

his will disclosed the fact that he had selected Robert Watts, the second son of his old friend, to inherit his estate, on condition that he and his descendants should take and forever bear the surname of Leake; but, in case of his refusal to accept it on these conditions, or of his decease during his minority without lawful issue, then the entire estate was to be devoted to an orphan house, of which he furnished the design, and appointed the seven *ex-officio* trustees. The last will and testament of Mr. Leake was found among his papers in his own handwriting, finely executed, with his full name at its commencement, but, unfortunately, he had neglected to add his signature at its close, and to secure the proper witnesses. He named four executors, only two of whom, however, Hermon LeRoy, and his old friend, John Watts, survived him. The surrogate of the county refused to admit the will to probate, on account of its imperfect execution, and a long and expensive litigation ensued. The authorities of New York claimed that Mr. Leake died intestate, and that his property fell to the city; but after a series of ably contested suits, in which thirty thousand dollars of his savings were squandered, the highest judicatory decreed that the instrument was a valid testamentary document so far as his personal property was concerned, but that the landed estate, valued at seventy or eighty thousand dollars, escheated to the State.

Up to the period of this final decision, which occurred about the close of 1829, it was not known whether or not Robert would comply with the conditions, and receive the estate, which still amounted to about four hundred thousand dollars. He had waited quietly for the close of the litigation, and then decided to accept it. Application was made to the Legislature for the enabling act, but ere its passage he died suddenly, to the great disappointment of his friends, leaving all his possessions to his father.

Mr. John Watts, who was also very wealthy, being now far advanced in years, and having no surviving sons, took a most sensible view of the situation, and immediately proceeded to carry out the design of his departed friend, namely, to establish the Orphan House. On the 7th of March, 1831, an act passed the Legislature incorporating the Leake and Watts Orphan House in the city of New York. The testator wisely directed that the Orphan House should be erected from the income of the estate, so as to preserve the capital for a permanent endowment; consequently, the structure was not

commenced for several years. A plot of twenty acres of ground was selected at Bloomingdale, One Hundred and Tenth street, and on the 28th of April, 1838, the corner-stone of the building was laid in the presence of a large audience, several distinguished clergymen of New York taking part in the exercises. The edifice, completed November 1843, consists of a large central building and two wings; the front entrance is reached by a broad flight of sixteen granite steps, while the porticos, front and rear, are supported by six immense Ionic columns. The basement is of granite, the three succeeding stories of brick, well appropriated to school-rooms, dormitories, play-rooms, and all other needed apartments, capable of accommodating three hundred children, though the income from the endowment is not sufficient for so large a family. The eastern wing is devoted to the boys, the western to the girls; each story is provided with a wide veranda, skirted with a high, massive balustrade, and furnished with an outside stairway, affording excellent facilities for escape in case of fire. A one-story building in the rear, connected with the main building by a covered passage-way, has recently been added, and is used as the kitchen and dining-room. The schools are well conducted. The children are all dressed alike; are well taught in the principles of Protestant Christianity, and appear healthy and happy. Since the opening of the Institution, about one thousand orphan children have here found a happy home, the average number at present being about one hundred and twenty, and are supported at an annual expense of about \$26,000. The cost per child has more than doubled during the last fifteen years. The original cost of the land and buildings was about \$80,000, which has so wonderfully increased in value that the trustees have recently sold four acres for \$130,000. The excellent Superintendent, Mr. W. H. Guest, has spent his whole life in public institutions. He was twenty years connected with the nursery department of our city charities, and has now closed his sixteenth year in the Orphan House.



NEW YORK JUVENILE ASYLUM

(One Hundred and Seventy-sixth street.)

Every great city contains a large floating population, whose indolence, prodigality, and intemperance are proverbial, culminating in great domestic and social evil. From these discordant circles spring an army of neglected or ill-trained children, devoted to vagrancy and crime, who early find their way into the almshouse or the prison, and continue a life-long burden upon the community. It becomes the duty of the guardians of the public weal to search out methods for the relief of society from these intolerable burdens, and the recovery of the wayward as far as possible. That a necessity existed for the establishment of this Institution, appears from the fact that two companies of distinguished philanthropists, in ignorance of each other, arose in the autumn of 1849, to inaugurate some movement for the suppression of juvenile crime. Each company applying to the Mayor, they were happily united, and after careful discussion, and repeated appeals to the Legislature, the New York Juvenile Asylum was incorporated June 30, 1851, with twenty-four managers, the Mayor, the Presidents of the

Board of Aldermen and Assistants, and some other officials, being *ex-officio* members of its board. After the failure of their first application to the Legislature for a charter, in 1850, a number of Christian ladies formed an association, and opened an "Asylum for Friendless Boys," in a hired building, No. 109 Bank street. They entered this inviting field with considerable enthusiasm, and toiled with marked success until the chartering of the society, when they voluntarily transferred their charge, consisting of fifty-seven boys, to the managers of the new Institution. The charter made it obligatory upon the board that the sum of \$50,000 should be obtained from voluntary subscriptions, before it should be entitled to ask from the city authorities for a similar sum, or to call upon them to support its pupils. The board was permanently organized November 14, 1851, and so vigorous were the exertions of its members, that, by the following October, the required \$50,000 were pledged, and an appeal to the supervisors was responded to one month later with a similar sum, thus securing \$100,000 for a permanent location and buildings. After taking possession of the building in Bank street, a House of Reception was, at the beginning of 1853, opened on the same premises, and soon after a building at the foot of Fifty-fifth street, East river, was leased, to be occupied temporarily as an Asylum. During the year 626 children were received, and during 1854 no less than 1,051 were admitted, making a permanent family of two hundred. The buildings being uncomfortably crowded and illy adjusted for such an enterprise, the Institution seriously suffered in all its branches. After much difficulty the board selected and purchased twenty-five acres of rocky land at One Hundred and Seventy-sixth street, near the High Bridge, where very commodious buildings were erected of stone quarried from the premises, and made ready for occupation in April, 1856, with accommodation for five hundred children. The buildings have been several times enlarged, and now consist of a central five-story, skirted by two vast wings of four stories each, supplemented with rear extensions, and appropriate outbuildings for shops, play, etc. A three-story brick, one hundred and eight by forty-two feet, has just been erected to supply some needed class-rooms, a better gymnasium, a swimming bath, and the appropriate industrial departments. The cost of these buildings has exceeded \$140,000. They stand on a lofty eminence, two points

only on the island being higher, surrounded with cultivated gardens, finely-arranged gravel walks and carriage-ways, and with play-grounds covered with asphaltum, and shaded with trees of rare growth. A large platform, with seats, has been erected on the central roof of the main Asylum, affording visitors an extended view of the enchanting scenery of Fort Washington and the High Bridge. The location in summer is one of the choicest in the world, though somewhat bleak in winter.

The children who come under the care of the society are between the ages of five and fourteen, and may for the sake of brevity be divided into two general classes. First, the truant and disobedient; secondly, the friendless and neglected. The first are either voluntarily surrendered by their parents for discipline, or committed by the magistrates for reformation. The second class found in a state of friendlessness and want, or of abandonment, or vagrancy, may be committed by the mayor, recorder, any alderman or magistrate of the city. The charter requires that, when such commitment shall have been made, a notice shall be forthwith served on the parent, if any can be found, and that the child shall be retained twenty days at the House of Reception, during which period, if satisfactory assurances or securities for the training of the child be given, the magistrate may revoke the commitment; but if not, it becomes the ward of the managers of the Asylum, who may indenture the same at discretion to a suitable person.

The House of Reception, No. 61 West Sixteenth street, is a broad, well-arranged, four-story brick edifice, with iron stairways, first occupied in 1859, and cost, including ground, \$40,000. It accommodates comfortably one hundred and thirty children, and is always filled, as most remain here four or five weeks before they are sent to the Asylum. The first great lesson inculcated after admission is cleanliness, without which there cannot be self-respect, laudable ambition, or godliness. The child is stripped of its filthy garments, taken by a kind woman to a vast bathing tub, supplied with jets of hot and cold water, and thoroughly scrubbed, after which it is clothed with a new clean suit, retained alone until pronounced by the physician free from infectious disease, after which it is assigned to its appropriate class, and enters upon the study and discipline of the Institution. Bathing is

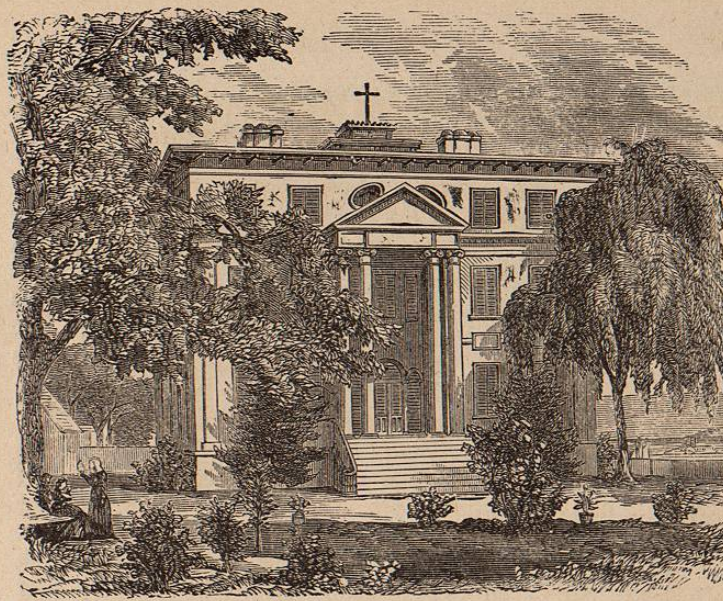
continued regularly twice a week during the year, ample facilities being provided in both Houses.

The schools, long under the able Principalship of James S. Appley, Esq., are conducted by graduates selected for their skill in discipline, and the children make rapid progress in study while they remain in the Institution. The libraries of the Asylum contain nearly two thousand volumes. Fifty of the boys are at present instructed and employed in the tailor shop; thirty in the shoe shop, fifteen at a time; others toil in the gardens, supplying all the vegetables for the family; while others are made useful in cleaning halls, washing vegetables, sweeping yards, making the beds in the dormitories, etc. Hours are set apart for family and public religious instruction and worship, for lectures, instruction in music, temperance meetings, and other opportunities of culture. The children retire at a quarter before eight in summer, and at seven in winter, and are required to rise with the sun or before it. Nine or ten hours are thus given for uninterrupted sleep. The managers secured for a number of years for their Superintendent the services of Dr. S. D. Brooks, an educated physician and a gentleman of fine administrative talent, coupled with a long experience in training truant children. He has recently connected himself with the "New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb," and his place in the Asylum has been filled by Mr. E. M. Carpenter, late of the House of Refuge, at Rochester, New York, another gentleman of large and successful experience.

The sanitary interests of the Asylum have been so well conducted that of the fifteen thousand three hundred and thirty-six children admitted since its opening in January, 1853, only sixty-three have died, and during 1864-65 but one death occurred.

The correctives applied are mainly moral, the rod being very rarely employed; but the hundreds of unruly boys received annually make more and more necessary the erection of a high enclosure around the premises. The building was long poorly supplied with water from wells, and the danger of fire was a source of deep and constant anxiety, but the construction of the high-service reservoir has at last obviated this difficulty. A steam pump has recently been connected with the general heating apparatus, capable of throwing two hundred gallons of water per minute to any part of the buildings, with well-arranged iron pipe and hose for the speedy ex-

tion of fire. The plan of the Institution is the early return of the children to their parents, or their indenture to responsible families in the country; hence few remain over six months. The State of Illinois, the garden of the West, was early selected as the place for the deportation and indenturing of the children, and over three thousand have been placed in these Western homes. A House of Reception, under charge of a resident agent, has been established at Chicago. This agent regularly visits the children and corresponds with the families in which they live, taking care that justice is done to all concerned. Children are not indentured without the consent of their parents, except in extreme cases. They are often placed in large numbers in a township or county, and thus allowed to continue their early acquaintance, and rival each other in attainments and worth. Clergymen and other persons of character are requested to instruct and otherwise care for them after their indenture, and very few have turned out badly. More than \$250,000 have been contributed by private parties toward the support of this Institution since its establishment, its chief revenue being derived from the city government. It is admirably conducted, and ranks among the best institutions of the age.



THE HOUSE OF MERCY.

(Eighty-sixth street, North river.)

Woman has in all time borne a conspicuous part in works of benevolence and reformation. There is an intensity in the female nature which generally develops into positive traits of character, either for good or for evil. She loves or hates with all her heart, and can hardly occupy a middle ground. The instincts of a good and true woman are easily aroused by the cries of the wretched and helpless, and her entire nature is at once thrown into efforts for their relief. In the quickness of her perceptions, in the depth and constancy of her sympathy and affection, as well as in the sublimity of her faith, she has often excelled her more hardy companion. But alas! an angel corrupted becomes a devil, and a woman abandoned to treachery and lust becomes a mournful wreck, of all others the most difficult to recover. Nature thus abused seeks to avenge itself of the outrage, by sadly inverting all her high-wrought faculties, degrading to the deepest infamy all that was formed for sublimity and purity. Only woman can intimately superintend the recovery of her own

fallen sex, and the age has produced not a few who have successfully toiled in this dark and forbidding field.

The House of Mercy was founded in 1854, through the untiring exertions of Mrs. S. A. Richmond, wife of the late Rev. William Richmond, formerly rector of St. Michael's Church, New York. The act of incorporation was passed February 2d, 1855. The efforts of the society for several years were on a limited scale, and conducted in private houses hired or gratuitously furnished by the friends of the enterprise. The zeal and efforts of Mrs. Richmond, who was a Christian lady of rare endowments and great address, during the infancy of the movement are infinitely above all praise. She not only sought with the most careful training the reformation of the fallen in the Institution, but shrank from no other toil or exposure. For several years she so successfully plead the cause of the society at the markets, in the streets, and before the counters of the merchants, that the supplies of the House were never exhausted. When her failing health compelled her to resign the superintendency in the Institution, she still conducted the branch office at No. 304 Mulberry street, receiving and sending to Eighty-sixth street the women who desired to reform. She was succeeded in the management of the Institution by several members of the sisterhood of St. Mary, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who had spent some time at St. Luke's. At first only the internal government was committed to them, but for several years past the financial department, in connection with the trustees, has been in their charge also, leaving the committee of ladies to whom this was at first assigned as merely representatives from their respective churches. The sisters have succeeded with much satisfaction both to themselves and others. The younger class of fallen women are taken, a large part of them being between twelve and twenty years of age. They are not compelled to remain against their will, and if very refractory are sent away. Deep-rooted virtue is with them a plant of slow growth, hence a period of exclusion from ordinary society for one or two years is considered essential to their thorough reformation. Many return to their friends, after spending a few weeks or months in the Institution; some depart at the request of the sisters, or without it; others remain long, and then go to service in good families, or enter upon the responsible duties of the conjugal state. Quite a large number of the inmates have been confirmed as members of

