

BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.

BELLEVUE HOSPITAL occupies a position on the East River which has long been famous for its beauty and healthfulness. As early as 1786 we find it mentioned among the favorite resorts of persons seeking pleasure and relaxation from business.

In his "Picture of New York, or the Traveller's Guide through the Commercial Metropolis of the United States," first edition, 1807, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchel thus describes Bellevue Hospital among the benevolent institutions of New York: "On the shore of the East River, about three miles from the City Hall, is a delightful spot, of which our celebrated countryman, Lindley Murray, was once the proprietor and resident. It has been purchased by the Common Council for an occasional infirmary; whither, during the prevalence of sickness in the city, it is thought advisable to remove those who languished. A more wholesome air is found here, as well as accommodations for the sick and the convalescent. The selection of such a spot for the reception of the inhabitants who are suffering the violent assaults of the fever, redounds greatly to the feelings and humanity of the Common Council. In common seasons there are no sick persons here. This hospital is opened only upon extraordinary occasions."

The early history of the hospital, and the progressive changes in its management down to the year 1857, were very accurately detailed in an address delivered on the opening of the new wing of Bellevue Hospital, at the request of the

Medical Board, by B. W. McCready, M. D. We quote from this address the following interesting historical facts :

“Up to a very recent period, the history of the charity hospital of this city is confounded with that of the almshouse; the sick were received under the same roof with those who were unable to provide for their own necessities, and the wants of both were cared for by the same officers. According to information furnished me by Mr. David T. Valentine, the excellent clerk of the Common Council, and the industrious chronicler of by-gone times in New Amsterdam, as far back as the year 1699, when the population of the city did not exceed six thousand souls, the poor received partial relief in their own houses, or in lodgings provided for them by the vestry. About fifteen years later, an almshouse was erected on the spot where the City Hall now stands, and where the poor were maintained, partly out of what was then termed the minister's fund, partly by a small tax upon the inhabitants, and by voluntary contributions. After the War of the Revolution had broken out, and previous to the occupation of the city by the British, the poor were removed, first to Westchester County and afterward to Poughkeepsie. On the conclusion of peace, they again returned to the city, where additions were made to the former buildings to accommodate their augmented numbers. The rapid increase of the population, and the immigration which poured in from abroad soon, rendered additional accommodation necessary; a new almshouse was accordingly erected in the rear of the former one, constituting the range of buildings fronting on Chambers Street, and since known as the New City Hall; these were burned down about two years since. The new building was opened for the reception of patients in the year 1795; the same causes that had given rise to the previous changes were still at work, and in fifteen years' time it became necessary to make arrangements for the enlarged accommodation of those who were thrown upon the charities of the city. At that time, the grounds now occupied by the hospital, three miles distant from the city, were destitute of buildings; the neighborhood hilly, varied in surface, and well wooded; the shore bold; the river, unconfined by wharves and bulkheads, ran two hundred feet nearer in shore than it

now does. Well might the wanderer from the distant city, as he saw the bank of the East River, trending away in a graceful sweep toward the north, with Blackwell's Island, still sufficiently wooded, shutting in the view, and the low shores of Long Island, as yet undeformed by factories and buildings in his front—well, I say, might he name the place Bellevue!

“It was this site which was now pitched upon as suitable for the eleemosynary institutions of New York. Between twenty-five and thirty acres were purchased or taken by commissioners from the Kipp and Cruger estates. The first stone of the building which constitutes the present hospital was laid on the 1st of August, 1811. During the War of 1812-'15, with an enemy's fleet blockading the harbor, and an enemy's army at one time threatening a descent upon the city, the work progressed slowly but steadily; finally, in the beginning of 1816, the new buildings were opened for the reception of their inmates; they consisted of the present hospital, three hundred and twenty-five feet in length, fifty-five in depth and three stories in height, with two projecting wings, which was designed as an almshouse, and of a large edifice, some hundred feet in the rear, which was occupied as a penitentiary. The stone which was employed in the buildings was quarried upon the grounds, and their whole cost was, as the record informs us, four hundred and eighteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-four dollars and thirty-four cents.

“The hospital proper was not as yet separated from the almshouse and the penitentiary, but in each of those buildings wards were set apart for the accommodation of those suffering from illness or injury. The medical supervision of the establishment was committed to a visiting or consulting physician, who visited it as often as he deemed necessary, while the immediate attendance upon the sick was intrusted to one or two young physicians who resided in the establishment; thus matters continued until early in the spring of 1825.

“At that time, owing to the neglect of proper sanitary measures, a malignant typhus or jail fever broke out in the penitentiary; the pestilence made rapid progress; the visiting physician, Dr. Charles Drake, contracted the fever and was a long time confined to his house in the city; the two young resident

physicians both sickened; the disease spread to the turnkeys and officers of the house, and general alarm was excited. Under these circumstances, Drs. Jos. Bailey, Jos. M. Smith, and Isaac Wood, were appointed a committee to visit the penitentiary and report upon its condition. They were received by one of the young men, Dr. Belden, who left his bed for the last time to meet them; he died a few days afterward. They found the prison in a dreadful condition, filthy, neglected, without medical attendance. On reporting to Mr. Elisha W. King, the chairman of the committee of the Common Council, he requested the doctors to take the medical charge of the establishment, and to do what was necessary for its renovation. Dr. Bailey at once, from prudential considerations, declined, and the task was undertaken by Drs. Smith and Wood. It was necessary for the penitentiary to be cleared out, but there was a difficulty in the way of this measure. The prisoners were committed for crime, and there was no power in the Common Council to authorize their removal from the penitentiary. Application was at once made to Albany, and an act hurried through the Legislature, authorizing the temporary removal of the prisoners. The building lately occupied as the House of Refuge, but originally erected, on the recommendation of Dr. David Hosack, as a fever hospital, was then nearly finished. It was hastily fitted up, and the prisoners, washed, cleansed, and new clothed, were one by one transported to it; no want of ventilation there, for the rooms were still unceiled; some of the windows boarded up, some imperfectly glazed; air found ready admittance through many a crevice, while guard was regularly mounted over the prisoners, to prevent their running away when convalescent. In a month the pestilence was at an end. Over sixty prisoners were attacked by it, after Drs. Smith and Wood took charge of them; of these only five died, but the keepers, the turnkeys, the nurses, and the medical assistants, fell victims in far larger proportions, and for a long time dropping cases occurred through the city, which could be traced to the jail fever of the penitentiary.

“This occurrence led to a change in the medical department of the almshouse, and Dr. Isaac Wood, who, on the res-

ignation of Dr. Drake, served during the remainder of the year as visiting or consulting physician, was, in January, 1826, appointed resident physician. With Dr. Wood's appointment commenced the permanent separation of the hospital from the almshouse; indeed, the number of the sick poor had now so increased as to demand a separate establishment. The fever hospital, finished and properly fitted up, was appropriated exclusively to those requiring medical or surgical treatment. For seven years, from January, 1826, to the same month in 1833, Dr. Wood ably, and to the satisfaction of the authorities and the public, discharged the duties of his office. He then resigned, and was succeeded by Dr. Stevenson, a gentleman of liberal education and large attainment, but ignorant of hospital duty. Dr. S. served but a year, and then gave place to a gentleman whom we all know and esteem—Dr. Benj. Ogden. In 1837 Dr. Ogden was removed on political grounds, and Dr. Van Hovenberg was resident physician for two years. In 1839 Dr. Van Hovenburg, having been removed, was again succeeded by Dr. Ogden, who finally resigned his office in 1840. The next seven years saw a rapid change of physicians; the office having become a prize for political partisans, every fluctuation of party-power brought with it a change of residents. Old abuses, some of them incident to the character of many of the inmates of the establishment, where the details of the administration were chiefly intrusted to young men, repressed with a strong hand during the firm and enlightened administrations of Drs. Wood and Ogden, broke out with fresh virulence. Licentiousness, disorder, and filth, reached a disgraceful height. While stating the facts, let us not blame too harshly the various residents; for the most part, without experience of hospital duty, they found themselves at the head of an immense establishment, the government of which was too much for one person, even of the highest administrative and professional ability. Under them were placed the young men, advanced students, or newly-graduated physicians, who obtained their appointments by paying a fee to the resident. The latter became bewildered by the weight and magnitude of their duties, and, after perhaps an ineffectual struggle, acquiesced in a state of things they were powerless

to prevent, or, if they continued to struggle on, the disorder was too deeply rooted to be extirpated during the short time they continued in office. A thorough change in the mode of governing the establishment was needed, and it came at a time when the epidemic occurrence of typhus fever raised the existing evils of the establishment to a culminating height. A committee of the Common Council, consisting of James D. Oliver, Washington Smith, and George H. Purser, to whom the subject of the reorganization of the medical department of the public charities was referred, called to their aid a number of prominent medical men, and with their assistance drew up a plan for its future government. With the exception that the office for resident physician was retained, this is the plan which is still in force, and with it a new era commences in the history of our institution. In 1849 the office of resident physician was abolished by the Board of Governors of the almshouse, to whom the control of the establishment had passed, and the administration of the medical department given over entirely to the Medical Board. A few words will complete the sketch I have attempted of the history of our institution. On the completion of the penitentiary on Blackwell's Island, the convicts were transferred from the building in the rear of the present edifice, and this last was occupied as a hospital. In 1848 the almshouse was removed to the building erected for it on the island, and the hospital took its place; the extensive grounds of Bellevue were cut up, and the larger portion sold. The old penitentiary and fever hospital can now scarce be recognized, and in a few years no trace of them will remain; let us hope that the hospital may here be permanent; a more convenient, beautiful, and salubrious site could scarcely be obtained.

“The same causes which have led to such repeated changes in the location of our charitable establishments, to such repeated calls for their enlargement, are still in operation. As our population increases, vice and destitution increase in a much greater ratio. For several years back the hospital has been at times so crowded that it has been necessary annually to open the garrets for the accommodation of patients; dark, low, unceiled, ill-ventilated, stifling in summer, freezing cold

in winter, they were never intended for habitation, and the measure was only had recourse to when forced upon us by necessity. But the Governors have felt that we have no right to poison our patients by confined air, or injure them by unnecessary exposure; that economy ceases to be a virtue when it leads to needless suffering and loss of life; that the taxpayers of our city, heavily as they may be burdened, would sustain them in an expenditure necessary for the well-being of the sick poor. A new wing has been provided, plain, but well adapted to the purposes which it is to subserve, with admirable arrangements for the comfort and cleanliness of the patients. Another year will behold the complete renovation of the old building: Croton water, gas, and proper heating apparatus will be introduced, and the addition of another story will give us ample room for the classification and treatment of our patients; thus the spread of puerperal fever, erysipelas, and typhus, will be stayed, and the mortality and average duration of the illness of the patients be diminished.

“ And let us here observe, New York is peculiarly situated in regard to hospital accommodation. Within a comparatively short period, from the size of a provincial town, she has grown to the proportions of a metropolis; her population, in the time allotted to the life of man, has swollen from thirty thousand to eight hundred thousand, and she has had, within a comparatively short time, to provide institutions and public buildings which, in other countries, have been the growth of centuries. She has far less hospital accommodation than any European city approaching her in size. There, hospitals have been the growth for centuries of the union of private charity with the fostering care of government. In 1840, over fifteen million francs, or three million dollars, were expended by the administration of the hospitals of Paris, and a large portion of this sum was derived from the revenue of real estate belonging to the hospitals, and from bequests by charitable individuals. Dublin has eight considerable hospitals, some of them richly endowed by private charity, and yet this year the Government of Great Britain aids them with a grant of sixteen thousand pounds, or eighty thousand dollars. In London, Guy, the founder of Guy's Hospital, after spending one hundred thou-

sand dollars in erecting the building, bequeathed it over a million dollars. Here our rich men have not yet had time to die and endow hospitals, and yet the need for them exists and must be met; the sick poor cry aloud to us to aid them, or they perish; and whatever, in other respects, may be our shortcomings, as a New-Yorker, I am proud to say that here such an appeal has never been made in vain. Let the public be convinced of its truth, and it will demand that it be answered. This necessity for increased hospital accommodation in the city has indeed been felt for some time, and the additions to the City Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital, that of the Jews, and the noble building of St. Luke's, have been products of its manifestation. These last may, and probably will, like the City Hospital, become the germs of magnificent institutions. They will absorb a portion of the destitution which increases with our wealth and population; but we cannot wait until the death or suffering of thousands awakens private charity from its slumbers. The need was upon us, was felt now, and the Governors of the Almshouse have met it.

“ On first entering on their duties at Bellevue, the Medical Board at once aimed at rendering the institution serviceable for the clinical teaching of medicine; they believed that they would thus elevate the character of the institution; make it an honor to be connected with it; secure the best attainable professional services for its inmates, and partly repay the public for the cost of its maintenance, by improving the education of the rising generation of medical men. These views have since undergone no change; on the contrary, every year strengthens and confirms them. Last winter three hundred students were present at one time, to witness an operation performed by one of the visiting surgeons, in the theatre of the hospital. Could such an audience have been drawn together by mediocrity? or, if drawn together by fortuitous circumstances, would mediocrity and ignorance have dared to face it? Would they not blush in the presence of those who, to a great extent, are able to appreciate their acts? Would they not tremble and shrink under the indignant criticism they would excite? Things are not done here in a corner, and the veil of silence and oblivion drawn over our mistakes. Discussion,

inquiry, and remarks are invited, challenged, and we must be prepared to meet the criticism we provoke. If not impelled by a higher motive, a sacred regard for that most precious of all precious things—human life—a regard that underlies the character of every true physician—would not the care of their own interests and reputation force upon them the most sedulous attention to their patients?

“Medicine cannot be properly taught by books and collegiate lectures alone. To recognize disease we must be familiar with its aspect. The student may be crammed with all the knowledge of the books, and yet, if he has had no clinical teaching, when dismissed with his diploma to practise, he will have to acquire experience at the cost of suffering to his patient, and terrible anxiety to himself. Such experience can only be acquired within the walls of a large hospital, and Bellevue has already become the great clinical school of the city. Daily the visiting physicians and surgeons are accompanied by as many students as can profitably avail themselves of their instructions; and we doubt not the instructions thus received will be found a source of comfort and relief in many a far-off country spot, where the young physician, with no one near to aid him, is forced to rely solely on his own exertions.

“In nominating the young men, who, under the visiting physicians and surgeons, have the immediate care of the patients, it has been customary, in most hospitals, for the officers to use their right of nomination in rotation, thus securing the most desirable situations for their own private students, or obtaining a fee for the favor they conferred. It was at once determined, by the Medical Board, to do away with all such privileges for themselves, to throw the places open to general competition, and to select as their candidates those who, on trial, prove most worthy. Such has been our invariable practice. No questions are asked as to where a young man was born; from what State he came, or from what college he graduated. All are received upon one common footing; all are examined by the same committee, and, after the examination, the only question mooted is the relative merit of the candidates; that this course is the most conducive to the interests of the patients there can be no doubt; we believe

it to be equally conducive to the interests of the young men themselves. They know the terms upon which they are to be received, that they must stand upon their merits alone, and many a young man has been, and will be, incited to the more strenuous prosecution of his studies, by the hope of entering Bellevue Hospital. To this rule we owe the efficiency of our medical staff. Nowhere will be found a more intelligent, better informed, or more capable set of young men, and from among them we look for those who are to be the future pride and honor of our profession.

“So far, gentlemen, as to our views and expectations; but what has been the effect of the changes in the Medical Department on those who are most deeply concerned—on the destitute sick who have been committed to our management? For twenty years previous to the change, the average annual mortality of the institution was twenty per cent.; since that change, in 1848, the average was reduced to sixteen per cent.; in 1849, to thirteen; since that, last year, the medical management has been exclusively under the supervision of the visiting physicians and surgeons—and, notwithstanding that the number of patients is nearly double what it was in 1847, the mortality has been diminished to an average of ten per cent. In the preceding six years, thirty-five thousand and eighty-eight have been under treatment in the hospital. Now, gentlemen, look at this matter in what light you may, scrutinize it as you please, make every allowance and deduction that the most ingenious criticism will enable you to make, and yet the great fact stands out—nearly six hundred lives saved per annum! Nearly six hundred human beings, who would otherwise have been consigned to an untimely tomb, preserved for the enjoyments, the trials, and the duties of life! What a mass of misery and suffering prevented! Nay, if we believe what is indubitable, that faults of omission are almost equally criminal with faults of commission, that when a human being, whose life might have been saved, is suffered to die, the responsibility must rest somewhere, either with individuals or with the community, what a mass of crime is prevented! In six years, three thousand five hundred lives saved—three thousand five hundred murders prevented—is not that some-

thing of which all who have been connected with the present organization of the hospital, whether it be the members of the Common Council who originated it, or the Board of Governors who perfected it and carried it out, or the medical men who have been their instruments—is not that something in which we can all rejoice—something regarding which we can feel with pride that we have deserved well of the community?

“With enlarged space, with improved ventilation, may we not hope that a still further saving of human life may be effected?—that, with the additional facilities wisely and kindly afforded us by the Board of Governors, the number of students who seek practical instruction at our hospital may be increased?—that from it the blessings of sound, practical medical instruction may be scattered broadcast through the State and the country; and that Bellevue, preëminent as it is in extent, and in the beauty and salubrity of its site, may be equally preëminent in the successful cultivation of medical science, and in the relief of human suffering?”

The hospital continued under the management of the Governors until the year 1860. During the period from 1857 to 1860, the improvements in its construction, in its appointments, and in its management, were steadily prosecuted; the wards were rearranged and better ventilated; the accessory buildings were enlarged and improved; the nurses were selected with greater care; and all the necessities of a large hospital were still further perfected. The advantages of the hospital for medical instruction were liberally developed, and every needed opportunity was given to subordinate this immense storehouse of clinical and pathological facts to the interests of practical medicine, surgery, and obstetrics. At the close of the term of service of the Governors, this hospital had become the habitual resort of the students attending the various medical schools of the city, and was fairly recognized by the medical profession as the legitimate field for clinical study and observation.

On the 17th of April, 1860, the Legislature passed a law organizing the department, and conferring upon the Comptroller of New York the power of appointing four Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections, whose terms of of-

five should be six years. The commissioners appointed were Simeon Draper, Esq., Moses H. Grinnell, Esq., Isaac Bell, Esq., and James B. Nicholson, Esq., and on the 21st day of April, 1860, they organized by the election of Mr. Draper as president, and Mr. Bell as secretary. Mr. Draper, who had previously been a member of the Board of Governors and had long taken an active interest in those institutions, entered upon the work of reorganization with great zeal and energy, and was ably seconded by the other members of the commission. The reforms instituted were of the most radical kind, giving to every branch of the service the greatest economy and efficiency. Mr. Draper remained connected with the department until nearly the close of his official term of office, when he withdrew to accept the appointment of Collector of the port of New York. Although he was not again connected with the commission, his personal interest in these charitable institutions ceased only with his death in 1866.

We cannot pay a more fitting tribute to the memory of Mr. Draper, than by placing on record in this volume, the preparation and publication of which he several years since encouraged, the following extract from the address of the Governors of the Almshouse on his retirement from the presidency of that body in 1856: "For more than seven years, irrespectively of domestic and personal claims upon his leisure from ordinary business, and, to some minds, the far stronger claims of weariness that asks some respite, regardless of weather, whether storm or sunshine, during the most pestilential, as well as the most healthy seasons, Governor Draper, with the watchfulness and regularity of a military sentinel, has never failed, always once, and frequently twice a week, to visit those outposts of crime and suffering, the various departments of our official care, in which he has ever taken so kindly an interest. He has superintended them all so faithfully and closely, that as the result he is not more known by the inmates than beloved. To the children he is an object of especial attachment. The poor, miserable, abandoned child—the worse than orphan outcast, whose parents have been to it a curse rather than a blessing—has found in him a thoughtful protector; a guardian possessing a heart as well as a head."

On the expiration of the term of service of the first Board of Commissioners in April, 1865, Mr. Draper and Mr. Grinnell retired from the commission, and Mr. Bell and Mr. Nicholson were reappointed, together with James Bowen, Esq., and Owen W. Brennan, Esq., who form the present Commission of Public Charities and Corrections.

The following statement, from the annual report for the year 1868, exhibits the capacity of the hospital, and the results of treatment of those who enter its wards :

The number of patients remaining in hospital, January 1, 1868, was..	691
The number of admissions during the year was.....	5,800
The number of births during the year was.....	594
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Total number of patients treated during the year.....	7,085
The number of patients discharged, cured, or relieved during the year was.....	5,597
The number of deaths during the year was.....	795
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	6,392
Total number of patients remaining in hospital under treatment, December 31, 1868.....	693

PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF BELLEVUE HOSPITAL FROM 1847 TO 1870.

Name and Position.	Date of Appointment.	Date of Death or Resignation.
Valentine Mott, ¹ M. D., Surgeon,	1847	Died, 1865
John W. Francis, ² M. D., Physician,	1847	" 1861
James R. Manly, ³ M. D., Physician,	1847	" 1851
Alexander H. Stevens, ⁴ M. D., Surgeon,	1847	" 1869
Willard Parker, ⁵ M. D., Surgeon,	1847	Resigned, 1853
James R. Wood, M. D., Surgeon,	1847	
Wm. H. Van Buren, ⁶ M. D., Surgeon,	1847	" 1853
John T. Metcalfe, ⁷ M. D., Physician,	1847	" 1859
John O. Stone, M. D., Surgeon,	1847	" 1854
F. Campbell Stevens, M. D., Surgeon,	1847	" 1848
S. R. Childs, M. D., Surgeon,	1847	" 1850
A. G. Elliot, M. D., Physician,	1847	" 1849
Alonzo Clark, M. D., Physician,	1847	

¹ Consulting Surgeon, 1847-1865.

² Consulting Physician, 1847-1851.

³ Associate Surgeon, 1856-1868. Consulting Surgeon, 1868.

⁶ Consulting Surgeon, 1868.

² Consulting Physician, 1847-1861.

⁴ Consulting Surgeon, 1847-1869.

⁷ Consulting Physician, 1868.

Name and Position.	Date of Appointment.	Date of Death or Resignation.
C. R. Gilman, M. D., Physician,	1847	Resigned, 1850
Stephen Harris, M. D., Physician,.....	1847	" 1848
S. Conant Foster, M. D., Physician,	1847	" 1853
B. W. McCready, M. D., Physician,	1847	
A. Vaché, M. D., Surgeon,	1848	" 1848
Isaac Green, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1849	Died, 1854
Thomas F. Cock, M. D., Physician,.....	1850	Resigned, 1855
A. B. Robeson, M. D., Physician,	1850	Died, 1853
Charles D. Smith, M. D., Surgeon,	1850	Resigned, 1859
Isaac Wood, ¹ M. D., Consulting Physician,.....	1851	Died, 1868
James C. Forrester, M. D., Physician,	1853	" 1854
John J. Crane, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1853	
Lewis A. Sayre, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1853	
Isaac E. Taylor, M. D., Physician,.....	1853	
George T. Elliot, M. D., Physician,.....	1854	
John A. Lidell, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1854	Resigned, 1859
Stephen Smith, M. D., Surgeon,	1854	
B. Fordyce Barker, M. D., Physician,.....	1855	
John W. S. Gouley, M. D., Surgeon,	1859	
Alexander B. Mott, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1859	
Charles T. Meir, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1859	Died, 1863
William H. Church, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1859	" 1866
Alfred C. Loomis, M. D., Physician,.....	1859	
John W. Green, M. D., Physician,	1859	Resigned, 1869
Theodore G. Thomas, M. D., Physician,.....	1860	
Austin Flint, M. D., Physician,.....	1861	
Frank H. Hamilton, M. D., Surgeon,	1861	
Henry B. Sands, M. D., Surgeon,.....	1866	
Thomas M. Markoe, M. D., Surgeon,	1868	
Austin Flint, Jr., M. D., Physician,.....	1869	

¹ Consulting Physician, 1851-1868.