

## INTRODUCTORY.

As was to be expected from a population so conglomerate as that which comprised the early and later settlers of Lancaster county and city, German, Scotch-Irish and Quakers, Protestants, Catholics, with a sprinkling of Jews, and, perhaps, still other nationalities, it was a community generous, kind-hearted and considerate, alive to the claims of the poor, the needy and unfortunate. As it was in the earlier periods of our history so it has also been in these latter days, only on a broader and more liberal scale, due to the greater wealth of the people, as well as to the growth of humane and enlightened public sentiment generally.

The paper which will be read to you this evening, and to which I have been asked to add a brief introduction, deals with the noble women of this community nearly a century ago, who, impressed with the needs and necessities of that class of whom it is written, "the poor ye shall have with you always," associated themselves for the purpose of supplying those needs and necessities so far as their personal efforts might attain that end.

The paper itself deals with the members of an association called by themselves "The Female Benevolent Society of Lancaster," organized out of motives of pure benevolence and

successfully carried forward in that spirit. As the complete story of the organization, as well as sketches of nearly all the signers of the document, will be presented to you by another hand, I shall take leave of it here, detaining you only a little while longer to call to your attention the fact that the early labors of those warm-hearted and sympathetic women have been supplemented during the century by the generous deeds and eleemosynary services of many who succeeded them, showing that our people have always been alive to the welfare of the deserving and unfortunate among them.

### **The Stevens Industrial School.**

As the most recent example, I beg leave to direct your attention to that finely-conceived idea of Thaddeus Stevens—an industrial school for the education and training of orphan boys, and the splendid structure now nearing completion. He left all his estate to this worthy purpose, some \$80,000, to which the State has added \$100,000 more. Having thus become a State institution, its success and perpetuity are assured, let us hope, for all time to come.

### **The Long Home.**

A few years older and now in the full tide of successful operation is that splendid institution in the western part of the city, "The Widow and Single Woman's Asylum," better known as the "Long Home," conceived by the late Judge Henry G. Long and successfully carried out by his daughter in a spirit of filial affection and reverence that itself is an enduring monument to her memory. An endowment of \$373,000

is a guarantee that this home shall endure during the years to come.

### **The Needlework Guild.**

The Lancaster Branch of the Needlework Guild of America was organized in 1894 by Mrs. Mary V. H. Steinmetz, President; Mrs. Elizabeth Brosius, Secretary.

The object of the Needlework Guild of America is to collect and distribute new, plain and suitable garments, to meet the great need of hospitals, homes and other charities, and to extend its usefulness by the organization of branches. The annual contribution of two or more articles (new) of wearing apparel or household linen, or a donation of money constitutes membership in a branch. Men, women or children may become members.

The Lancaster Branch for the year 1907 collected fifteen hundred and eighty-three garments, a gain of sixty over last year, and distributed them as follows: St. Joseph's Hospital, 153; General Hospital, 152; Y. W. C. A., 118; Ann C. Witmer Home, 166; B. B. Home, 54; reserved for local poor, 787.

Hon. President, Mrs. M. V. H. Steinmetz; President, Mrs. Geo. M. Franklin; Vice President, Mrs. Elizabeth Brosius; Secretary, Miss Anna Guthrie; Treasurer, Mrs. A. K. Spurrier.

Mrs. Brosius died on December 4, 1907.

### **The Poor Coal Fund.**

A still earlier public benefaction is the coal fund, founded by our former eminent citizen, President James Buchanan, who gave \$6,000, the interest of which was to be used for the purchase of coal for the needy poor of the city. To that early donation still other generous-hearted men have

given of their means until the invested funds now exceed \$33,000. As contributors to that fund the names of Buchanan, McEvoy, Reynolds, Long, Smith, Herr and Wright will fill a high niche in our local annals.

### **The Home for Friendless Children.**

The Home for Friendless Children, in the eastern end of the city, is an enduring monument to the generous liberality of our people to a class of unfortunates incapable of helping themselves. It has been in successful operation for many years and the amount of good it has done is incalculable. While our county remains to us the Home will stand.

### **Our Two Hospitals.**

In an enumeration of our eleemosynary institutions of the highest class the two hospitals, St. Joseph's and the General Hospital, deserve a foremost place. Too much praise cannot be given to these grand institutions. They have become an absolute necessity. We could not do without them. Few know of the wonderful amount of good they have done, or of the spirit of self-sacrifice, hard labor without fee or reward, and devotion they have entailed on those who direct them.

### **The Witmer Home.**

Among our local charities none deserves kindlier mention than the "Ann C. Witmer Home," on Columbia avenue, the unselfish gift of the kindly lady whom I knew so well fifty years ago to the people of Lancaster, as a memorial to an only son, who, if I mistake not, was lost overboard a ship in the Mediterranean many years ago. Such charities are not only a credit to

our community, but are a perpetual honor to the best there is in human nature itself.

### **County Institutions.**

The charities of Lancaster county at large are so generous as to merit all possible praise. The County Alms-house, where the aged and homeless indigent are kindly received and sheltered, the County Hospital and Insane Asylum, whose doors are always open to such as require their attention, all bespeak the careful consideration which is accorded to all comers irrespective of age, color, creed and condition. And it is a fact worth telling that the State authorities which regularly inspect the condition of these public institutions award ours high praise for their wise management and careful consideration the inmates receive.

### **Society for the Encouragement of Industry and the Suppression of Pauperism.**

Still another organization, small in numbers, but fervent in spirit, is the "Society for the Encouragement of Industry and the Suppression of Pauperism." Generally speaking, its work is along the lines of the other societies already mentioned. At the present time its resources are somewhat hampered by the loss of the greater part of its endowment fund through the failure of a recent financial institution, this being the second loss from a like cause.

### **Church Organizations.**

In addition to the various charitable guilds and organizations already enumerated there are many more of a less public character, but all render-

ing excellent service, which can be mentioned here only by name, such as the Children's Aid Society, the United Hebrew Charities, St. Vincent De Paul Society, The Woman's Guild, Lancaster Woman's Indian Association, St. James' Episcopal Orphanage, Bishop Bowman Episcopal Church Home and others. It must also be stated that almost every church organization in the city has one or more charitable organizations connected with it which do an immense amount of good within their respective spheres. Their work seldom comes before the public eye, but it is well known to be as remarkable for its extent as it is liberal, unselfish and successful.

### **Lancaster Charity Society.**

One of the more recent charitable organizations of this city, whose work is largely along the same lines as of the earlier society which will be the subject of the paper to be presented to you to-night, is the Lancaster Charity Society. This society was organized about four years ago. It has made a most excellent record for itself during that time. It not only makes distribution of clothing and other necessities, but looks after the general welfare of the sick and the needy, and strives to provide homes for deserted children, employment for the unemployed, and temporary lodging, with meals, for men and women. So excellent has been the work of this Charity Society that the municipality has intrusted it with the distribution of the beneficiary coal fund, mentioned elsewhere.

### **The Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A.**

Among the best known of our very excellent public institutions are the

Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, each now housed in homes owned by them, but, unfortunately, not yet wholly paid for. The good work they have done in the community during their existence is seen and recognized by all. Liberal men and women have given freely of their time and means to support them and carry on the work they have found awaiting them. They have exerted a powerful influence on the young life of our city, and wholly for good. The measure of their usefulness cannot be told in words. The stranger of either sex can find a welcome and more within their friendly walls. Their doors stand open at all times, and many a weary lot has been brightened and made happier through their instrumentality.

### **The Union Dorcas Society of Lancaster.**

I come now to the oldest association of this character still in active service among us, several of whose founders were also connected with that earlier organization soon to be brought to your notice. I refer to "The Union Dorcas Society of the City of Lancaster," chartered in 1858. I was privileged a few days ago to examine the charter and few remaining minute books, and will state a few facts gleaned from them. It seems that, while not chartered until 1858, it was in existence long before that time. The minutes of a meeting of the society, held on November 26th, 1845, state that it was organized thirteen years before, or in 1832. This almost creates the suspicion that it was, perhaps, a revival and continuation of that earlier organization about which we will soon hear. Like the latter, it was working

under an excellent constitution and body of by-laws. The earlier records are probably lost. The first minute book still extant begins in 1850. The amount of clothing and provisions distributed by it in those early days was very great, filling page upon page in the record.

The first name on the application for the charter was that of Mrs. Rosina Hubley, who was also a patron of the still earlier Society. The most illustrious women of the city were among its Presidents: Mrs. Dr. George B. Kerfoot in 1850, and again in 1853-1854; Mrs. Rosina Hubley in 1851; Mrs. John Baer in 1852; Mrs. Charles A. Heinitsh in 1855; Mrs. James Black in 1857; Mrs. H. Kendig in 1858; Mrs. H. S. Magraw in 1862; Mrs. John Metzger, 1864-65. At earlier periods Miss Catharine Yeates and Mrs. Dr. F. A. Muhlenberg. Among the more recent ones was Mrs. M. O. Kline, in 1870-1871. The President at the present time is Mrs. Sarah Rengier.

### **The Patriot Daughters.**

The Patriot Daughters, an organization which rendered such memorable services to our soldiers during the days of the Rebellion, was largely composed of members of the Dorcas Society. It was the first association of the kind formed anywhere in the North. During the entire period of the war it labored earnestly to provide the soldiers in the field and the sick and wounded in distant hospitals with the comforts and delicacies their needs demanded.

It is a notable fact that Mrs. Rosina Hubley, whose name is attached to the constitution of the "Ladies' Benevolent Society of Lancaster," founded in 1816, who was also a charter member of the Dorcas Society,

founded in 1832, was also the President of the Patriot Daughters, formed in 1861. Such a record stands unmatched in the history of the Commonwealth, and confers imperishable honor and credit on her. Her record is one which Lancaster should cherish for all time to come. May many in future years, inspired by the memory of her good work, be ready and willing to do likewise when the occasion arises.

F. R. D.

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