CHAPTER X

PETTICOAT MEDICINE

Women played their part in the fight against disease and death. Opinions differed then as now concerning their place in the profession, but the lives of some of these splendid women need only be read to prove their value as doctors.

"Godey's Lady's Book—The idea of introducing women into the medical profession is making rapid progress and gaining in favor with many through the country. In the August number of Godey's Lady's Book, Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, the editress, has taken up the subject and thus writes as earnestly as she thinks:

"There are a few self-evident propositions, and it would be questioning the common sense of mankind to doubt the general belief on these points. One is that women are better qualified by nature to take charge of the sick and suffering: a second, that mothers should know the best means of preserving the health of their children; and a third point is, that female physicians are the proper attendant for their own sex in the hour of sorrow."

"In speaking of the exclusion of females from the practice of medicine she says:

"'To this practice, and consequently, to the increased ignorance and helplessness of women, as regards their own diseases, and their children's well being, we believe is, in a great measure, to be attributed the increased and increasing constitutional ill-health of the American people.'"

—Texas Republican, Sept. 27, 1851.

FEMALE PHYSICIANS

By Fanny Fern

"The Boston Journal strongly advocates the introduction of females into the ranks of the Medical Profession. We consider the needle of woman more powerful than the pill box."

"Do you? Just suppose yourself a forlorn sick bachelor,
in the upper story of some noisy boarding house, deciding whether you will die or get well. Then—suppose just as you are at the last gasp, the door opens, gently, and admits not a great creaking pair of boots, containing an oracular, solemn M.D., grim enough to frighten you into a churchyard but a smiling, rosy-cheeked, bright eyed, nice little LIVE woman doctress, hey?

"Well, she pushes back her curls, throws off her shawl (Venus, what a figure!) pulls off her gloves, and takes your hand in those little fingers. Holy mother! how your pulse races!—She looks at you so compassionately from those soft blue eyes; lays her hand on your forehead, and then questions you demurely on your 'symptoms,' (a few of which she sees without any of your help!) Then she writes a prescription with those dainty little fingers, and tells you to keep very composed and quiet (just as if you could!) smooths the tumbled quilt—arranges your pillows—shades the glaring sunlight from your aching eyes, with an instinctive knowledge of your unspoken wants; and says, with the sweetest smile in the world, that she'll 'call again in the morning,' and so—the last fold of her dress flutters through the door; and then you crawl out of bed the best way you can—clutch a looking-glass to see what the probabilities are that you have made a favorable impression; inwardly resolving (as you replace yourself between the blankets) not to get quite well as long as she will come to see you! Well, the upshot of it is, you have a delightful and lingering attack of heart complaint.

"FOR MYSELF, I prefer prescriptions written by a masculine hand; shan't submit my pulse to anything that wears a bonnet!—The Standard, March 26, 1853.

NIGHT AIR

"An extraordinary fallacy is the dread of night air. What air can we breathe at night but night air? The choice is between pure night air from without, and foul night air from within. Most people prefer the latter. An unaccountable choice. What will they say if it is proved to be true that fully one-half of all the disease we suffer from is occasioned by people sleeping with their windows shut? An open window most nights in the year can never
hurt anyone. This is not to say that light is not necessary for recovery. In great cities night air is often the best and purest air to be had. I could better understand the shutting the windows in towns, during the day than during the night, for the sake of the sick. The absence of smoke, the quiet, all tend to make night the best time for airing the patient. One of the highest medical authorities on consumption and climate, has told me that the air in London is never so good as after ten o’clock at night. Always air your room then, from the outside air, if possible. Windows are made to open, doors are made to shut—a truth which seems extremely difficult of apprehension. Every room must be aired from without—every passage from within. But the fewer passages there are in a hospital the better. “Florence Nightingale.”

From *Houston Telegraph*, June 9, 1860.

DR. SOFIE HERZOG, daughter of a well-known Austrian surgeon, came to the United States from Vienna in 1886. She had just finished the best medical training that Europe offered at that time.

After practicing in New York for a short time, she moved to Brazoria, Texas, where she found, as she expected and wanted, a field of work that appealed to her love of a rigid, hardy, adventurous life. South Texas at that time was frequently harrassed by feudal battles and bandits—so much so that a large per cent of her first calls were to give emergency treatment to wounded men. Her skill as a surgeon was soon established, and she performed many operations to remove bullets. By a turn of fancy some years later, she began to take special pride in her skill as an extractor of bullets and soon she was stringing the little leaden missiles into a necklace. At the time of her death, July 21, 1925, she had acquired twenty-four of these beads and wore the necklace constantly. At her request this was placed in her casket.

Dr. Sofie, as she was affectionately known to hundreds, was local surgeon for the Gulf Coast Lines at Brazoria. Her railroad work brought her many strange and thrilling experiences. She rode in box cars, on hand cars, on engines; in fact in or on anything that would get her quickly to the
sufferer, regardless of the night or risk to herself. Her death brought to a close a vigorous, useful and picturesque life. She was seventy-six years old and the mother of fifteen children.

DR. MARGARET ELLEN HOLLAND was the first woman to practice medicine in Harris County. For over forty years she was a useful, beloved citizen, serving her community with skill and courage and always with a smile.

Born in Newberryport, Massachusetts, September 10, 1840, she had a trying childhood. Her own mother died when she was eight years old; her father married again in a few years and the family moved to Dixon, Illinois, then on to Parsons, Kansas, by the prairie schooner route. The country was newly settled and life was hard. The father died in a short while; two new babies had come into the family circle, and the brave mother started back to friends in Illinois with this pitiful little family.

When she arrived, they were all ill. Kind friends came to their assistance; and Jacob Powell, a prosperous farmer and land owner, adopted Margaret, who was then about thirteen years old. He later adopted her younger sister but did not change their names.

Margaret attended a district school near Sterling, Illinois. At the age of twenty-one, she was sent to Chicago to attend the Woman’s Medical College. There she was graduated in June, 1871.

Dr. Holland came to Houston with Major and Mrs. R. B. Baer. The latter was an invalid for many years. Dr. Holland was her private physician and besides doing a large practice, lived in her home and cared for her until Major Baer’s death in 1919.

Dr. Holland was one of the early and valued members of the Art League and Parent-Teacher’s Association of Houston. She never married but had the heart of a mother. She reared and educated three of her brother’s children and later a niece of Mrs. Baer. She helped many young people to get their education by supplying the needed funds. Her charity was generous to all who came within her touch. She died August 31, 1921, a much beloved and honored woman and physician.
DR. CHARLOTTE SCHAEFFER, an outstanding member of the medical profession in Texas, was a native of San Antonio, born June 24, 1874. As a graduate of the San Antonio High School she enrolled in the Medical Branch of the University of Texas, where she was graduated in 1900. Post-graduate work was done at the University of Chicago and Johns Hopkins.

Dr. Schaeffer's ability was at once recognized, and in 1901 she became demonstrator of histology at the University of Texas Medical College and resident pathologist at John Sealy Hospital. These positions were held until 1907, when Dr. Schaeffer was made lecturer and demonstrator. In 1910 she was elected an Associate Professor in Biology and Histology. In 1915 she was made full Professor of Embryology and in 1925 full Professor of Histology.

Dr. Schaeffer was methodical, punctual, economical in the use of her time and effort. She took great pride in her pupils who graduated and then made brilliant records in the profession, but she also watched with interest and helped those who were not so blessed. She stood by with encouragement and assistance when she was most needed, and helped those who were willing to help themselves. Seldom has a woman succeeded so remarkably in the profession as did Dr. Schaeffer.

Her death came suddenly at John Sealy Hospital on Friday, May 27, 1927. The Medical School was just in the midst of graduation festivities; but out of respect for their greatly honored and beloved teacher, all entertainments were cancelled and the Final Ball was not held.

DR. JULIET E. MARCHANT, aged eighty-four, woman pioneer and one of the first physicians of La Porte, died at her home, Wednesday, April 24, 1929. As a graduate in medicine and surgery from the University of Michigan, June 27, 1877, Dr. Marchant obtained a license to practice in Oneida County, New York, in October, 1878. She practiced for several years with a woman physician partner, in her home at Rome, New York.

When the original La Porte Development Company from Syracuse, New York, put on a sensational advertising campaign for the town of La Porte and vicinity, Dr. Marchant
decided to try her fortune in Texas. She came in on the first excursion train, November, 1893, and remained the rest of her life.

Dr. Marchant owned a ten-acre farm in the Lenox neighborhood and a residence in La Porte. Quietly and faithfully she did her work in the surrounding country. The doctor had a modest income and much of her work was done as charity. Her neighbors tell with interest of how she walked many miles to her calls. The mud was often too much for a horse-drawn conveyance but never too deep for the doctor when her services were needed. Her familiar figure was often seen trudging along the road, always with her little black bag in hand.

During the World War the doctor was most liberal to all war subscriptions and her knitting was done with dispatch and accuracy.

Though not known outside of her immediate community, her life and service were a blessing there.

With a perfect record in Houston High School and Kidd-Key College at Sherman, Dr. MINNIE C. ARCHER entered the Woman's College of Medicine at Philadelphia, where she was graduated in 1894. After post-graduate work in eye, ear, nose and throat, she returned to Houston, where she established an office and limited her practice to these branches.

Always correctly dressed, Dr. Archer, in one of the first electric coupes brought to Houston, was a familiar figure as she went to and from her office, the hospitals and her calls. Dr. Archer's offices were among the best equipped, most correctly furnished and operated that the citizens of Houston had the advantage of utilizing during the early days of this century.

Of unquestioned skill, unfailing courtesy, and possessing a sweet womanly personality, Dr. Archer deserved and received an enormous practice.

Born in Houston, November 25, 1872, this unusual woman practiced in her home town among friends who loved and honored her from 1894 until her death, February 8, 1912. She was not only a professional woman but also a model sister and daughter. Her final illness, of pneu-
monia, was contracted while nursing her adored mother through that malady. Her mother’s death preceded hers only a few days.

MADAME F.

The woman quack arrived along with the other quacks. "The Celebrated Physician and Chiromancer "Is here, at room No. 9, Plaza House, where she will remain two weeks, and where she will be pleased to wait upon those that may favor her with a call. "Office hours from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. "Madame F. is a skillful Physician, having had ten years practice in the Northern States, prescribing for all diseases that male or female is heir to, such as Epilepsy, Rheumatism, Bronchitis, and all diseases of the Lungs or Liver, Chronic Difficulties of every character pertaining to the generative or uterine organs, Syphilis, Prolapsus Uteri, and female weaknesses of every description. Has also a certain cure for barrenness and all obstruction that tends to a general debilitation. "Madame F. prescribes and prepares her own medicines herself, which are purely vegetable. "All persons suffering from acute or chronic difficulties should go and consult one whose skill never fails. "Madame F. is also a practicing Chiromancer or Palmist telling your fortune from the hand, which is done upon scientific principles, as there are five prominent lines in the hand that portray our destiny. Lovers' wishes are drawn from her double pack of cards; disappointments in business or love; and different kinds of marriages, travels, wealth; and number of luck in lotteries, are likewise told by her from the hand. "Charges from three to five dollars for a lady or gentleman the past, present, or future. "Madame F. is also a Spiritual impressive Medium. "Ladies and gentlemen go and visit Madame F., as she will give you good satisfaction, or return your money.”

—San Antonio Daily Herald, November 13, 1857.