

1 a

The two causes that led to the establishment of the Normal College of the city of New York ^{were} to say the least peculiar. ^{causes} The first ^{cause} was the removal of a lady principal of a public school for gross neglect of duty and the second was the utter ignorance of a primary teacher. After a fair trial the former was removed from her position, and immediately her friends raised the cry of bigotry and intolerance. Her chief defender and advocate was a politician of commanding influence who ordered the Board of Education to reinstate her or take the consequences of refusal. The lady was not restored to her office; and although the Board consisting of twenty-one members had been elected by the people, it was swept out of existence by an act of the legislature passed through both houses of the legislature by the influence of this political leader, and ^{of twenty members} a board ^{of 12} to be appointed by the mayor substituted instead.

The twelve members were nicknamed "the mayor's twelve apostles". These gentlemen were obliged by the circumstances under which they were appointed to find something to introduce, to change, to improve or to reform, in a word to give some good reason for their existence. In the new Board there was one man, ^{as} like Saul, a head and shoulders above his fellows. He perceived that there could be no reformation without something to reform. And so he went to work to visit the schools; and in a primary department he found a teacher writing ^{on the black board} the pronoun I a small i, and when he had privately corrected her, such had been her inveterate habit of writing the little i that she placed a dot over the capital I. As the distinguished Commissioner left the room, he said to himself "Wreck a! — We must educate the teachers."

In that moment he conceived the idea of an institution for the education and training of teachers; and between the conception and organization of the Normal and High School but a very short time elapsed. This school has grown into the present Normal College of the city of New York. And thus it came to pass that from the failure to perform their duty by two women, an establishment for the education of thousands ^{of women} was founded.

(4) a

in recent years of immigration from southern and southeastern Europe. Speaking of the different nationalities represented in the College, it is difficult to determine which one of four races is the most intellectual, the American of several generations ^{which is composite}, the Teutonic which includes north Germans, Scandinavianans, Danes and Dutch, the British ^{which is} of Roman Saxon and Celtic descent, or the Jewish which is an unmixed race. The valedictorians and prize winners have in turn belonged to each. The German possesses the most momentum, the Anglo-Saxon (so-called) the greatest staying power, the Jew the most perseverance, the Celt the greatest nimbleness, and the American combines, to a great extent, the qualities of the other three. The students from southern Europe have not yet distinguished themselves. With one exception no colored student has ever graduated with honor, and that exception on account of its extreme peculiarity is worth mentioning. However, as the number of colored students is to the number of whites as one to three hundred, if the exception already alluded to were really an African negro, she would give her race a due proportion of the honors.

A very dark colored student one year carried off the William Wood prize of \$40 for the greatest ^{progress} in the French language and literature. As the donor was President of the Board of Education and usually handed out the money in a silver purse ^{which could be kept as a souvenir while the cash might be exp} ~~there was always a hard struggle for~~ ^{the girls here a habit of calling themselves Mammy and Miss and} ~~the honor went more than for the gold~~ ^{the President} ~~and when~~ ^{called} all the prize winners to his office for the purpose of ascertaining their real Christian names, in order that they might be printed correctly in the Commencement program, he perceived for the first ^{time} that the ~~colored~~ colored girl who captured Mr. Wood's prize had features almost straight and regular, resembling more those of a Hindoo than of a negro. He purposely detained her until all the others had retired. He then asked her if she knew anything of her ancestry, and to his amazement she replied, elevating her chin

(5)

The Kindergarten system of training young children began at this time to attract the attention of educators in all parts of the country. The President of the College became an ardent advocate of establishing a free public Kindergarten ^{in connection} with the normal instruction in order that the pupil-teachers should understand its humanizing principles. Miss Elizabeth Peabody, the sister-in-law of Horace Mann, the greatest teacher that America has produced, volunteered to deliver a few lectures on the methods and aims of Frederick Froebel. Her discourses made a profound impression which has lasted to this day. One of her eager disciples, then a young girl of seventeen, is at present the very able supervisor of Kindergartens in the city of New York.

The President of the Board of "Twelve" was an intelligent merchant, kind-hearted and affable even to the humblest janitor. When he was requested to establish a Kindergarten, he exclaimed, "What? Nonsense! Pay out the public money to teach children to play? You would better throw the money into the East River." Nevertheless the free Kindergarten was established, the first of its kind in the United States. But it survived the opposition of the Principal of the Training Department, then located in St. Mark's Place, a considerable distance from the College, only a few months of precarious existence. However under better auspices it was re-established a few years later and has been in successful operation ever since.

When the students were transferred to the new building at Park Avenue and Sixty-eighth Street, the Faculty were very much annoyed by boys in their teens meeting the students and escorting them to and from College. When the girls were spoken to by the Lady Superintendent concerning the impropriety of such conduct, they asserted with one accord ^{that} these boys were "cousins", "uncles", "fathers"