

# The Revolution.

Lectures of Dr. Anna Densmore  
The Revolution, March 19, 1868

## LECTURES OF DR. ANNA DENSMORE.

NEW YORK, March 18, 1868.

### *Errors of the Revolution :*

WHEN reading your valuable paper this morning my attention was specially drawn to two articles, one entitled "The One Thing Needful," the other "Child Murder."

In the first article we find these expressions! "There is much, very much to be said to women that cannot be printed, that must come from thoroughly taught women to their sisters. And until it is said, and the truths acted upon, the world must continue to suffer. Only woman can save us."

While inwardly commenting upon the force of the above quotation it seemed to me that perhaps you might not be aware that there is a movement now in successful operation in our own city that is destined to do more for women in the way of wide spread physiological knowledge among them than has ever been accomplished.

Dr. Anna Densmore, of our city, delivered a course of lectures to ladies, at Bunyan Hall, in the month of January last, which were more largely attended than any course of scientific lectures on medical topics ever given in this city.

Many of the teachers in our public schools were present, and both principals and subordinates were much delighted with the valuable instruction afforded them. At the close of the course, Dr. Densmore proposed to form a class for teachers exclusively, to qualify them to instruct young women and girls in those departments of Physiology and Hygiene, that are specially important to their future as wives and mothers, and in the language of your Boston correspondent, to impart that kind of knowledge "that must come from thoroughly taught women to their sisters." 'Tis a verity in this connection that "only woman can save."

She should present this topic for our consideration, she said, because it is the one least understood, and the one of all others necessary to be well comprehended in order that the duties and responsibilities of maternity and child culture should be realized in sufficient force to compel a radical change in the wifhood and motherhood of American women.

Further assuring us that it is only in the light of such knowledge that young women can expect to cope with temptation successfully under all the various forms in which it is disguised, and that it is only necessary for women to know themselves thoroughly, in all that pertains to the varying attributes of girlhood, wifhood, and maternity; for true morality to attain a sound enduring foundation, against which the artifice of past times can make but a light impression. And that to ignorance of the laws that govern her life in all these particulars, are due the sad advances that Frivolity, Invalidism and Crime, have made in all communities of women.

reading the article on "Child Murder," I could not repress the wish that the whole world could have heard Dr. Densmore's remarks at Bunyan Hall upon that theme. Those who had the privilege will never forget the startling effect of the truths that she revealed relative to the primitive and ever present vitality of the developing embryo, as evidenced by the fainting of several self-convicted participators in the crime of premeditated child destruction before birth.

And now, I should not be true to my womanly instincts if I failed to write a few of those things that your Boston correspondent would probably class as among those that should be taught by women, but not written.

And I do it, because I am sure that women would rarely dare to destroy the product of conception if they did not fully believe that the little being was devoid of life during all the earlier period of gestation.

This was my own impression, and I know that the majority of women have never had any other opinion. In fact, we have been taught it from our mothers.

But Dr. Densmore demonstrated to us fully and clearly that the fulfillment of life processes were going on from the very beginning of embryonic development, and showed us how, step by step, was added bone, muscle and nerve, and that even before any intimate connection was made between the little structure and the parent, that by the process of endosmosis an albuminous product that was furnished by the mother was absorbed and nourished the embryo to the extent of adding to its substance, and forming distinct enveloping membranes that continued to develop and remain as permanent structures till the child was born. And that even before the mother could assure herself that she was to wear the crown of maternity by realizing the movements of the child, that the educated ear of the physician could often distinguish the beating of its heart. These are the facts that women need to know.

We have not such an amount of inherent depravity, nor such a degree of reckless daring in our composition, nor such a deficiency in the motherly instinct and other elements that go to make up the true woman, as to lead us into the commission of this most deadly crime realizing it to be so.

Give us knowledge before accusing us of crime, and do not forget to gauge the calibre of our sins by the light furnished to guide us.

Do not tell us that it is indelicate to know ourselves, and then ask us to discharge our responsibilities to ourselves and our children in a manner creditable to us and them and acceptable to the Almighty!

Let every God given function be stripped of the mysterious mantle with which the darkened mind of man has enshrouded it, and we shall no longer, wittingly or unwittingly, stain our hands with the blood of the innocent.

A TEACHER.

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are due the sad advances that Frivolity, Invalidism and Crime, have made in all communities of women.

I can assure you that we were deeply touched, as well as interested, by the earnest appeal made to us as teachers to improve the large and valuable opportunities that our position and extensive intercourse with the young and others of our sex can command, to carry on the work of Physiological training on a large and successful scale.

Every woman physician, she said, should herself be a teacher, and make it a cardinal rule to spread the knowledge she has gained, in reference to the prevention of disease and the possibility of imparting better constitutions to our children than is now done. But, from the nature and multiplicity of their professional duties, they could not as a class be as largely useful in this direction as they ought and desired to be, unless they could make available the talent and energy of some other class of women that could carry on the work continuously, after suitable preparation, from the point where the woman physician was compelled by circumstances to relax her efforts.

She then demonstrated to us in a forcible and happy way that we were the great connecting link between women physicians and the vast numbers that were perishing from want of instruction, and the only class of women that could make such knowledge readily and extensively available.

The class was formed in a few days, and we number from one hundred and fifty to two hundred, I do not know the exact number.

The Board of Education granted us the use of the main hall of the Twelfth street Public School by a unanimous vote, and we are progressing rapidly, to say nothing of the engrossing interest with which the entire subject is invested by Dr. Densmore.

All teachers are cordially invited to partake of these advantages without money and without price, and I will add that the hall will seat more than two hundred. In-

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## MEDICAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN.

### ORGANIZATION OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

At a meeting of the Corporators of the Cleveland Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital for Women, the following Board of Trustees was appointed: Stillman Witt, T. S. Beckwith, Bolivar Butts, N. Schneider, M. D., T. S. Lindsey, Mrs. D. R. Tilden, Mrs. S. F. Lester, Mrs. Peter Thatcher, Mrs. C. A. Seaman, M. D., Mrs. M. K. Merrick, M. D., Mrs. S. D. McMillan, Mrs. M. B. Ambler, Mrs. Lemuel Crawford, Mrs. Henry Chisholm, Mrs. G. B. Bowers.

At a subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees, the following officers were chosen:

Mrs. C. A. Seaman, M. D., President.

Mrs. S. F. Lester, Vice-President.

Mrs. M. B. Ambler, Secretary.

Mrs. S. D. McMillan, Treasurer.

Institutions like the above multiply. We quite agree with *Harper's Weekly* that, notwithstanding the most determined hostility to the demands of the age for female physicians, institutions for their educational preparation for professional responsibilities are rapidly increasing. The ball first began to move in the United States, and now a female medical college is in successful operation in old foggy medical London, where the favored monopolizers of physic and surgery were resolved to keep out all new ideas in their line by acts of Parliament. But, the ice-walls of opposition have melted away, and even in Russia a woman has graduated with high medical honors.

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