

**A BRIEF MEMOIR OF DR. ELISHA
BARTLETT: WITH SELECTIONS
FROM HIS WRITINGS AND A
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE SAME**

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A Brief Memoir of Dr. Elisha Bartlett: With Selections from His Writings and a Bibliography of the same by Elisha Bartlett

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ELISHA BARTLETT

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BRIEF MEMOIR
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ELISHA BARTLETT.

THE foundation of a state rests on the virtue, the patriotism and the knowledge possessed by its citizens; why, then, is it not the duty of the state to perpetuate the memory of those of its citizens who most possess these virtues, as a means of strengthening its own existence. The good name of its citizens is the heritage of the state, and should not be confined to family limits. The state is lavish of her bounty while we recite deeds of bravery and heroism, too often coupled with brutality, for the purpose of inciting emulation in the minds of youth. Peace also hath her victories, and these, too, deserve well at the hands of the state. Scholastic pursuits, even if unaccompanied with the pomp and pride and circumstance of war, have sometimes resulted in

greater benefits to the race than those events which come heralded with more noise, but less real worth.

"A wise physician, skilled our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal."

Let me, therefore, present the name of a Rhode Island scholar for emulation—a man who, while he possessed the rugged reasoning powers of men, possessed also the delicate, sensitive, sympathetic nature of woman; a close student, a wise counsellor, a true friend, to be loved by all who knew him. Possessed of ample knowledge and of perfect simplicity, a man who, but little known in his native state, yet exercised a wide influence outside its narrow borders, an influence always on the side of virtue.

This, then, is my defence. That to perpetuate the memory of good civil acts tends to strengthen the basis of a state, and things which tend to this end are for the good of its citizens. I suggest for consideration the name of Elisha Bartlett.

Doctor or Professor Bartlett (for he was equally known by either title) was the son of Otis and Wait

Bartlett, of Smithfield, Rhode Island, where he was born October 6th, 1804. He early betrayed a fondness for scholastic pursuits, books were the companions of his boyhood, his solace and his delight.

His parents were members of the Society of Friends, and while desirous of giving their son the best advantages of education, they yet did not find in the universities of their time such results as they desired him to reach; so that, although it must be said he did not receive a university education, he did yet obtain, by means of excellent schools and close application, as fine a classical education as any American university of his time could have given him.

His inclination was towards the medical profession, a path which he afterwards described in these fine sentences: "It is the path which was trodden by the Sydenhams, the Hallers and the Hunters. It is the path which led Harvey to the most brilliant achievement in the annals of physiological science. It is the path which led the more fortunate Jenner to that discovery which has embalmed his name in the gratitude and the love of all peoples and of all

tongues. It is the path which led Newton up to the loftiest pinnacle ever reached by uninspired humanity. A pinnacle crowned with light of ineffable brightness, where the veil was rent, which, from the creation of the world, had hung before the universe, hiding its wonder and its mystery, and man was suffered to look, for the first time, out upon the beauty, the majesty, the unchangeable order of the handiwork of God. Into this path, be it our effort and our happiness to enter." Such was the language with which he inspired the young men to whom he spoke to exertion in their profession.

He pursued his studies in this department under several masters in New England, all of them men of distinction. Among these men mention may be made of Dr. Levi Wheaton, of Providence, (1761—1852). He attended medical lectures at Boston and in Providence, where, at Brown University, he took his degree of M. D. in 1828, one of the last graduates of that school, which was abandoned at the close of that academic year, although the chairs of several of the professors seem to have been occupied for a year or two after. Solomon Drowne held the

position of Professor of Materia Medica and Botany, Levi Wheaton that of Theory and Practice of Physic, Usher Parsons that of Anatomy and Surgery,—names long and well known in Rhode Island.

After his graduation at Brown University, Dr. Bartlett visited Paris, France, where he still further pursued his medical studies, under the distinguished teachers for which the French capital was then and has always since been so celebrated. On his return from France he took up his residence in the town of Lowell, Massachusetts. On its becoming a city, in 1836, Dr. Bartlett became its first Mayor. He was afterwards honored by a seat in the Legislature of Massachusetts. But these positions were uncongenial to his delicate nature, and he soon abandoned them for a more congenial pursuit, that of a medical teacher. He had held a professorship at Pittsfield since 1832. In 1841 he abandoned the practice of medicine and accepted a professorship at Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky, at which place he remained six years, and afterwards a year at Louisville. During these years he had also delivered lectures at Woodstock, Vermont, and at other places.