



Martha May Eliot



Florence Rena Sabin



Alice H. Hamilton



Elizabeth Blackwell, the young woman

## *The First Woman Doctor*

by ERLE E. SNELGROVE

**T**WELVE leading women doctors of the United States, Canada, England and France were cited by Hobart and William Smith Colleges at Geneva, N.Y., early this year at a special convocation held on the 100th anniversary of the graduation of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman doctor. Dr. Blackwell received the first degree of Doctor of Medicine ever conferred on a woman from the medical department of Hobart (then Geneva) College on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1849.

Elizabeth Blackwell Centennial Citations were awarded by Dr. Alan W. Brown, president of the Geneva college, following a radio salute to women in medicine by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. The response for women doctors was made by Dr. Priscilla White of Boston, who was one of the 12 to receive the awards.

Elizabeth Blackwell was born in Counterslip, Bristol, England, Feb. 3, 1821, the daughter of a sugar refiner. She came to the United States in Aug., 1832, lived for six years in New York and New Jersey and moved to Cincinnati at the age of 17. She taught school in Asheville, N.C., and Charleston, S.C., to get money for a medical education.

After being rejected by most of the recognized

Priscilla White



Helen MacMurphy



Margaret D. Craighill





Helen Vincent McLean



Elise S. L'Esperance



Gerty T. Cori

medical schools of the time and overcoming innumerable obstacles, Miss Blackwell entered the medical department of Geneva College on Nov. 6, 1847. She received her degree Jan. 23, 1849, after leading her class and receiving the admiration of her fellow students and the faculty.

Doctor Blackwell returned to England where she continued her studies at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, going later to the continent for further study. In 1857 she founded the New York Infirmary for Women and Children and the Woman's Medical College there. She gained the honor of being the first woman to be listed in the British Medical Register in 1859, and in 1875 she helped to found and taught at the first school of medicine for women in England.

She died at Hastings, England, May 31, 1910, and is buried at Kilmun, Argyllshire, Scotland.

The 12 world famous doctors who received the Elizabeth Blackwell Centennial Citations at the Hobart and William Smith Colleges in recognition of their contributions to the extension of medical knowledge, the arts of medical practice, the development of our public health services and to the constant improvement of medical education are:

**Martha May Eliot, M.D.**

Dr. Eliot resigned as associate chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau in June to become assistant di-

rector general of the United Nations World Health Organization. She was born in Dorchester, Mass., April 7, 1891, graduated from Radcliffe in 1913 and received her medical degree from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1918.

Since 1936, this distinguished pediatrician had supervision of federal grants to states for maternal and child services and services for crippled children.

**Florence Rena Sabin, M.D.**

Dr. Sabin, of Denver, is considered one of the world's outstanding physicians as well as one of the world's greatest women. She was the first woman to graduate at Johns Hopkins Medical School (1900) and the first woman to become a full member of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Since her "retirement" she has been following a new career in public health in Colorado.

Dr. Sabin was born in Central City, Colo., Nov. 9, 1871, and received her B.S. degree from Smith College in 1893.

**Alice H. Hamilton, M.D.**

Dr. Hamilton is a pioneer in the important public health field of industrial toxicology and a consultant in that field to the U.S. Department of Labor and the U. S. Public Health Service.

Born in New York, Feb. 27, 1869, Dr. Hamilton got her medical degree (*Continued on page 567*)

Helen B. Taussig



Therese Bertrand Fontaine



Elizabeth Blackwell, in late years



## The First Woman Doctor

(Continued from page 535)

from the University of Michigan in 1893, and became the first woman on the Harvard faculty in 1919 when she was appointed assistant professor of industrial medicine at Harvard Medical School.

### Helen Vincent McLean, M.D.

Dr. McLean is one of the founders of the Institute for Psychoanalysis in Chicago and one of the outstanding psychiatrists in modern medicine. Her contributions to the understanding of the psychiatric problems of minority groups, especially Negroes, has enormously strengthened modern knowledge of the fundamental nature of democracy.

Born in Sandusky, Ohio, May 27, 1894, Dr. McLean graduated at Mount Holyoke College in 1915, received graduate fellowships in chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her medical degree from Johns Hopkins in 1921.

### Elise S. L'Esperance, M.D.

Dr. Elise S. L'Esperance, president of the American Medical Women's Association and first woman to become a professor in Cornell University Medical College, graduated in 1901 at the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children, both founded by Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. She has devoted her life to medical education and research and is famous for notable work in pathology, especially her study of the origin, treatment and prevention of malignant tumors. She planned and established the first cancer prevention clinic in 1937.

### Gerty T. Cori, M. D.

Dr. Gerty T. Cori, distinguished for her research in pharmacology and biochemistry at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, became in 1947 the third woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine, for her share in the synthesis of glycogen. Born Gerty T. Radnitze in Prague in 1896, she married Carl F. Cori after they received their medical degrees from the German University of Prague in 1920. They came to this country in 1922, in a great movement of scientists from the Old World to the New.

### Priscilla White, M.D.

Dr. Priscilla White, practicing physician in Boston and at the New England Deaconess and Faulkner Hospitals, was a graduate in 1923 of the Tufts College Medical School, where she is now a clinical teacher of diabetes with special reference to diabetic children and mothers. She has studied deeply the problems of the inheritance of that disease. Dr. White is a native of Boston.

### Helen MacMurchy, M.D.

Dr. Helen MacMurchy, Companion of the Order of the British Empire, most widely known of Canadian women doctors, served for many years as Chief of the Division of Child Welfare in the Department of Health in Canada. She received her degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Toronto in 1900 and taught obstetrics and gynecology thereafter in the Faculty of Medicine of that university. Her postgraduate studies, initiated under Sir William Osler, were continued on both sides of the Atlantic, enriching her work in the fields of child welfare and public health.

### Margaret D. Craighill, M.D.

Dr. Margaret D. Craighill, head of the Women's Division of the Army Medical Corps during the last war, is now Chief of Service at the Winter Veterans Administration Hospital, Menninger Psychiatric Clinic, in Topeka, in charge of the medical care of women veterans. A graduate of the Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1924, she became a distinguished practitioner and teacher in obstetrics in Philadelphia.

### Helen B. Taussig, M.D.

Dr. Helen B. Taussig is associate professor of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, where she received her medical degree in 1927. She is the winner of many awards for her work with Dr. Alfred Blalock, and their successful creation of the "blue baby" operation that has helped so many lives to useful activity. She is one of the most distinguished women scientists. Dr. Taussig was born in Cambridge, Mass., May 24, 1898, and received her A.B. degree from the University of California in 1921.

### Therese Bertrand Fontaine, M.D.

Dr. Therese Bertrand Fontaine of Paris, notable French physician was named by her countrymen as the most important woman doctor in France. Now holding the responsible position of first woman physician in the hospitals of her native land, she continues a tradition inspired by Dr. Blackwell, when she helped to open the hospitals of the continent to clinical investigation by women.

### Helen Marion MacPherson Mackay, M.D.

Dr. Helen Marion MacPherson Mackay, first woman to be elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, received her degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of London in 1917. Notable contributor to our knowledge of the deficiency diseases of children, she has been named the most distinguished of contemporary women doctors in Britain.

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