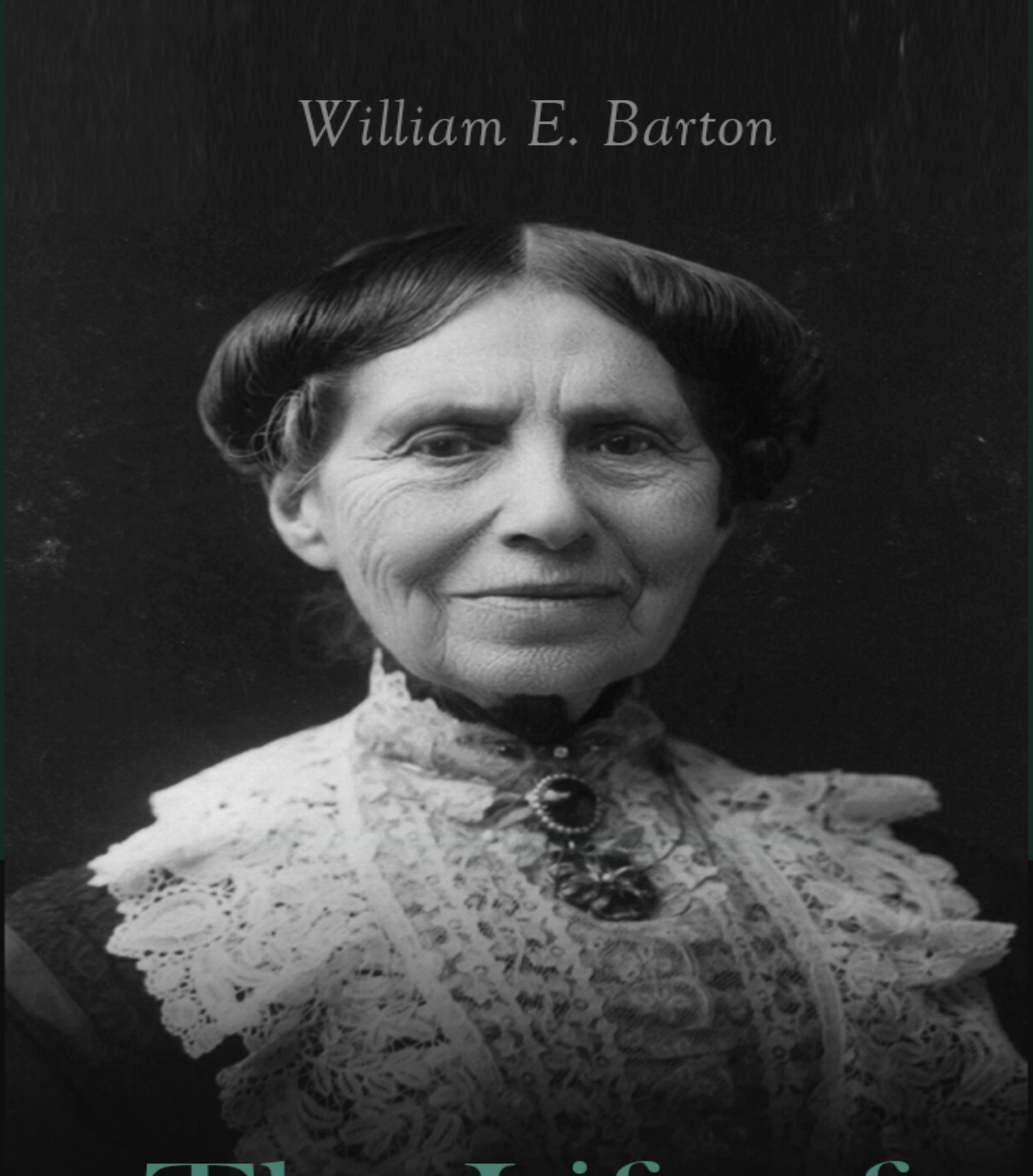
William E. Barton



The Life of Clara Barton

William E. Barton

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Biography of the Founder of the American Red Cross

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Clara Barton

Introduction

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The life of Clara Barton is a story of unique and permanent interest; but it is more than an interesting story. It is an important chapter in the history of our country, and in that of the progress of philanthropy in this country and the world. Without that chapter, some events of large importance can never be adequately understood.

Hers was a long life. She lived to enter her tenth decade, and when she died was still so normal in the soundness of her bodily organs and in the clarity of her mind and memory that it seemed she might easily have lived to see her hundredth birthday. Hers was a life spent largely in the Nation’s capital. She knew personally every president from Lincoln to Roosevelt, and was acquainted with nearly every man of prominence in our national life. When she went abroad, her associates were people of high rank and wide influence in their respective countries. No American woman received more honor while she lived, either at home or abroad, and how worthily she bore these honors those know best who knew her best.

The time has come for the publication of a definitive biography of Clara Barton. Such a book could not earlier have been prepared. The “Life of Clara Barton,” by Percy H. Epler, published in 1915, was issued to meet the demand which rose immediately after her death for a comprehensive biography, and it was published with the full approval of Miss Barton’s relatives and of her literary executors, including the author of the present work. But, by agreement, the two large vaults containing some tons of

manuscripts which Miss Barton left, were not opened until after the publication of Mr. Epler's book. It was the judgment of her literary executors, concurred in by Mr. Epler, that this mine of information could not be adequately explored within any period consistent with the publication of a biography such as he contemplated. For this reason, the two vaults remained unopened until his book was on the market. The contents of these vaults, containing more than forty closely packed boxes, is the chief source of the present volume, and this abundant material has been supplemented by letters and personal reminiscences from Clara Barton's relatives and intimate friends.

Clara Barton considered often the question of writing her own biography. A friend urged this duty upon her in the spring of 1876, and she promised to consider the matter. But the incessant demands made upon her time by duties that grew more steadily imperative prevented her doing this.

In 1906 the request came to her from a number of school-children that she would tell about her childhood; and she wrote a little volume of one hundred and twenty-five pages, published in 1907 by Baker and Taylor, entitled, "The Story of my Childhood." She was gratified by the reception of this little book, and seriously considered using it as the corner stone of her long contemplated autobiography. She wrote a second section of about fifteen thousand words, covering her girlhood and her experiences as a teacher at home and in Borden town, New Jersey. This was never published, and has been utilized in this present biography.

Beside these two formal and valuable contributions toward her biography, she left journals covering most of the years from her girlhood until her death, besides vast quantities of letters received by her and copies of her

replies. Her personal letters to her intimate friends were not copied, as a rule, but it has been possible to gather some hundreds of these. Letter-books, scrap-books, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, records of the American Red Cross, and papers, official and personal, swell the volume of material for this book to proportions not simply embarrassing, but almost overwhelming.

She appears never to have destroyed anything. Her temperament and the habits of a lifetime impelled her to save every scrap of material bearing upon her work and the subjects in which she was interested. She gathered, and with her own hand labeled, and neatly tied up her documents, and preserved them against the day when she should be able to sift and classify them and prepare them for such use as might ultimately be made of them. It troubled her that she was leaving these in such great bulk, and she hoped vainly for the time when she could go through them, box by box, and put them into shape. But they accumulated far more rapidly than she could have assorted them, and so they were left until her death, and still remained untouched, until December, 1915, when the vaults were opened and the heavy task began of examining this material, selecting from it the papers that tell the whole story of her life, and preparing the present volumes. If this book is large, it is because the material compelled it to be so. It could easily have been ten times as thick.

The will of Clara Barton named as her executor her beloved and trusted nephew, Stephen E. Barton. It also named a committee of literary executors, to whom she entrusted the use of her manuscripts for such purpose, biographical or otherwise, as they should deem best. The author of these volumes was named by her as a member of that committee. The committee elected him as its chairman,

and requested him to undertake the preparation of the biography. This task was undertaken gladly, for the writer knew and loved his kinswoman and held her in honor and affection; but he knew too well the magnitude of the task ahead of him to be altogether eager to accept it. The burden, however, has been measurably lightened by the assistance of Miss Saidee F. Riccius, a grand-niece of Miss Barton, who, under the instruction of the literary executors, and the immediate direction of Stephen E. Barton and the author, has rendered invaluable service, without which the author could not have undertaken this work.

In her will, written a few days before her death, Miss Barton virtually apologized to the committee and to her biographer for the heavy task which she bequeathed to them. She said:

“I regret exceedingly that such a labor should devolve upon my friends as the overlooking of the letters of a lifetime, which should properly be done by me, and shall be, if I am so fortunate as to regain a sufficient amount of strength to enable me to do it. I have never destroyed my letters, regarding them as the surest chronological testimony of my life, whenever I could find the time to attempt to write it. That time has never come to me, and the letters still wait my call.”

They still were there, undisturbed, thousands of them, when the vaults were opened, and none of them have been destroyed or mutilated. They are of every sort, personal and official; and they bear their consistent and cumulative testimony to her indefatigability, her patience, her heroic resolution, and most of all to her greatness of heart and integrity of soul.

Interesting and valuable in their record of every period and almost every day and hour of her long and eventful life,

they are the indisputable record of the birth and development of the organization which almost single-handed she created, the American Red Cross.

Among those who suggested to Miss Barton the desirability of her writing the story of her own life, was Mr. Houghton, senior partner in the firm of Houghton, Mifflin and Company. He had one or more personal conferences with her relating to this matter. Had she been able to write the story of her own life, she would have expected it to be published by that firm. It is to the author a gratifying circumstance that this work, which must take the place of her autobiography, is published by the firm with whose senior member she first discussed the preparation of such a work.

The author of this biography was a relative and friend of Clara Barton, and knew her intimately. By her request he conducted her funeral services, and spoke the last words at her grave. His own knowledge of her has been supplemented and greatly enlarged by the personal reminiscences of her nearer relatives and of the friends who lived under her roof, and those who accompanied her on her many missions of mercy.

In a work where so much compression was inevitable, some incidents may well have received scant mention which deserved fuller treatment. The question of proportion is never an easy one to settle in a work of this character. If she had given any direction, it would have been that little be said about her, and much about the work she loved. That work, the founding of the American Red Cross, must receive marked emphasis in a Life of Clara Barton: for she was its mother. She conceived the American Red Cross, carried it under her heart for years before it could be brought forth, nurtured it in its cradle, and left it to her country and the

world, an organization whose record in the great World War shines bright against that black cloud of horror, as the emblem of mercy and of hope.

Wherever, in America or in lands beyond, the flag of the Red Cross flies beside the Stars and Stripes, there the soul of Clara Barton marches on.

First Church Study
Oak Park, *July 16, 1921*

Chapter I
Her First Attempt at Autobiography

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Though she had often been importuned to furnish to the public some account of her life and work, Clara Barton's first autobiographical outline was not written until September, 1876, when Susan B. Anthony requested her to prepare a sketch of her life for an encyclopædia of noted women of America. Miss Barton labored long over her reply. She knew that the story must be short, and that she must clip conjunctions and prepositions and omit "all the sweetest and best things." When she had finished the sketch, she was appalled at its length, and still was unwilling that any one else should make it shorter; so she sent it with stamps for its return in case it should prove too long. "It has not an adjective in it," she said.

Her original draft is still preserved, and reads as follows:

For Susan B. Anthony
Sketch for Cyclopædia

September, 1876

Barton, Clara; her father, Capt. Stephen Barton, a non-commissioned officer under "Mad Anthony Wayne," was a farmer in Oxford, Mass. Clara, youngest child, finished her education at Clinton, N.Y. Teacher, popularized free schools in New Jersey.

First woman appointed to an independent clerkship by Government at Washington.

On outbreak of Civil War, went to aid suffering soldiers. Labored in advance and independent of commissions. Never in hospitals; selecting as scene of operations the battle-field from its earliest moment, ’till the wounded and dead were removed or cared for; carrying her own supplies by Government transportation.

At the battles of Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain, Falmouth and “Old Fredericksburg,” Siege of Charleston, Morris Island, Wagner, Wilderness, Fredericksburg, The Mine, Deep Bottom, through sieges of Petersburg and Richmond under Butler and Grant.

At Annapolis on arrival of prisoners.

Established search for missing soldiers, and, aided by Dorence Atwater, enclosed cemetery, identified and marked the graves of Andersonville.

Lectured on Incidents of the War in 1866-67. In 1869 went to Europe for health. In Switzerland on outbreak of Franco-Prussian War; tendered services. Was invited by Grand Duchess of Baden, daughter of Emperor William, to aid in establishing her hospitals. On fall of Strassburg entered with German Army, remained eight months, instituted work for women which held twelve hundred persons from beggary and clothed thirty thousand.

Entered Metz on its fall. Entered Paris the day succeeding the fall of Commune; remained two months, distributing money and clothing which she carried. Met the poor of every besieged city of France, giving help.

Is representative of the “Comité International of the Red Cross” of Geneva. Honorary and only woman

member of Comité de Strasbourgoes. Was decorated with the Gold Cross of Remembrance by the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden and with the “Iron Cross” by the Emperor and Empress of Germany.

Miss Anthony regarded the sketch with the horror of offended modesty.

“For Heaven’s sake, Clara,” she wrote, “put some flesh and clothes on this skeleton!”

Thus admonished, Miss Barton set to work to drape the bones of her first attempt, and was in need of some assistance from Miss Anthony and others. The work as completed was not wholly her own. The adjectives, which had been conspicuously absent from the first draft together with some characterizations of Miss Barton and her work, were supplied by Miss Anthony and her editors. It need not here be reprinted in its final form; for it is accessible in Miss Anthony’s book. As it finally appeared, it is several times as long as when Clara Barton wrote it, and is more Miss Anthony’s than Miss Barton’s.

In the foregoing account, mention is made of her being an official member of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In that capacity she did not at that time represent any American organization known as the Red Cross, for there was no such body. Although such an organization had been in existence in Europe from the time of our Civil War, and the Reverend Dr. Henry W. Bellows, late of the Christian Commission, had most earnestly endeavored to organize a branch of it in this country, and to secure official representation from America in the international body, the proposal had been met not merely by indifference, but by hostility.

Clara Barton wrote her autobiographical sketch from a sanitarium. She had not yet recovered from the strain of her service in the Franco-Prussian War. One reason why she did not recover more rapidly was that she was bearing on her heart the burden of this as yet unborn organization, and as yet had found no friends of sufficient influence and faith to afford to America a share in the honor of belonging to the sisterhood of nations that marched under that banner.

* * * * *

The outbreak of the World War found America unprepared save only in her wealth of material resources, her high moral purpose, and her ability to adapt her forms of organized life to changed and unwelcome conditions. The rapidity with which she increased her army and her navy to a strength that made it possible for her to turn the scale, where the fate of the world hung trembling in the balance, was not more remarkable than her skill in adapting her institutions of peace to the exigencies of war. Most of the agencies, which, under the direction of civilians, ministered to men in arms had either to be created out of hand or adapted from institutions formed in time of peace and for other objects. But the American Red Cross was already organized and in active service. It was a factor in the fight from the first day of the world's agony, through the invasion of Belgium, and the three years of our professed neutrality; and by the time of America's own entrance into the war it had assumed such proportions that everywhere the Red Cross was seen floating beside the Stars and Stripes. Every one knew what it stood for. It was the emblem of mercy, even as the flag of our Nation was the symbol of liberty and the hope of the world.

The history of the American Red Cross cannot be written apart from the story of its founder, Clara Barton. For years before it came into being, her voice almost alone pleaded for it, and to her persistent and almost sole endeavor it came at length to be established in America. For other years she was its animating spirit, its voice, its soul. Had she lived to see its work in the great World War, she would have been humbly and unselfishly grateful for her part in its beginnings, and overjoyed that it had outgrown them. The story of the founding and of the early history of the American Red Cross is the story of Clara Barton.

Chapter II
The Birth of Clara Barton

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Clara Barton was a Christmas gift to the world. She was born December 25, 1821. Her parents named her Clarissa Harlowe. It was a name with interesting literary associations.

Novels now grow overnight and are forgotten in a day. The paper mills are glutted with the waste of yesterday's popular works of fiction; and the perishability of paper is all that prevents the stopping of all the wheels of progress with the accumulation of obsolete "best-sellers." But it was not so in 1821. The novels of Samuel Richardson, issued in the middle of the previous century, were still popular. He wrote "Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded," a novel named for its heroine, a pure and simple-minded country girl, who repelled the dishonorable proposals of her employer until he came to respect her, and married her, and they lived happily ever after. The plot of this story lives again in a thousand moving-picture dramas, in which the heroine is a shop girl or an art student; but Richardson required two volumes to tell the story, and it ran through five editions in a year. He also wrote "Sir Charles Grandison," and it required six volumes to portray that hero's smug priggishness; but the Reverend Dr. Finney, president of Oberlin College, who was also the foremost evangelist of his time, and whose system of theology wrought in its day a revolution, was not the only distinguished man who bore the name of Charles Grandison.

But Richardson's greatest literary triumph was "Clarissa Harlowe." Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was not far wrong when she declared that the chambermaids of all nations wept over Pamela, and that all the ladies of quality were on their knees to Richardson imploring him to spare Clarissa. Clarissa was not a servant like Pamela: she was a lady of quality, and she had a lover socially her equal, but morally on a par with a considerable number of the gentry of his day. His name, Lovelace, became the popular designation of the gentleman profligate. Clarissa's sorrows at his hands ran through eight volumes, and, as the lachrymose sentiment ran out to volume after volume, the gentlewomen of the English-reading world wept tears that might have made another flood. Samuel Richardson wrote the story of "Clarissa Harlowe" in 1748, but the story still was read, and the name of the heroine was loved, in 1821.

But Clarissa Harlowe Barton did not permanently bear the incubus of so long a name. Among her friends she was always Clara, and though for years she signed her name "Clara H. Barton," the convenience and rhythm of the shorter name won over the time-honored sentiment attached to the title of the novel, and the world knows her simply as Clara Barton.

He who rides on the electric cars from Worcester to Webster will pass Bartlett's Upper Mills, where a weather-beaten sign at the crossroads points the way "To Clara Barton's Birthplace." About a mile from the main street, on the summit of a rounded hill, the visitor will find the house where she was born. It stands with its side to the road, a hall dividing it through the middle. It is an unpretentious home, but comfortable, one story high at the eaves, but rising with the rafters to afford elevation for chambers upstairs. In the rear room, on the left side, on the ground floor, the children

of the Barton family were born. Clara was the fifth and youngest child, ten years younger than her sister next older. The eldest child, Dorothy, was born October 2, 1804, and died April 19, 1846. The next two children were sons, Stephen, the third to bear the name, born March 29, 1806, and David, born August 15, 1808. Then came another daughter, Sarah, born March 20, 1811. These four children followed each other at intervals of a little more than two years; but Clara had between her and the other children the wide gap of more than a decade. Her brothers were fifteen and thirteen, respectively, and her sister was “going on eleven” when she arrived. She came into a world that was already well grown up and fully occupied with concerns of its own. Had there been between her and the other children an ascending series of four or five graduated steps of heads, the first a little taller than her own, and the others rising in orderly sequence, the rest of the universe would not have been quite so formidable; but she was the sole representative of babyhood in the home at the time of her arrival. So she began her somewhat solitary pilgrimage, from a cradle fringed about with interested and affectionate observers, all of whom had been babies a good while before, but had forgotten about it, into that vast and vague domain inhabited by the adult portion of the human race; and while she was not unattended, her journey had its elements of solitude.

Chapter III
Her Ancestry

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The Bartons of America are descended from a number of immigrant ancestors, who have come to this country from England, Scotland, and Ireland. The name, however, is neither Scotch nor Irish, but English. While the several families in Great Britain have not as yet traced their ancestry to a single source, there appears to have been such a source. The ancestral home of the Barton family is Lancashire. The family is of Norman stock, and came to England with William the Conqueror, deriving their English surname from Barton Manor in Lancashire. From 1086, when the name was recorded in the Doomsday Book, it is found in the records of Lancashire.

The derivation of the name is disputed. It is said that originally it was derived from the Saxon *bere*, barley, and *tun*, a field, and to mean the enclosed lands immediately adjacent to a manor; but most English names that end with “ton” are derived from “town” with a prefix, and it is claimed that *bar*, or defense, and *ton*, or town, once meant a defended or enclosed town, or one who protects a town. The name is held to mean “defender of the town.”

In the time of Henry I, Sir Leysing de Barton, Knight, was mentioned as a feudal vassal of lands between the rivers Ribbe and Mersey, under Stephen, Count of Mortagne, grandson of William the Conqueror, who later became King Stephen of England. Sir Leysing de Barton was the father of Matthew de Barton, and the grandfather of several granddaughters, one of whom was Editha de Barton, Lady of

Barton Manor. She inherited the great estate, and was a woman of note in her day. She married Augustine de Barton, possibly a cousin, by whom she had two children, John de Barton, who died before his mother, and a daughter Cecilly.

After the death of Augustine de Barton, his widow, Lady Editha, married Gilbert de Notton, a landed proprietor of Lincolnshire, who also had possessions in Yorkshire and Lancashire. He had three sons by a previous marriage, one of whom, William, married Cecilly de Barton, daughter of Editha and her first husband Augustine. Their son, named for his uncle, Gilbert de Notton, inherited the Barton Manor and assumed the surname Barton.

The Barton estate was large, containing several villages and settlements. The homestead was at Barton-on-Irwell, now in the municipality of Eccles, near the city of Manchester.

Other Barton families in England are quite possibly descended from younger sons of the original Barton line.

The arms of the Bartons of Barton were, *Argent*, *three boars' heads*, *armed*, *or*.

In the Wars of the Roses the Bartons were with the house of Lancaster, and the Red Rose is the traditional flower of the Barton family. Clara Barton, when she wore flowers, habitually wore red roses; and whatever her attire there was almost invariably about it somewhere a touch of red, "her color," she called it, as it had been the color of her ancestors for many generations.

In the seventeenth century there were several families of Bartons in the American colonies. The name is found early in Virginia, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and other colonies.

Salem had two families of Bartons, probably related,—those of Dr. John Barton, physician and chirurgeon, who

came from Huntingdonshire, England, in 1672, and was prominent in the early life of Salem, and Edward Barton, who arrived thirty-two years earlier, but, receiving a grant of land on the Piscataqua, removed to Portsmouth, and about 1666 to Cape Porpoise, Maine. On account of Indian troubles, the homestead was deserted for some years, but Cape Porpoise continued to be the traditional home of this branch of the Barton family.

Edward's eldest son, Matthew, returned to Salem, and lived there, at Portsmouth, and at Cape Porpoise. His eldest son, born probably at Salem in or about 1664, was Samuel Barton, founder of the Barton family of Oxford.

Not long after the pathetic witchcraft delusion of Salem, a number of enterprising families migrated from Salem to Framingham, among them the family of Samuel Barton. On July 19, 1716, as recorded in the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds in Boston, Jonathan Provender, husbandman, of Oxford, sold to Samuel Barton, Sr., husbandman, of Framingham, a tract of land including about one-thirtieth of the village of Oxford, as well as a fourth interest in two mills, a sawmill and a gristmill.

In 1720, Samuel Barton and a few of his neighbors met at the home of John Towne, where, after prayer, "they mutually considered their obligations to promote the kingdom of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," and covenanted together to seek to establish and build a church of Christ in Oxford. On January 3, 1721, the church was formally constituted, Samuel Barton and his wife bringing their letters of dismission from the church in Framingham of which both were members, and uniting as charter members of the new church in Oxford. The Reverend John Campbell was their first pastor. For over forty years he led his people, and his name lives in the history of that town as a man of learning,

piety, and rare capacity for spiritual leadership. Long after his death, it was discovered that he was Colonel John Campbell, of Scotland, heir to the earldom of Loudon, who had fled from Scotland for political reasons, and who became a soldier of Christ in the new world.

Samuel Barton, son of Edward and Martha Barton, and grandson of Edward and Elizabeth Barton, died in Oxford September 12, 1732. His wife, Hannah Bridges, died there March 13, 1737. From them sprang the family of the Oxford Bartons, whose most illustrious representative was Clara Barton.

The maternal side of this line, that of Bridges, began in America with Edmund Bridges, who came to Massachusetts from England in 1635, and lived successively at Lynn, Rowley, and Ipswich. His eldest son, Edmund, Jr., was born about 1637, married Sarah Towne in 1659, lived in Topsfield and Salem, and died in 1682. The fourth of their five children was a daughter, Hannah, who, probably at Salem about 1690, married Samuel Barton, progenitor of the Bartons of Oxford, to which town he removed from Framingham in 1716.

Edmund, youngest son of Samuel and Hannah Barton, was born in Framingham, August 15, 1715. He married, April 9, 1739, Anna Flint, of Salem. She was born June 9, 1718, eldest daughter of Stephen Flint and his wife, Hannah Moulton. Anna Flint was the granddaughter of John Flint, of Salem Village (Danvers), and great-granddaughter of Thomas Flint, who came to Salem before 1650.

Edmund settled in Sutton, and owned lands there and in Oxford. He and his wife became members of the First Church in Sutton, and later transferred their membership to the Second Church in Sutton, which subsequently became the First Church in Millbury. He served in the French War,

and was at Fort Edward in 1753. He died December 13, 1799, and Anna, his wife, died March 20, 1795.

The eldest son of Edmund and Anna Barton was Stephen Barton, born June 10, 1740, at Sutton. He studied medicine with Dr. Green, of Leicester, and practiced his profession in Oxford and in Maine. He had unusual professional skill, as well as great sympathy and charity. He married at Oxford, May 28, 1765, Dorothy Moore, who was born at Oxford, April 12, 1747, daughter of Elijah Moore and Dorothy Learned. On her father's side she was the granddaughter of Richard, great-granddaughter of Jacob, and great-great-granddaughter of John Moore. John Moore and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Philemon Whale, bought a home in Sudbury in 1642. Their son, Jacob, married Elizabeth Looker, daughter of Henry Looker, of Sudbury, and lived in Sudbury. Their son Richard, born in Sudbury in 1670, married Mary Collins, daughter of Samuel Collins, of Middletown, Connecticut, and granddaughter of Edward Collins, of Cambridge. Richard Moore was one of the most capable and trusted men in early Oxford. Dorothy Learned, wife of Elijah Moore, was the daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Learned, the largest landowner in Oxford, one of the original thirty proprietors. He was a man of superior personality, for thirty-two years one of the selectmen, for many years chairman of that body, and moderator of town meetings, a justice of the peace, a representative in the Great and General Court, and an officer in the militia from 1718 to 1750, beginning as Ensign and reaching the rank of Colonel. He was active in the affairs of the town, the church, and the military organization during his long and useful life. His wife was Deborah Haynes, daughter of John Haynes, of Sudbury. He was the son of Isaac Learned, Jr., of Framingham, who had been a soldier in the Narraganset War, and his wife, Sarah

Bigelow, daughter of John Bigelow, of Watertown. Isaac Learned was the son of Isaac Learned, Sr., of Woburn and Chelmsford, and his wife, Mary Stearns, daughter of Isaac Stearns, of Watertown. The parents of Isaac Learned, Sr., were William and Goditha Learned, members of the Charlestown Church in 1632, and of Woburn Church in 1642.

The Learned family shared with the Barton family in the formation of the English settlement in Oxford, and were intimately related by intermarriage and many mutual interests. Brigadier-General Ebenezer Learned, a distinguished officer in the Revolution, was a brother of Dorothy Learned Moore, the great-grandmother of Clara Barton.

Dr. Stephen Barton and his wife, Dorothy Moore, had thirteen children. Their sons were Elijah Moore, born October 12, 1765, and died June 13, 1769; Gideon, born March 29, 1767, and died October 27, 1770; Stephen, born August 18, 1774; Elijah Moore, born August 10, 1784; Gideon, born June 18, 1786; and Luke, born September 3, 1791. The first two sons died at an early age; the four remaining sons lived to marry, and three of them lived in Maine. The daughters of Dr. Stephen Barton and Dorothy, his wife, were Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe, Hannah, Parthena, Polly, and Dolly.

It is interesting to note in the names of these daughters a departure from the common New England custom of seeking Bible names, and the naming of the first two daughters after the two principal heroines of Samuel Richardson.

Of this family, the third son, and the eldest to survive, was Stephen Barton, Jr., known as Captain Stephen Barton, father of Clara Barton.

Chapter IV
Her Parentage and Infancy

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Captain Stephen Barton won his military title by that system of *post-bellum* promotion familiar in all American communities. He was a non-commissioned officer in the wars against the Indians. He was nineteen when he enlisted, and marched on foot with his troop from Boston to Philadelphia, which at that time was the Nation's capital. The main army was then at Detroit under command of General Wayne, whom the soldiers lovingly knew as "Mad Anthony." William Henry Harrison and Richard M. Johnson, later President and Vice-President of the United States, were then lieutenants, and Stephen Barton fought side by side with them. He was present when Tecumseh was slain, and at the signing of the treaty of peace which followed. His military service extended over three years. At the close of the war he marched home on foot through northern Ohio and central New York. He and the other officers were greatly charmed by the Genesee and Mohawk valleys, and he purchased land somewhere in the vicinity of Rochester. He had some thought of establishing a home in that remote region, but it was so far distant from civilization that he sold his New York land and made his home in Oxford.

In 1796, Stephen Barton returned from the Indian War. He was then twenty-two years of age. Eight years later he married Sarah Stone, who was only seventeen. They established their home west of Oxford, near Charlton, and later removed to the farm where Clara Barton was born.

MOTHER AND FATHER OF CLARA BARTON

It was a modest home, and Stephen Barton was a hardworking man, though a man of influence in the community. He served often as moderator of town meetings and as selectman for the town. He served also as a member of the Legislature. But he wrought with his own hands in the tillage of his farm, and in the construction of most of the articles of furniture in his home, including the cradle in which his children were rocked.

BIRTHPLACE OF CLARA BARTON

Stephen Barton combined a military spirit with a gentle disposition and a broad spirit of philanthropy. Sarah Stone was a woman of great decision of character, and a quick temper. She was a housewife of the good old New England sort, looking well to the ways of her household and eating not the bread of idleness. From her father Clara Barton inherited those humanitarian tendencies which became notably characteristic, and from her mother she derived a strong will which achieved results almost regardless of opposition. Her mother's hot temper found its restraint in her through the inherited influence of her father's poise and benignity. Of him she wrote:

> His military habits and tastes never left him. Those were also strong political days—Andrew Jackson Days—and very naturally my father became my instructor in military and political lore. I listened breathlessly to his war stories. Illustrations were called for and we made battles and fought them. Every shade of military etiquette was regarded. Colonels, captains, and sergeants were given their proper place and rank. So with the political world; the President, Cabinet, and leading officers of the government were learned by heart, and nothing gratified the keen humor of my father more than the parrot-like readiness with which I lisped these difficult names. I thought the President might be as large as the meeting-house, and the Vice-President perhaps the size of the schoolhouse. And yet, when later I, like all the rest of our country's people, was suddenly thrust into the mysteries of war, and had to find and take my place and part in it, I found myself far less a stranger to the conditions than most women, or

> even ordinary men for that matter. I never addressed a colonel as captain, got my cavalry on foot, or mounted my infantry!
>
> When a little child upon his knee he told me that, as he lay helpless in the tangled marshes of Michigan the muddy water oozed up from the track of an officer's horse and saved him from death by thirst. And that a mouthful of a lean dog that had followed the march saved him from starvation. When he told me how the feathered arrow quivered in the flesh and the tomahawk swung over the white man's head, he told me also, with tears of honest pride, of the great and beautiful country that had sprung up from those wild scenes of suffering and danger. How he loved these new States for which he gave the strength of his youth!

Two sons and two daughters were born to Stephen and Sarah Barton in their early married life. Then for ten years no other children were born to them. On Christmas, 1821, their eldest daughter, Dorothy, was as old as her mother had been at the time of their marriage. Their eldest son, Stephen, was fifteen, the younger son, David, was thirteen, and the daughter, Sally, was ten. The family had long considered itself complete, when the household received Clara as a Christmas present. Her brothers and sisters were too old to be her playmates. They were her protectors, but not her companions. She was a little child in the midst of a household of grown-up people, as they seemed to her. In her little book entitled "The Story of my Childhood," she thus describes her brothers and sisters:

> I became the seventh member of a household consisting of the father and mother, two sisters and two brothers,

each of whom for his and her intrinsic merits and special characteristics deserves an individual history, which it shall be my conscientious duty to portray as far as possible as these pages progress. For the present it is enough to say that each one manifested an increasing personal interest in the newcomer, and, as soon as developments permitted, set about instructing her in the various directions most in accord with the tastes and pursuits of each.

Of the two sisters, the elder was already a teacher. The younger followed soon, and naturally my book education became their first care, and under these conditions it is little to say, that I have no knowledge of ever learning to read, or of a time that I did not do my own story reading. The other studies followed very early.

My elder brother, Stephen, was a noted mathematician. He inducted me into the mystery of figures. Multiplication, division, subtraction, halves, quarters, and wholes, soon ceased to be a mystery, and no toy equaled my little slate. But the younger brother had entirely other tastes, and would have none of these things. My father was a lover of horses, and one of the first in the vicinity to introduce blooded stock. He had large lands, for New England. He raised his own colts; and Highlanders, Virginians, and Morgans pranced the fields in idle contempt of the solid old farm-horses.

Of my brother, David, to say that he was fond of horses describes nothing; one could almost add that he was fond of nothing else. He was the Buffalo Bill of the surrounding country, and here commences his part of my education. It was his delight to take me, a little girl of five years old, to the field, seize a couple of those beautiful young creatures, broken only to the halter and