals. The order of the hour is co-operation, and good fellowship. Young men and women, through

co-education, are learning to have a clearer understanding, and a greater respect for each other, intellectually and morally. The world is full of needs, replete with problems, and demands men and women, who are imbued with hopes, enthusiasm, with well-trained active minds, yet withal, charitable, large-hearted, purposeful, a finer, greater, type of manhood and womanhood united by a community of interests, their destiny the evolvement of mankind.

APPENDIX

It may be of interest to know that when the College was absorbed in the University of Toronto, the Teaching Staff was composed of the following:—

- R. B. Nevitt, Dean—Professor of Clinical Surgery.
J. T. Duncan—Professor of Anatomy and Professor of Ophthalmology and Otology.
Augusta Stowe-Gullen—Professor of Diseases of Children
Jas. F. W. Ross—Professor of Gynaecology
D. J. Gibb Wishart—Professor of Rhinology and Laryngology
T. F. McMahan—Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine and Professor of Clinical Medicine
G. B. Smith—Professor of Therapeutics and Pharmacy.
G. S. Cleland—Assoc. Professor of Anatomy, Demonstrator of Anatomy.
B. E. McKenzie—Lecturer on Applied Anatomy, Associate Professor of Surgery (Orthopedics).
R. Shawe Tyrell—Professor Medical Jurisprudence.
H. T. Machell—Professor of Obstetrics.
Graham Chambers—Associat  Professor of Medicine and Professor of Dermatology.
Lelia A. Davis—Demonstrator of Pathology.
Jennie Gray—Associate Professor of Gynaecology.
R. J. Dwyer—Lecturer on Nervous Diseases.
A. B. Eadie—Professor of Sanitary Science and Professor of Physiology.
Ida W. Lynd—Lecturer in Materia Medica, Junior Demonstrator of Anatomy.
Charles B. Shuttleworth—Lecturer on Surgery and Clinical Surgery.
Harold C. Parsons—Professor of Pathology and Clinical Microscopy.

- E. Leslie Skinner—Lecturer in Obstetrics and Demonstrator in Gynaecology.
- W. J. McCollum—Lecturer in Medicine.
- G. Silverthorn—Professor of Surgery and Lecturer on Clinical Surgery.
- W. McKeown—Lecturer on Clinical Surgery.
- Rowena G. D. Hume—Lecturer in Bacteriology and Laboratory Assistant in Pathology.
- Minerva M. Greenaway—Lecturer on Diseases of Children.
- Jean M. Willson—Lecturer on Medical Psychology.
- Chas. J. Copp—Lecturer on Toxicology and on Clinical Medicine and Surgery.
- Helen MacMurchy—Junior Demonstrator in Anatomy, Lecturer in Medicine.
- E. Stanley Ryerson—Lecturer in Clinical Surgery.
- Eleanor Lucas—Assistant in Anatomy.
- Isabella S. Wood—Assistant in Anatomy.
- Charles McKenna—Demonstrator in Surgery.

Possibly some tribute may not be amiss. The Staff had served long and faithfully, they had given of their best and had been loyal to the interests of the College, and the cause of Medical Education for Women; while the able Secretary, Dr. D. Gibb Wishart whose executive ability and continued faithfulness to the interests of the Students had made it possible for the College to exist in defiance of the very greatest obstacles.

“To plow, to pray, to plant is to prophecy, and the Harvest answers and fulfills.”