

DR. WILLIAM H. BAKER presented a paper on
 THE ORIGIN, GROWTH, AND WORK OF THE FREE HOSPITAL FOR
 WOMEN, BOSTON, MASS.

Origin.—The Free Hospital for Women was organized in 1875 with five beds and a guaranteed support of one hundred and fifty dollars annually from each of six religious societies, or nine hundred dollars.

The necessity for this hospital in the community was felt and shown by the co-operation of such leading members of the profession in Boston as Drs. D. H. Storer, A. D. Sinclair, W. W. Morland, and J. P. Reynolds; and as sponsors for the ability to preside over the surgical welfare of the institution I was indebted to my New York friends and instructors, Drs. J. Marion Sims, T. Addis Emmet, T. Gaillard Thomas, and E. R. Peaslee.

The governing boards are as follows: Board of Trustees, Medical Board (one member of which is on the Board of Trustees), and Board of Lady Visitors. In early days it was rather as an accommodation to me that individuals served on these boards. The success was further insured by the location of the hospital on the next street to the residence of the visiting surgeon, who served alone in the professional care of the patients for four years.

As its name implied, it was an entirely free institution, no charge being made for admittance, board, care, medicines, or anything else. Its doors were open to poor women without regard to race, creed, color, or location of residence. It was enough to know that she was an absolutely poor woman suffering from some disease peculiar to her sex. It only cared for as many patients at any one time as, or for whom, the funds had been previously guaranteed. Thus the motto of the hospital was created: "Never spend a dollar until we possess it." To this, with one exception, we have strictly adhered.

To secure against any present or future inauguration of political influences that might hamper the attainment of the highest character of professional work, it was decided not to ask for or receive any State or municipal aid.

From the earliest days of our history the Board of Lady Visitors has been composed of most actively working members. To these came with double force the appeals of the suffering applicants for admission, which our limited means restricted our ability to care for, and the determination on their part to provide such means was not only highly praiseworthy, but was that which more than anything else insured the growth and success of our undertaking.

From the earliest period in our history the governing boards have realized two great principles to guide them in the dispensing of this charity: First, the relief of suffering to poor women and surrounding them with that kindly attention and sympathy which

helps greatly to soften their hard lot and to encourage their feelings of self-respect and individuality. Second, the discharge of our obligation to the community and the public at large by the dissemination of the knowledge obtained in our work, through the use of the hospital as an instructing factor to medical students and the profession. That there need be no incompatibility in the harmonization of both these interests is evidenced by the universal success in their adaptation during the twenty-seven years of our work.

Growth.—Within two years, or in 1877, the capacity had increased to fifteen beds and a more commodious house on the same street was obtained. Within four years the capacity was increased again to twenty beds, and an Out-Patient Department established and Dr. F. H. Davenport appointed assistant surgeon, and at the end of that time we received an act of incorporation from the State.

After an existence of twenty years the growth of our institution was well shown in that fourteen surgeons were in constant attendance throughout the hospital year in the Indoor and Outdoor Departments, the surgeons in the latter having a service in the former in rotation. At this time, although the capacity of the hospital remained the same, twenty beds, yet, through the adaptation of aseptic principles in surgery, double the number of patients were treated annually, and the number of operations performed on such patients quadrupled, and this not only without the death rate increasing, but it actually diminished.

January 1, 1895, our present hospital building was dedicated, which largely increased our running expenses; still, through our improved facilities, we were able to care for one-third more patients annually. In the erection and furnishing of our new building we attempted to combine aseptic and hygienic principles with usefulness and artistic effect, and, I might say, an elegance of construction which would not only appeal to the more educated class of sufferers, of whom we had many, but which certainly also made the work of the hospital increasingly pleasant to the governing boards.

Work Accomplished.—In the twenty-seven years of the hospital work there have been 4,152 patients in our wards, with a death rate of two per cent from all causes, including the cases of inoperable cancer, from which cause alone we had seven last year, who entered the hospital for nursing and care until death relieved them from their suffering. There have been treated in the Out-Patient Department 104,706 patients. From the various causes of hospital facilities, operative technique, and the adaptation of aseptic principles the average stay in the hospital has been reduced from fifty-nine and one-half days to nineteen days, or two-thirds. A Training School for Nurses has been in successful operation for the past six years. The present land, buildings, and outfit represent \$200,000, and our endowed fund is \$200,000, making a total of \$400,000. There is no debt of any kind, and

there has never been a time when our treasurer had a deficit to report in our running expenses. Our present capacity is forty beds, and there is seldom a time when the application list numbers less than one hundred names.

We are making a vigorous effort to raise at least \$250,000, in order that the number of patients may be doubled, which would attain the full capacity of our present building, eighty beds. In the expenditure of such sum we hope to move the present kitchens, laundries, nurses' quarters and servants' quarters, and laboratories into other buildings, so as to devote the whole of the present building to the care of patients. We feel the need of a large sum for the construction and the maintenance of a scientific laboratory. We feel that the special hospital for to-day, or any hospital for that matter, can only grow, progress, and keep pace along its lines by doing superior work, by excelling in the knowledge and treatment of the class of cases especially treated; that this can only be done by the most thoroughly scientific work and original research. It is for the construction and endowment of such an institution that we hope to appropriate a large amount of the sum proposed to be raised.

It is with great pleasure that I make this report to my fellow-alumni and thus render the account of my stewardship to my Alma Mater for the twenty-eight years of work since I left the Woman's Hospital, and in so doing I wish to again thank my instructors, the visiting staff, and the assistants of the Woman's Hospital with whom I was associated, for the knowledge received from them and their oft-repeated encouragement and counsel.

DR. GEORGE TUCKER HARRISON.—One thing strikes me as showing real administrative ability and wisdom in the surgeon who organized and built up the hospital, and that is the way in which the boards were organized. The hospital would never have reached the success attained had it not been for his remarkably sound judgment and knowledge of human nature. I only wish some of our hospitals would study that portion of the report. Like a wise captain, he stood close to the helm in the management of the ship.

DR. CLEVELAND.—It has been a great pleasure to listen to this report of Dr. Baker's work. I visited the first hospital, saw him operate there, saw how the work was done, and I have also seen the new hospital. Every detail indicates the earnest, deep thought given to the work, and he has been the master-spirit from the very beginning and inception of it, all through; he has guided the people and kept them with him. He does to this day.

DR. HENRY D. NICOLL.—It has been a great privilege to all members of the Society to hear so distinguished an associate and such an interesting history of his successful work in Boston. It is evident to anybody who has watched the progress of Dr. Baker's hospital that it has illustrated the true principle upon which to establish and carry on a hospital successfully. A hospital must be under medical control if it is to reach the highest

usefulness. The offspring in this instance has shown much more wisdom than the parent. The highest development of the Woman's Hospital of New York has frequently been interrupted by the failure of the Board of Governors to be guided in medical matters by the Medical Board.

I believe we have with us young men—men placed in responsible positions close to those who are organizing hospitals; they ought to learn a lesson which Dr. Baker's history to-night so strongly emphasizes: a hospital must be managed in medical matters by doctors if it is to succeed. We cannot hope to have always his admirable success, which is due so largely to his personality, magnetism, adaptability, and tactfulness. The lesson is there and we should learn it.

DR. JANVRIN.—I have been particularly interested in this cancer question which Dr. Baker has brought up. I happened to be connected with the Woman's Hospital as one of the assistant visiting at the time of the trouble to which he refers, and as a result of that trouble, I think, the Skin and Cancer Hospital was started. The late Dr. Hunter was the gynecologist of this hospital during the first year. I succeeded Dr. Hunter as gynecologist. We had a little building in Thirty-fourth street for many years. The Skin and Cancer Hospital is now at Nineteenth street and Second avenue and will accommodate fifty patients, twenty-five skin and twenty-five cancer. We take in males as well as females. The cancer ward for females has twelve beds, the ward for males eight beds, and we have a few private rooms.

We find it difficult in that building, even, to take in inoperable cases and keep them long. We have the wards on the second floor for skin diseases, and those on the third floor for cancer, and on the fourth floor the operating room, a few private rooms, and a children's ward with six or seven beds. We do take in a great many inoperable cases—that is, where I can curette and clear necrotic tissue out; then we send them somewhere else. Of course, as a rule, the beds are pretty well filled with cases in the early stages. As soon as the operation is finished and the patient is convalescent she is sent away. For some years we had a country branch at Fordham for incurable cases. We disposed of it at a high figure, and the money helped us to buy the property at Nineteenth street and Second avenue and build a modern hospital. I am surprised that Dr. Baker can keep these inoperable cases in the same room with others and not have a disturbance. Our patients object to the foul-smelling cases. It has occurred to me very frequently, and more particularly during the last few years, that an institution in which inoperable cases can be taken care of, out of the city, is the thing now most needed.

DR. BROUN.—When I was at the Memorial Hospital one ward was devoted to inoperable cases. I know, when I was on the staff, air was pumped in all the time—the air was kept sweet all day. It was only heavy after 9 o'clock at night, after the win-

dows were closed. However, I know after 9 o'clock until next morning it was very heavy, but all during the day it was very sweet—not perceptible at all in the ward proper. We kept the patients there until they died.