

subjects, he was induced to write a series of articles, describing the islands in New York harbor and many of the institutions, which were published in one of the monthlies of the city. The brief histories of a few of the institutions given proved highly satisfactory to some of the managers, and at their suggestion he at length decided to undertake the preparation of this work.

In examining the several institutions, the author has endeavored to dismiss all denominational prejudice, and present honestly the history and merits of each. He has in every place looked for something commendable, and almost invariably found it. The two hundred institutions of New York, many of which are colossal enterprises, are highly creditable to the humanity and benevolence of our people. The author does not endorse the idea so often advanced, that "*we have too many charitable institutions,*" nor does he believe that they *could* or *should* be greatly consolidated. Institutions, like armies, may be too large for successful management. Many of ours are already as large as they ever should be, and the younger and smaller ones, if well conducted, are certain to rapidly increase in magnitude. We believe every denomination should provide its homes for the aged, and found asylums for its orphans. We have contemplated with high satisfaction the march of events in this direction.

It has not been our purpose to present any new theory for the establishment or management of an institution. An imperfect system has often proved eminently successful under judicious administration, while the most perfect has repeatedly failed through mismanagement. Hence, abstract discussions of theories or systems are of uncertain value. No one can wade through many hundred published reports of the institutions, as we have done, without being impressed with the fact that in the minds of all these managers there is a manifest desire for progress and great efficiency. While the history of our institutions discloses the fact that provision is made for every class of unfortunates, and that the benevolence of the people

is rapidly increasing, it exhibits, also, most noticeably the recognized power of *mind* and of *moral instrumentalities*. Brute force no longer reigns. Public justice is no longer a revenge, but an expedient for the safety of community, and the reformation of the criminal. Sixty years ago truant youth were hurled into a prison, where, under the tuition of mature criminals, they soon became hopelessly corrupted. Now, in a Refuge or an Asylum—a school with a sanctuary—they are impressed with ideas and moral motives, and soon rise to usefulness. The blind and the deaf-mute are educated, asylums rise for the reformation of fallen women and the inebriate, while the halls of the hospital and the prison resound with the ministrations of religion. The most advanced in evil are still considered within the reach, and susceptible of, moral influence, and for whose recovery scores are willing to toil.

For much valuable information in the preparation of this work, the author cheerfully acknowledges his obligation to "A Picture of New York in 1848," "Valentine's History of New York," Appleton's "American Cyclopaedia," the "Gazetteer of the State of New York," the "Manuals of the Common Council," the "Charities of New York," "Half-Century with Juvenile Delinquents," "Public Education in the City of New York," "Watson's Annals of New York," Miss Booth's "History of the City of New York," and to the printed reports of the several institutions whose histories are briefly presented. Also to the managers, superintendents, chaplains, and physicians of the institutions, who, with a few exceptions, have manifested an interest in his undertaking, and promptly furnished such information as was within their reach. The author has gathered his statistics from the most reliable sources, and trusts they will be found very generally correct. Of the labor and difficulty in preparing a work of this kind in a great city of strangers, where things are changing with kaleidoscopic rapidity, few have any conception who have not undertaken it.

Of the style, he has only to say that he has labored to present



the largest amount of matter in the smallest space; and has sought to minister to the understanding, rather than the imagination. In tracing the early history of the island, and the colonial history, he has sought to select, and so group the principal events, as to make them readily found, and easily remembered. He has not sought to unduly encumber the volume with the names of officers, or with unimportant statistics. It has been his aim to present a portable book, richly illustrated, within the reach of all; containing all the information that the masses care to read, of the development of the city, the origin and work of its institutions; in fine, a comprehensive work and guide, acceptable alike to the citizen and the stranger. How far he has succeeded he leaves for others to judge.

The volume has been prepared amid the duties of a laborious pastorate. During the last five years he has visited, as occasion has offered, each of the institutions described, and to many of them he has been called to offer consolation to the suffering. The reports, statistics, and other items, have been thus collected, and any missing facts supplied, when possible, through correspondence. The chapters have mostly been written nights, after conducting an evening service. The labor of its preparation, notwithstanding the numberless perplexities such an undertaking involves, has been a pleasant and profitable one—and he can only wish the reader a similar experience in its perusal. Hoping the fruits of these snatches of time and toil may be made to minister in some degree to the intelligence and good of the people, we send this volume forth on its mission to the world.

J. F. RICHMOND.

NEW YORK, *August*, 1871.

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