

Life's story / Mary E. Ryerson Butin

LIFE'S STORY MARY E. RYERSON BUTIN, MD. MADERA, CALIFORNIA -1930

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INTROSPECTION

The qualities most dominant in my nature and vigorously manifest early in life, were a repudiation of the false in friends or material things and a demand for the true in both, which has been largely realized; a confidence and trustful belief in people, not altogether to be regretted, but which experience has modified; a spirit to seek other than well beaten paths in pursuance of an object: a love for the beautiful and artistic, common to most women; impatience of physical restraint in conventional dress, though never approving hoydenish or mannish ways; a keen sense of humorous and an exuberance of spirit, common to other members of my family, but from the seriousness of my nature, little exercised; virtues were inculcated in early life "line upon line" and "precept upon precept" and thoroughly engrafted.

I have not accomplished all that I would like to have done or as much as I had planned to do, but hope there has been some resultant good to others and an advanced objective for women. Between its narrow confines, the stream of my life has run deep and swift; from its placid smiling surface, none might guess how deep the waters, how strong the current or how dangerous the rapids have been. My joys have been heightened and sorrows mitigated as I have striven to aid others and all life in consequence has taken on a greater depth of meaning. I am convinced that no woman ever studies medicine or pursues the practice of it, but who is called to higher purposes.

There has never been a moment in my life that I have regretted the decision made so early in life, or a time when I have not felt devoutly thankful for my knowledge of medicine.

Sincerely, Mary Ryerson Butin M.D.

Madera, California August 1, 1932

LIFE'S STORY

'Tis many a mile, many a smile and many a sadness too, since as a happy carefree child I grew to young womanhood and in the words of that old song, I can say, "Now as grave and reverend Seniors, look we der the verdent past."

IOWA

I was born on a farm in Iowa, my parents having come there in the late fifties from New Jersey. I had three brothers, who, together with myself, were the objects of much careful bringing up, and as the only girl, I suspect I may have developed an age.

My father was instrumental in establishing a school close to our home and memories of school on long benches, fireside studies in winter and friends then made, linger with poetic and sentimental halo. One of my teachers later said that he had seldom seen no joyous a nature.

My mother, practical and sensible, was often called to help the neighbors in times of illness and realized the usefulness of a trained and educated woman and early in my life taught me to say when I grew up I was going to be a doctor. It was a strange freak of fate which would make one choose a career in which there was so little to provoke levity or occasion calling for it.

When we were nearly grown, my people moved to Wilton that we might have the advantage of better schooling, where I entered the high school and graduated at the head of the class. Later I attended a sectarian school, in which my two older brothers had proceeded me, which would now be known as a Liberal Arts Institution and in which I acquired much of the moral trend which has characterized my life. After two and a half years there, I sought and obtained a teacher's certificate. Having taught school two terms, I was offered a position in the high school from which I had graduated, but after a conference with my mother, who encouraged me, I decided to take up the study of medicine. When I made my decision known, my schoolmates were agast, that I, who had always seemed so different, should take so decisive a step or be of so determined a character. To study and practice medicine was to them a matter of amazement.

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About this time there came to our town, to lecture, a noted woman physician, Dr Anna Longshore Potts, of a prominent family in Philadelphia. I attended her lectures with my mother, resolved to

meet her ideals, and she no doubt influenced my later life, and at no time in after life did I realize the the gravity of my professional career, or the responsibilities of every physician.

There were two other doctors in the office of our family physician, all of whom gave me much encouragement in taking up the study of medicine and in preparation I commenced the study of Anatomy, Physiology and Materia Medica, reciting daily. For my first term I entered the Medical Department of the State University of Iowa City, a coeducational institution, with one hundred students, ninety men ten women. The studies were hard, attendance at all the lectures was obligatory, and the professors spared us not, seemingly to test our endurance or to discourage us in the study. The ordeal was especially trying for me as I was unaccustomed to hearing delicate subjects discussed before both sexes. My mother visited me and I took her to all the classes, clinics and dissecting rooms, she was enthusiastic, instead of being shocked and said she would have liked nothing better than to have had my opportunities.

I think I did fairly well in my studies, and made a favorable impression on my professors, who probably thought from my make up I would not stick to it. The Senior class asked me to be one of the ushers at their graduation. Though this was somewhat of a menial position, I was quick to accept it, as in this case, a mixed school, the invitation to do so was an honor and fostered the spirit of comradeship. After the graduating exercises, I attended a theatre party with one of the newly fledged doctors.

I was helped greatly during the experiences here by two sisters who had preceded me the year previous, Anna and Emma Braunworth, who both graduated from that institution, one now practicing in Chicago, the other in Muscatine, Iowa. There are some advantages to be had in attending a mixed school of medicine, but in my case I do not see where it would have been a benefit or helped me in private practice. There are facilities to be had and a freedom of action in a medical school for women alone which in a mixed school one can not feel free to accept.

For my second year I chose to enter the Womans Medical College of Chicago for the Northwestern University. I was much happier here where there were one hundred of women students. Dr Wm Byford was President and all the faculty were men except two, Dr. Sarah Hacket Stephenson and Dr Marie Mergler, both of whom were fine specimen of 3 were examples of fine and successful women doctors. I became prosector for the class of Anatomy, a very helpful experience, with Dr. Fannie Diokenson, now a well known physician of Chicago. I graduated in 1881 with a class of nineteen. My decision to become a physician encouraged and influenced two of my school girl-friends at Wilton, both of whom entered the Women's Medical College with me and graduated from it. They were Dr. Mary Hollister, oculist, Chicago, deceased, and Alice Auten Fine of St. Paul, Minnesota. After graduation, I entered the Southside Presbyterian Hospital as resident physician. After being there a

time I went home for a vacation where I found one of my sister-in-laws ill and extended my stay on that account, finally settling where she lived in Nebraska.

NEBRASKA

Two of my brothers and their families were do well known in Dorchestor where they lived, that I soon found I could obtain a good practice. I rented an office and started out in earnest. I joined the Nebraska State Medical Society and was the first woman to have membership in it. I attempted my first convention in Hustings. Upon reaching the door of the convention, I was awed by the large number of men present and turned away to gather courage to go in, but was noticed by the secretary who had received my application and was expecting me. He sent a messenger and I was escorted to a seat beside the President. I soon felt at ease with them. The next year at Omaha, I was elected First Vice-President of the State Medical Society and occupied the chair on several occasions.

I read my journals assiduously, contributing occasional articles, the title of one in particular I remember, "Care of the Perineum in Labor", which I suspect has been the subject of more contributions to medical journals than any other subject. I was much in earnest, hoping to give my patients the best and latest to be had in the field of medicine and conscientiously devoted myself to my cases. I met with opposition from resident doctors, more than if I had been a man I suspect, and could "beat 'em up", though I succeeded without that. One incident in one of my earliest obstetric cases, I will relate. A child was born without a thumb on one hand. Stories of uncertain source came to my ears that I somehow had been responsible for the absence of that thumb. Several years later it was a satisfaction to me to refuse to financially help the doctor responsible for this tale to leave town when he had come to ask me to do so. I also justified myself by thinking he might say I paid him to go.

One doctor there was though, who did not oppose me, but who helped me on every occasion. It was a young doctor who had come to town for the same reasons I had, relatives. He was 4 a typical Caucasian, handsome and dignified, but his being so fine looking made no impression on me, for I had married my profession and said so. As might be supposed, however, consultations were frequent on both sides.

One of my experiences was so unusual, I will relate it here. A patient of mine, the wife of a merchant, died of tuberculosis, then so fatal. She left an infant six weeks old. The day after the funeral the husband called the settle the bill. He had the reputation of being penurious and upon being told the amount of the bill, I saw a peculiar look pass over his countenance. I remarked, "I hope you do not find the bill too much". He said, "No, but I thought perhaps you would take her place". Well, to

say I was stunned, would be to put it mildly. I refused, telling him I had married my profession. He urged me several times to think about it, mentioning the baby; and he also said, "Ask your brothers if I am not well-to-do and if you would not be making a wise choice"? With energy I replied that I would not marry a man if he were made of gold, at the same time beginning to think I had a freak to deal with and how I could best get him out of the office and by a ruse, succeeded. (The man married later and I was their family physician and often wondered if he ever told his wife of this episode) Strange to relate, in less than a year, I married the aforesaid handsome young doctor, who was practically without a cent.

Financially, Dr. J. L. Butin and I commenced at the bottom of the ladder. Both of us were seriously minded, perhaps too much so, though there is little in the medical profession to grow hilarious about; nevertheless, there may be mirthful incidents if one is at all inclined to see them. We had many cases of respiratory and gastre intestinal diseases due to climatic conditions in Nebraska. At one time in winter. I had ten cases of lung diseases in children, ranging from congestion to lebar pneumonia. Typhoid fever in summer was also frequent. People and doctors know nothing of its origin comparatively to what we know now. We had food success in both diseases due, we always thought, to the exercise of common sense in treatment.

The weather was rigerous in winter and in summer we were out when big black clouds threatened and the lightning was vivid. He were out in winter when the temperature was more than ten degrees below sore, traveling over joy roads and snow. We had a pair of bronches which I drove and which looked, I have been told, as though they would run away with me. We also had a beautiful white Arabian pony, a perfect picture, which was too wild for me to drive. The branches had many an opportunity to run away 5 with me but they did not take it, seeming to exercise their benevolence in not doing so. On one occasion when the neck-yoke came loose at one end and it went flopping up and down while going down hill and at another time while scudding home before a storm, the lightning struck a nearby tree, the penies jumped, but continued their way with good horse sense.

One day there came to me a lovely young woman, Alma Lautronhizor, a teacher, who said she would like to study medicine. She commenced her studies with me and later graduated from the Women's Medical College where I had studied. She married Dr. Rowe, a graduate at the same time, of Rush Medical College. They located in Mississippi. Four lovely girls were born to them. She continued in practice of medicine, the beloved partner of her husband, until her demise.

In addition to the interest in my profession, I took an active part in the campaign for women's suffrage. I engaged in talks to and for the W.C.T.U. on Scientific Temperance Instruction. Chief among the advocates of suffrage was Mrs. Ada M. Bittenbonder, the editor of a paper in Beatrice, who later went to Washington with it. She took with her an Indian baby whom she had adopted by

the name of Zintin Lanuni, or in Indian language, "Lost Bird". Zintin, six months old, was found on a battlefield in the dead of winter, the only living creature after the Government troops had been sent to quell an attempt of the Sioux to leave the reservation. She had been kept from freezing to death by the warmth of her mother's body beneath which she had fallen.

The fall of 1890 found us all settled for winter; wood and coal in the collar, stoves up, warm clothing and the warm glow of the big base burner, burning night and day. Everything was in readiness for the months to come. One right, early in November, about two o'clock in the morning, the witching hour for babies, a messenger came for me to go about five miles out in the country on the Blue River to attend to a case of confinement. Owing to the fact that the roads were like graters from frozen mud, which made it too dangerous to drive horses over them, it was agreed that I should go and return with the man. Though wrapped warmly as never before, I became thoroughly chilled going over so that I did not get warmed through the several hours I was there. The arrival of the baby happened without incident.

The morning dawned beautifully bright and clear. Frost covered the ground. After breakfast, about eight o'clock we started on our journey homeward, driving another 6 team. Silence prevailed on our journey for a while and it was then that my thoughts were busy and I suddenly broke the silence with the exclamation, "I am going to California and I am going in two weeks"! The newly-made father who was driving replied, "Oh no, you will think differently soon", but my convictions were born of introspection and of prospect and I said, "We have five long cold hard months ahead of us and I am chilled through from my ride out last night". My other reasons for wanting to go to California, were that Doctor had had several spells of billiary colds due, we thought, to exposure in the cold weather. I thought he would never be able to endure the long rigorous months to come. Doctor had at one time visited California and always wanted to return. We had invested in an alluring colony scheme and Madera, California, which later failed and we lost our interests. My thoughts naturally turned there.

When I reached home I went into the room where a bright fire was burning and burst out with exclamation, "Doctor, I am going to California and am going in two weeks—are you going with me"? He looked at me quizzically and in amazement, saying, "If you really mean it, it is a go". I will see the new doctor who has just come to town and try to sell out to him". With emphasis I replied that I meant it and gave my reasons. From that moment we began to get ready. When night came, I thought of so many things which had to be done, that I tumbled and tossed and it was not until midnight that I resolved that it would be impossible for us to go in two weeks, but not relinquishing my determination, settled it in my mind by saying we would go as soon as we could get ready and not until then did I fall asleep. Among other things to be done, I knew I must go to Iowa to see my

dear old father and mother whom likely I would never see again. When the time came I arranged to visit my parents for two weeks and during that length of time not one word to pain them escaped me of our going so far away. The sadness was all mine and borne in silence. In the meantime, Doctor was busy settling accounts, selling off and packing, so that upon my return to Dorchester, we immediately started for California. It was just as I thought fate would have it, for I never did visit my home again.

CALIFORNIA

Westward over the Rookies and through the wonderful Royal Corge, through the snow sheds of the Sierras, we left behind us all the cold and snow which those who live in cold climates know; passing to the verdent valleys and spring-like activities of the Sacramento Valley. Upon arriving in San Francisco and viewing for the first time the Pacific 7 Ocean and to Golden Gate, I wired my parents of our whereabouts, and it was their first knowledge that we were in California. We arrived in Madera, the city of our destination, January 10, 1891, just two months instead of two weeks after my last case of confinement in Nebraska. At our first Sunday Church Services, the preacher took from his text, "Our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places", and as the weather was warm and pleasant, the wild flowers blooming, it seemed a veritable truth and we took it as prophetic of our life here. In some respects these words have proven true, though not all the years have been what we could have desired them to be, but we have never regretted the change.

We soon obtained a living practice and met other people from the East, who like ourselves, were induced by the widely advertised John Brown colony scheme and had come to California.

Automobiles were unknown and not until years afterwards came into use. We drove horses and had a beautiful span of high stepping sorrels and two single driving horses, one of them the veritable "old dobbin", but in this case a beautiful dapple gray, on account of which we named Dottie and which, with phaeton, I made in absolute safety my nearby calls. It was with tears in later years that we consigned her to green pastures where she ended her days.

Many of our calls were to distant parts of the country, at times taking two or three days to make them. Then too, a call to one patient usually resulted in a neighborhood affair, for they all knew when a doctor was sent for and bunched their complaints. This was before nurses were employed in rural communities and we sent our major surgical operations to distant cities. Dr. Lois Worthington, new a successful practioner at Bakersfield, California and a graduate of Cooper's Medical College,

commenced the study of medicine with me, staying in the office and reciting daily as I had done in Wilton.

I was called at one time to a patient over fifty miles in the mountains. The roads were steep and difficult. I started out with the messenger and his team and background and his sister whom he was taking back home with him. Starting at five o'clock p.m., three of us rode in one seat all night. Arriving at the home of my patient about five the next morning and finding her exsanguinated from metrorrhagia, I determined to do a curettment before resting or breakfast. I will never forget, though wearied by the long hard night ride, the glories of that morning, high up in the Sierras as the sun rose over the mountain peaks, the clear beautiful stream of water which ran past the door of my patient. These treasures of nature made many a trip mean more than more 8 business. We started on our return trip about ten o'clock and I was prepared to enjoy the blooming buckthorn and manzanita for it was "Springtime in the Rockies". As going down was much easier and faster than going up, we arrived home about three o'clock in the afternoon. Upon reaching home, I found a call awaiting me to go in the opposite direction more than thirty miles to see a case of pneumonia in a small town on the railroad and I could go and return by train which I did before midnight.

Another case I will relate illustrating the life of the old time family doctor. The lovely and only daughter of a pioneer family was to be confined. She lived with her parents fifteen miles distant. I was sent for in the middle of the night. Labor had commenced and progressed slowly all day. With night approaching, I would have sent for counsel, but before a messenger could be dispatched and returned, the case might have terminated. About midnight I decided to wait no longer but to use what help I had, her father and husband. I applied forceps, giving her mother charge of the anaesthetic. After the patient was under control I proceeded to apply forceps and momentarily expected her mother to fail me as she had valvular disease, but no, when did you ever know a mother to fail when needed most. I delivered a fine baby boy, only to find the cause of dystocia to have been a marked case of torticollis (wry neck).

About this time doctor had a return of digestive troubles (gallstone) which had been a source of anxiety to us in Nebraska. He continued to make professional calls though, with smiling face in spite of the excruciating pains which the attack at times caused and, no doubt, he was worse off sometimes than those whom he went to see. Doctors are like that. He had a wonderful personality I have been told. In the sick room he always left the patient feeling better but with no hint of the wakeful nights of agony he endured, until at last we noticed he was falling and decided something must be done. He entered a private hospital in San Francisco for operation. Gall bladder operations were unknown west of the Rockies and rare farther east. The doctors hesitated to operate and while waiting for their decision, I was at home attending to his patients and mine. I went scurrying

around with team and driver in an effort to keep up the work of both; to say with what a heavy heart and smiling face, I too, without a hint of anxiety executed these duties, can better be imagined than described. I look at some of the boys and girls born at that time, now grown, and think of the difficult labor case I had given when they were born and the heavy I carried.

Here I must relate a peculiar happening: I was starting out one morning to make my calls. Dear old Dotty 9 waited at the gate. A music teacher, a woman in whose family I was always employed, was passing, but came out of her way to speak to me. "Dr. May, Dr. May", (her name for me) she said, "You have never told me of your business, but I know it all. Doctor is in San Francisco to be operated upon. If you have it done, he will die, not from the operation, but from the anaesthetic, he is too weak". Well, such a startling piece of information could hardly go unnoticed, so I took her into the house for questioning. I found that she did know a lot of things which I could never expect any person to know and though I could never forsake my medical knowledge for that of a psychic, yet, I found myself constantly thinking about what she had told me. It was Saturday. I was to be in San Francisco Monday morning at which time it had been tentatively agreed the operation should be performed. I was there. Doctor, weak and emaciated, begged that he might die or get well. Influenced by what my friend had told me, I asked that the operation might be deferred a day. Miraculous as it may seem, he was slightly better the next day and continued to improve day by day and the operation was never performed. Later he care home unexpectedly while we were just in the midst of the financial depression of the nineties, though he did not know it. I did not know where we could get the necessary money to have paid further hospitalization. He was weak of course, but sat in the office or at home and saw patients and prescribed for them. It was at this time that I received never again would we get so reduced financially as we were then and we have never been. How this was done might be the subject (and has been) of another chapter, but I will take it for granted that you will believe me when I say that we never have been in such financial straits. During the following four years we never pretended to ask a man to settle his bill. If he had the money, he paid it without being asked. If he did not, he could not pay, but always intended to pay, which I believe is slightly different from these times of depression, 1932.

I was making progress professionally and establishing confidence in women doctors while doing a general practice. Most of my cases were obstetric and diseases of women and children. My mother who lived here several years, must have felt gratified in having encouraged me to study medicine. It is a matter of rejoicing to me that she knew of my activities.

Seen after coming to Madera, we bought residence property upon which we are now living. We later built a modern house and beautified the grounds and also have growing on it the proverbial "vine and fig tree". The time also came when we had automobiles in place of horses and trained 10 nurses,

which heretofore we had no use for, I was never happier than when I had enough practice that I employed three and sometimes four nurses at one time.

DOMESTIC LIFE

We were dependent on hired help in and outside the house, so in consequence we come in close contact with people of many nationalities for this is a cosmopolitan country. Of the many whom we have had and who remained with us from two to twenty years, are seven, whom we enumerate as "our family". My husband's attitude toward them would not allow them to feel too menial, while early in life I had imbibed the idea that none should ever come within the radius of my circle without some resultant good to them. Therefore, with all the order of my nature and the vigor of my constitution, I set about prescribing effectually for their faults, if they had any. By a self established blue print. I sought to bring each one up to it, physically, financially, mentally and morally. None over left us without having had the chance to come up in this quartett of quality. No one will ever know just what "vigor of constitution" it required or how much of physically energy on my part was thus expended, at times too, when it was very trying as the duties of my profession were calling. A chapter devoted to some of them would make interesting reading and before which much fiction would pale into insignificance. My successes were glowing, my failures tragic. Some went down in the tide physically or morally before our eyes, while our hands were extended to save them. The hired girls (maids) who lived with us and married, made wonderful housekeepers and became mothers of fine children. Of this I am sure I am capable of judging. None who made their home with us ever did do without the opportunity to come up to higher ideals and their life taken on a greater depth of meaning.

MYRTLE

At one time at the County Hospital while my husband was in charge, there were admitted two young girls about fourteen and sixteen years of age. They were motherless and as I later said, worse than fatherless, for he was in the penitentiary under sad circumstances. The County Hospital was no place for them, but as no else seemed to want to take them, I said we would take the older one and do what we could for her, the sister being taken by another family. She was an American girl, but was brought up as a gypsy, her mother having run off with a tribe, taking the two girls. You can imagine some of the trials I had with her. She rebelled at restraint, neatness and order was not in her curriculum. She considered the house well kept if the center of a room was swept and things thrown in a corner. Breaking dishes 11 was her specialty and the cause of great glee to her. She was capable of feeling as once when particularly saucy to me, I said, "You are a poor little motherless girl

and worse than fatherless”, she burst into tears, repentant. She was affectionate and bubbling over with youth and spirits, rather pretty with dancing brown curls, and but for vagrant ways, attractive. She had little schooling but fortunately could read, which we encouraged, and she would regale us at meal time with vivaciously told tales from “Charley” Dickens as she playfully called him. One Easter, I told her if she would help make herself a dress, I would get her the material and a new hat. That Easter morning she started for Sunday School with an armful of lillies, curls dancing about her fair face, looking as fair as the roses in the garden. Later she made the touching remark to me: “You had a mother to do nice things for you—I never did”. She became a memorable character in our home.

FRED

On long drives, I took a book of verse or a fancied poem with which to employ myself over the monotonous miles. These I sometimes shared with my driver. Once a young German boy drove and took care of our horses. He returned years after saying that from the impetus thus gained from me, he had continued reciting poetry to men in bunk-houses and men's boarding houses after leaving us, until he became known by that means and sought after in higher circles. Finally through this means, he met and married the niece of Ella Wheeler Willcox whom he often entertained in his home.

While attending high school I had obtained a smattering of astronomy which knowledge I put into practice on my night rides. I sought out and could name all the constellations in this latitude, but as some of them require a stretch of imagination, my success in transmitting this knowledge to my drivers was not I fear, attended by such brilliant success as I imagined from the acquiescing “yes” they gave me, it was more to please me than the actual location of the constellations.

FUJI

There was brought to us one Christmas Eve by a former Japanese cook, one of those “Japanese school boys” who wanted to learn house work and go to school. His name being long and hard, we called him “Fuji”. From his gentle manners and unselfish ways, one could easily see that he had fine bringing up by his parents who lived in a beautiful home in Japan. He learned everything quickly and to drive the car was a delight to him. He was equally capable, as they all are, in school and we thought that he might join the 12 school band so bought him a cornet and gave him lessons. He showed a keen appreciation of our style of music and gave it its fine grades of expression. It was a grief to me that I ever was impatient with him, but I excused myself then, that I was feeling the

long strain of teaching and changes of the many different helpers which it had been necessary to have, for we could not always procure efficient cooks and housekeepers but we have had some very fine ones. Never having studied domestic science, I have been obliged to teach it, much of my life in my home. With him tragedy stalked our efforts. He grow rapidly. He was in his teens but towards the close of one school year showed lassitude and pallor. I took his temperature which showed a slight rise above normal daily and understanding this as doctors do, to us it was ominous and presaged trouble. After the close of school we began a diligent search for cause. We consulted many physicians and took the case up with the Fresno County Medical Society but as it is the case in rare instances, the search proved futile and we were left only to guess the cause to be one of obscure tuberculosis. We put him under the most favorable circumstances with a nurse and proper care for ten months, without improvement.

Finally we decided he best return to Japan where his anxious mother awaited him. We saw him off on the liner Shinyo Maru with his father, who was a cook in Fresno. The last thing we could do for him was to rent a steamer chair that he might sit on deck and as they sailed away, though, no doubt, too deep for words in his heart and ours, rang the words of Aloha which we had often sang together with cornet and piano. In time his father returned alone bringing with him a reclining bambo chair from his own home which we prize as it was a last bequest to us from Fuji, expressing I suppose, his appreciation of and in return for the steamer chair. His fatal illness and going away was end and tragical. Might we have done more to avert the tragedy of a young life thus to be snuffed out, compunctions of conscience more or less poignant, must be the lot of all who have to deal with such a case, though I do not know what more we could have done after we found what was supposed to be the cause.

THE BANK

My husband's life and mine had run parallel both in public and professional services for years and we did not contemplate any change or expect to rise by any other means than our profession.

One day one of the business men approached the doctor on the subject of organizing a new bank and proposed to make him one of the directors. I encouraged him. In the 13 long look ahead, we decided wisely. When the committee met, knowing everybody in the country as the doctor did from professional contact, knowing their financial pulse so to speak, instead of being a director he was made president. The First National Bank was organized and he has been at the head of it for over a quarter of a century. The bank building is an imposing structure on a prominent corner, built of the famed gray Madera Country granite; and the institution has had the confidence of the community

from the beginning. The bank has grown steadily and held its place in these trying times of universal depression—a tribute to Dr. Butin's integrity, sound judgment and sterling birth. He continued the practice of medicine as consulting physician only until in time from duties of the bank he had to relinquish it. To his credit, be it said, he has never felt this calling of the financial world to be so noble or exalted as the profession of medicine which brings one in contact with the best in human nature and I have often heard him say so.

HEALTH OFFICER

Another unexpected change came into my life. One hot summer day in August 1902, while waiting for patients, I was called to the telephone and informed that the County Board of Supervisors, then in session, had just appointed me Health Officer. As the position had been entirely unsought, it came as a complete surprise to me. It was an unusual position for women. It was the first instance of the kind in the State and I afterward learned, first in the United States. I was quick to see it was one in which women might have a distinctive field and open up a new channel for their activities. I adopted it as a sacred trust and resolved to demonstrate women's fitness for it; and put public service ahead of private interests. I could not have done this without financial loss had it not been for association with my husband in the office, who, while I was absent, attended to my calls. It is very obvious that another not so happily situated could have done so.

The office carried a small salary. Little had been done by former health officers but it was the law of the State to have one. I set about my now duties in true domestic style to put the house in order. I made it my first duty to require physicians to register births and deaths which is so obviously necessary and which had not been done in the Country before. I required then to report contagious diseases and which for the first time were quarantined. I inspected dairies; had cement floors put in milking sheds and cows tested for tuberculosis and required a low bacterial count and later pasteurization. I visited the slaughter houses situated on the outskirts of the town 14 from which offensive odors pervaded the evening air. They complied, after repeated urging to clean up and there has never since been further cause of complaint. I found the water of the city to be of the best source of supply, that is from deep driven wells; I had the sewer line extended and required attachments; I agitated the matter of a sewer farm and septic tank which then was a new device for sewerage disposal and we now have a septic tank on a sewer farm a mile from town. I required food products which were exposed for sale to be screened; inspected restaurants, many of which were run by foreigners and to whom a woman acting in the capacity of Health officer was a matter of curiosity and some resentment. Chinese were particularly dense and dilatory in complying with orders to clean up. Once I remember a Chinaman stood at a table with a sharp pointed cleaver in

his hand which he did not lay down while I was there inspecting closets from which mice scampered and sinks from which cockroaches fled from the light and from me fortunately. I sensed daggar-like looks from the workers, rather than caught then as I continued my business of inspecting cellars and back yards. I inwardly realized that there was danger and I might be the cause of "international complications 3 and resolved that I should never go alone again. After visiting these places the apparent cleanliness of barber shops almost made me pause. Had it not been for convictions borne in upon me by the keen eye of science, I could not have had the nerve to order sterilization of towels and all their equipment as a sanitary and necessary procedure.

To aid in enforcing these measures, the District Attorney prepared a set of thirty-five ordinances with penalty attached. They were recorded and are still in force. Upon recently reviewing them, I found a rather amusing one which seemed of doubtful utility at the time as a health measure as it forbade the sale of cigarettes to minors, but I was prevailed upon by the District Attorney to allow it to go with the others as he had framed them. I hope it has done some good. Another one, thought to have been very necessary at the time, was one which prohibited expectoration on side walks in public places. I had large placards posted in conspicuous places bearing that notice. The ethical value, anyhow, of this prohibitory measure, could never be doubted.

We had epidemics of all kinds every year. Scarlet fever so mild that it got into the schools unnoticed; diphtheria, measles and until pox also. The latter was the only one vaccinated against at that time and vaccination was a far more complicated measure than it is now. We had no school nurses and when small pox broke out in the community, vaccination was accomplished by myself with 15 the aid of other doctors. At one time, I had twenty three cases of small pox in a boarding house brought there by a passenger from the east unwittingly and communicated to the other boarders. Policing was done by men appointed from the community in those and other instances needing it. An epidemic of typhoid fever created consternation which occurred at the Sugar Pine Lumber Camp with fifty cases due to drinking polluted river water. Fortunately for me, the company took full charge of the situation. We had mad dog scares which required especial measures and an examination of the dog's brain for negri bodies. For this purpose, as in now done, the head was sent to the State Laboratory in Berkeley. Several times, I made examination of all the children in the city schools with the aid of the teachers as there were no school nurses. I planned on visiting all the schools in the County for this purpose and to the future time when I might also ask for and procure a garbage incinerator for the city and put out certified milk, though the milk supply was much improved.

Some of the pleasant times in connection with those years of public service were those at State conventions where I met other health officers of the State and Nation who were or have become

prominent. I resigned after holding the position for thirteen successive years as I contemplated a trip with my husband.

A TRIP

Our trip took us to many of the noted cities in the United States and short trips on both oceans. We visited relatives on the way going on to Dorchester, Nebraska, where we had commenced the practice of medicine and then to Lincoln and Omaha. We spent several days in Chicago, both going and coming and renewed acquaintances and scenes of my medical training; went to Niagra Falls and at Albany we took the day light steamer trip down the Hudson River to New York where we remained ten days and then took the old Dominion Line of steamers on the Atlantic to Norfolk, Virginia; of the Potomac to Washington where we remained several days. We visited many places of interest including Mt. Vernon and Arlington. We traveled the same route only between Chicago and Omaha, thence to Seattle and on Puget Sound to Portland then back to San Francisco. It was wonderful—all of it—a most memorable and delightful trip.

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OTHER ACTIVITIES

Situated as I was in the center of California and in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, far from the metropolis of San Francisco or Los Angeles where other women engaged in unusual occupations, it seemed encumbent on me, the only woman engaged in public activities to make the lead in matters of public and civic organization. In consequence I became active in the two campaigns for Suffrage. We carried the county for it both times. The first one I financed myself, engaged speakers and sent from them over the county with team and driver appearing where dates had been made for them in school houses and country stores. When near Yosemite Valley, the trip included a short detour out of our country to Yosemite Valley where my mother and myself joined and continued with the party taking part in the campaign at all places on our way back to Madera. During the second campaign two years inter, we were favored by having speakers of national reputation, Susan B. Anthony, Rev. Anna Howard Shaw and Mrs. Currio Chupman Catt, who later became president of the Women's Suffrage National Association and whom I had the pleasure of entertaining in my home. She afterward gave a very fine scholarly address and I was glad to claim her as an Iowa woman.

After the 19th amendment carried and women became citizens, I affiliated myself with the Democratic Party. Having lived close to the common people and acquiring a knowledge of their needs, in that way, I became democratic in principle. I was made a member of the County Central

Committee and also the State Central Committee. I was elected alternative delegate to the National Convention in San Francisco in 1919 and attended the convention in that capacity. I became active in both campaigns for Woodrow Wilson and we carried the country, previously Republican, for him by just the plurality which it took in the nation the last time to elect him president. I have among my treasured souvenirs a personally autographed letter from President Wilson regarding the campaign.

My husband had taken an active part in procuring Chautauqua for the city and we frequently entertained some of the speakers among whom at that time was the famous and beloved William Jennings Bryan who spent the weekend with us. It was shortly after his resignation as Secretary of the State and we thought he seemed particularly glad to find real friends. He made himself at home with the family informally and went around the house singing. "Throw out the Life Line" and other evangelical pieces. We had a phenograph record recorded by him and played it for him. It commenced "If the father deigns to touch with divine power, The cold and pulseless heart of a buried acorn, 17 Will he leave neglected in the Earth, the soul of man etc.

I have always aligned myself with the cause of prohibition and have been County Chairman several times for the department of Scientific Temperance Instruction. I was county chairman for the Women's Auxiliary for the Panama Pacific International Exposition and chose five women from our county whom I had long known and esteemed as my assistants. In this work and during the time of the Exposition, I met women of prominence in the state. I was county chairman for women in all the Liberty Loan Drives and helped the county "go over the top" each time. I have a souvenir of this work, a wonderfully made now German Helmet which I prize, presented to each of her county chairman by the state chairman, Mrs. Brainard of Los Angeles. At the time the drive for funds for the Boy Scouts was a national movement. I was appointed by President Wilson in the drive.

Locally, our town had tried to organize a Board of Trade, but each time failed. I felt that the growing ad prosperous city should have one, drew up resolutions favoring an organization of that kind, solicited signatures among the business men and obtained the required number of signers and this resulted in an active Chamber of Commerce which is functioning splendidly. I took the lead in securing for our town and county a course by professors of the State University and have at different times brought men and women of prominence here to lecture.

I have always maintained my interest in and for the medical profession, attending conventions and special courses whenever I could. I am a constant reader of all the medical journals which we have taken for years and pride myself in keeping pace with the progress in medical lore. I was the first woman to join the Fresno County Medical Society of which Madera County was then a part and read a paper at that time on all Alkaloidal Medicine. The next morning's paper came out with the starting headlines, "Women to the Fore", and an account of a paper read by a beautiful brown haired woman.

I have since served in this society as Vice President and have been on some of its committees. I am a member of the State Medical Society, served on its welfare committee and was chosen alternate delegate at the American Medical Association meeting in San Diego in 1917. I am a member of the Medical Women's National Association and at one time was contributing editor to the Medical Women's Journal. I am a member of the Association of University of Women in San Francisco and of the 18 and of the Ina Coolbirth (Literary circle there and was also present at the ceremony crowning her post laurent of California. I am a member of the Parlor Lecture Club in Fresno, of the Business a Profession Women's Club, Fresno; a member of the Women's Improvement Club in Madera and the Business a Professional Women's Club of Madera, in all of which I have at times taken part.

From my experience derived during my years of Public Health Service, I have ever maintained a deep interest in it. I watched the unfoldment of a plan for the employment of a trained man who could devote his full time to it, which my experience has prompted me to believe is correct. In Yakima County, Washington, there had been an epidemic of typhoid fever, so general that every doctor was given the powers of a health officer with the result that the epidemic was soon under control. News of this circumstances came to the notice of J. D. Rockefeller. The experiment in the Southern States of a fully paid man for the eradication of hook worm was the success which lead the great philanthropic institution of the Rockefeller Foundation to incorporate it in its nativities. This plan of health work was adopted in California and soon after, through my efforts, in Madera County and it was among the first to employ a full time officer. I am at the present time and have been for several terms, District Chairman of the Federated Women's Club, which takes in seven counties. I have arduously promulgated the idea of a full time health officer and health unit in these counties with the result that several of the counties in my jurisdiction have adopted it and all of them will, I think, do so. I feel this is a distinct contribution to the cause of humanity and perhaps is as great an accomplishment as any that I have enumerated in these memoirs.

John L. Butin, M. D., Madera Calif

Mary Myerson Butin, M.D., Madera, Calif.

Doctors JOHN L. BUTIN, and MARY R. BUTIN MADERA CALIF

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ADDENDA

Mary Eva Ryerson Butin, M.D.

Born August 17, 1856, Wilton Junction, Iowa.

Graduated Wilton High School, June, 1873, Attended Wilton Academy, 1874.

Taught School 1875-1876.

Entered University Iowa State Medical Department, 1877.

Entered Womans Medical College Chicago, Ills, 1879.

Graduated W.M. College, March 1st, 1881.

Interned South Side Presbyterian Hospital 1881.

Located Dorchester Nebraska, 1882.

Admitted (first woman) to Nebraska State Medical Society 1882.

Married John L. Butin, M.D. May 8 1883.

Alma Lautzenhizer taken as student 1884.

Invested in Colony in California 1889.

Came to California Jan 10, 1891.

Lois Worthington taken as Student 1894.

Admitted to Fresno County Medical Society (first woman) 1895.

Admitted to California State Medical Society 1895.

Made Vice President of Fresno County Medical Society 1920.

Made Duty and County Health Officer (first woman) 1902-1913.

Dr John L. Butin made President First National Bank 1902. From 1880-1930.