

advice from her whose name will go down to posterity wherever our language is known and good women are loved and honoured.—Florence Nightingale.

From the information obtained from Dr. Wylie and from other sources, a paper was prepared, stating the object of the work proposed and appealing to the public of New York for funds to establish the school. The project was received with enthusiasm, and in six weeks after the publication of the appeal \$22,385 was contributed to start the school. Through the influence of James Bowen, one of the Commissioners of the Board of Charities, a reluctant consent had been obtained from the Board to allow us to nurse five wards at Bellevue, for which the Committee was to defray all the expense beyond what was paid under the old system. A house was hired in March, 1873, in the vicinity of the hospital, as a home for the nurses, and the Committee engaged to take charge of the five wards on May 1st.

The school started its struggling, tentative work amidst a good deal of opposition, but it never wavered nor faltered from its high ideals, and the principles accepted from Miss Nightingale have been faithfully followed, not only at Bellevue, but by all the schools subsequently founded to the present time.

At the expiration of the first year the house staff, which had been friendly from the beginning, ventured to point out to their superiors the improved condition of the nursing service under the training school, and gradually the eyes of these men were opened to the fact that their patients recovered sooner, and the deaths after operations were less frequent than formerly. The superintendent, Sister Helen, accustomed to the management of a pauper hospital in England, and to deal with workhouse authorities, was not daunted by the politics of Bellevue, so gradually during the second year the work assumed permanent shape and was extended to other wards, the applications from would-be pupils increased, the first pupils became head nurses, and at the close of the second year the first class graduated. Among these were Miss Euphemia Van Rensselaer and Miss Linda Richards, worthy representatives of New York and New England. The former became assistant superintendent, and is known in religion as Sister Marie Dolores; the latter, after starting many schools here, founded the first training school for nurses in the city of Kioto, in Japan, and is now superintendent of nurses in the University of Pennsylvania, after twenty-five years of continuous work.

TWO DISTINCT AIMS.

The managers had two distinct aims in the establishment of the school at Bellevue Hospital.

One was to make the great hospital a place where the respectable poor could be tenderly and skilfully nursed, and the other the training, year by year, of a band of experienced, devoted nurses for private service among the poor. Both these objects have been accomplished. Every mission church in the city now has its trained missionary nurse, who spends all her time in the homes of the poor, caring for women in confinement, dressing abscesses and burns, taking the sick to hospitals when they cannot be properly cared for at home, and often preparing meals for the family when the mother is unable to do so. The New York City Mission has eight of these missionary nurses in its employ.

With the establishment of schools for nurses connected with every principal hospital of the city there arose a fear in the minds of some that the ranks of the profession would be overcrowded. Not long after the breaking out of the war between the United States and Spain the surgeons in the Army recognized the value of female trained nurses to care for their sick and wounded men, and the report of Auxilliary No. 3 of the American National Red Cross Relief Association shows the value of this thoroughly trained organized assistance. The response of the public to the demands for funds to carry on a work supplementary to that done by the Government during the war was quick and generous. In a short time \$107,785 was contributed, of which \$21,000 came from Americans in Paris.

DR. POLK'S ADDRESS.

The speaker of the celebration was Dr. William M. Polk, who was introduced by Bishop Potter as one who had from the beginning been a friend of the training-school. "The Evolution of the Trained Nurse" was Dr. Polk's subject. He explained that nursing as a distinct pursuit probably began when the first hospital was established in India, about 500 B.C., and after interestingly describing the development of the hospital system through mediæval ages down to modern times he continued in part:

"Let us now speak of the influence of trained nursing upon the science and art of medicine. In general terms, medicine, as we see it to-day, is a tripartite association. First are those who study the phenomena of disease with a view to its recognition, prevention, and treatment; second, those who prepare for use the means or remedies whereby disease is met and treated; third, those, yourselves, who put into execution the preventive and curative agents, discovered and directed by the first and prepared by the second of the parties to this comprehensive combination. All three have made marvellous progress during the latter half of the present century. In fact, no period of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)