

first printed report, detailing the account of its proceedings, and showing that, during the fourteen and one-half months of its active existence, 1,227 patients with diseases of the eye had been treated, and 430 with diseases of the ear. The Hospital is always open for the reception of in-door patients, and on every secular day at two o'clock P.M., for such as may attend gratuitously the Dispensary for the out-door service.

Many cases have occurred in the experience of the year to illustrate the beneficent character of the work done by the Hospital. We append a few:

"An old man, who was once in affluent circumstances, but had lost his property, so that he was an object of charity, was brought to the Hospital blind. One eye was found to be hopelessly disorganized by disease, and the other fast becoming so. An operation was at once performed on the eye least diseased, and in which he could just distinguish light from darkness; it did not avail much, however, and then, on consultation, it was decided to remove the most diseased eye, trusting that this radical procedure might be of benefit to the eye which was rapidly becoming as hopelessly affected. This was done; in a few days the sight of the remaining eye began slowly to improve, and continued to do so until in about three months he was again able to read and write, and he is now earning his bread. This poor man was so destitute of means that he was not able to pay his board for one day of the three months he was in the Hospital, and but for its charity his eyes would have very soon been beyond all hope.

"A day laborer, with a family dependent upon him, had been blind for a year. He was led to the Hospital by a friend; he was found to have a cataract, which was removed by an operation, and in six weeks he was able to leave the Hospital with sight enough for all ordinary purposes, and has now been at work for a year. He was also unable to pay his board.

"A poor man, a widower, and his four small children, came into the Hospital with Ophthalmia, contracted in their overcrowded tenement from a child that had returned diseased from the Westchester Reformatory. They formed a piteous group, and were in immediate danger of blindness. They were ragged and unclean; special arrangements were made to cleanse, clothe, and treat them, and after prolonged and painstaking care they were all saved from blindness.

"An old lady, in reduced circumstances, was brought in

blind with cataract; she was operated upon, and her sight restored, so that she could read and write the finest print or writing.

"A man who had for many years occupied a fiduciary position became blind and was brought to the Hospital, where he was operated upon for cataract, and his vision restored.

"A poor seamstress, blind with cataract, was operated upon and her sight restored.

"A poor old man, who had for some years been shut up at his house by his relations as hopelessly blind, was brought to the Hospital, operated upon for cataract, and useful vision restored. So we might go on to narrate several scores of cases in which blindness was either cured or prevented.

"What is said of the cases of disease of the eye holds true also with regard to cases of diseases of the ear."

ASSOCIATION FOR THE RELIEF OF RESPECTABLE AGED INDIGENT FEMALES.

(East Twentieth street.)



THE society which still perpetuates this noble charity began its career during the last war with England, and has now issued its fifty-eighth annual report. In other lands, where institutions have attained the hoary growth of centuries, this statement would occasion no remark; but here, amid the rush of new events, and the ceaseless change in nearly every locality, we can but feel that this deserves the appellation of *time-honored*. The wants of human nature are identical in all ages, hence an institution to provide for aged females, whose declining years were saddened by poverty, was needed in this city sixty years ago. The common almshouse, filled as it usually is with the dregs of society, is not a place of comfort to persons of refined sensibilities. For the relief of this class, a few benevolent ladies were moved with compassion. Meetings for the discussion of their plans were held, and in the autumn of 1813 an association was formed, which was the nucleus of this society. The organization of the society occurred on the 7th of February,

1814, in the session room of the Brick Presbyterian Church, when a constitution was adopted, and a board of sixteen managers elected. The managers held their regular meetings for three years in the same church, after which they were held in private houses, until the completion of the Asylum in 1833. During the first twenty-four years, the society simply gave pensions to its needy beneficiaries in money and clothing, and thought of nothing beyond. But in 1833 the plan of erecting a suitable Asylum was proposed. In the winter of 1834, after a sermon preached by Dr. Schroeder, in the Church of the Ascension (then in Canal street), setting forth the wants of the society, a collection of \$310.20 was taken for the enterprise. But the impression made on the audience was better than the collection. Mr. and Mrs. Peter G. Stuyvesant, who were listeners, soon presented the society with a deed of three lots of ground, the site of the present building. John Jacob Astor nobly headed a subscription with \$5,000, on condition that \$20,000 should be raised in a year. The ball being now fully in motion, many merchants and persons of wealth were successfully appealed to, and the amount realized. The Asylum was commenced in 1837, and the following year completed and thrown open for the reception of inmates. The edifice is a four-story brick, with a fine basement and subcellar, with accommodations for about one hundred persons, including resident officers and employés.

The want of an infirmary was soon apparent, and Mr. Astor again pledged \$3,000, which, with numerous smaller sums, enabled the managers in 1845 to purchase the adjoining lot and complete the desired building. In 1816 the society received from the Common Council \$300, and the year following, \$250, which, with a recent State donation of \$6,000, comprise all sums ever drawn from the public authorities—a fine record, indeed, in this age of public plunder.

This society, being the pioneer of its kind, has exerted a most healthful influence in the city and country, and its managers, being selected from the several denominations, have infused its spirit into all the churches. Persons are not admitted under sixty years of age, and are required to furnish their own rooms, pay an entrance fee of fifty dollars, and leave what other property they may inherit to the Institution. No denominational tests are urged in the admission of candidates, though the greater number are from the Reformed Dutch and the Presbyterian churches. It may be interest-

ing to state that the Asylum at one time sheltered a near relative of President Washington, and has at this writing, within its walls, a cousin of General Lamb. The Asylum is conveniently arranged, the rooms are large and cheerful, and perfect order and tidiness reign in every department. The same cook has had charge of the kitchen twenty-seven years. The inmates have nearly all lived to a remarkable age. The obituary record shows that some died at 84, some at 85, others at 86, 89, 93, and 97. In 1851 the vestry of Trinity church granted the association a burial plot in their cemetery, and the same year similar donations were received from the trustees of Cypress Hill and of Greenwood. As the Asylum is likely to continue for generations to come, and constantly enlarge its operations, all these plots and many more will probably be needed.

In the winter of 1822-23 an auxiliary society was formed under the direction of Mrs. E. Mowatt and Miss Ann Dominick (now Mrs. Gillett, the First Directress), the object of which was to provide suitable clothing for the pensioners. This arrangement has been continued through all these years, accomplishing an incalculable amount of good. The plan of providing for out-door pensioners did not cease with the opening of the Asylum, but still continues. In 1851 their printed report showed that no less than eighty-seven had been regularly assisted during the year, and that one of these had died at the ripe age of 100 years, who had annually received aid since the formation of the society.

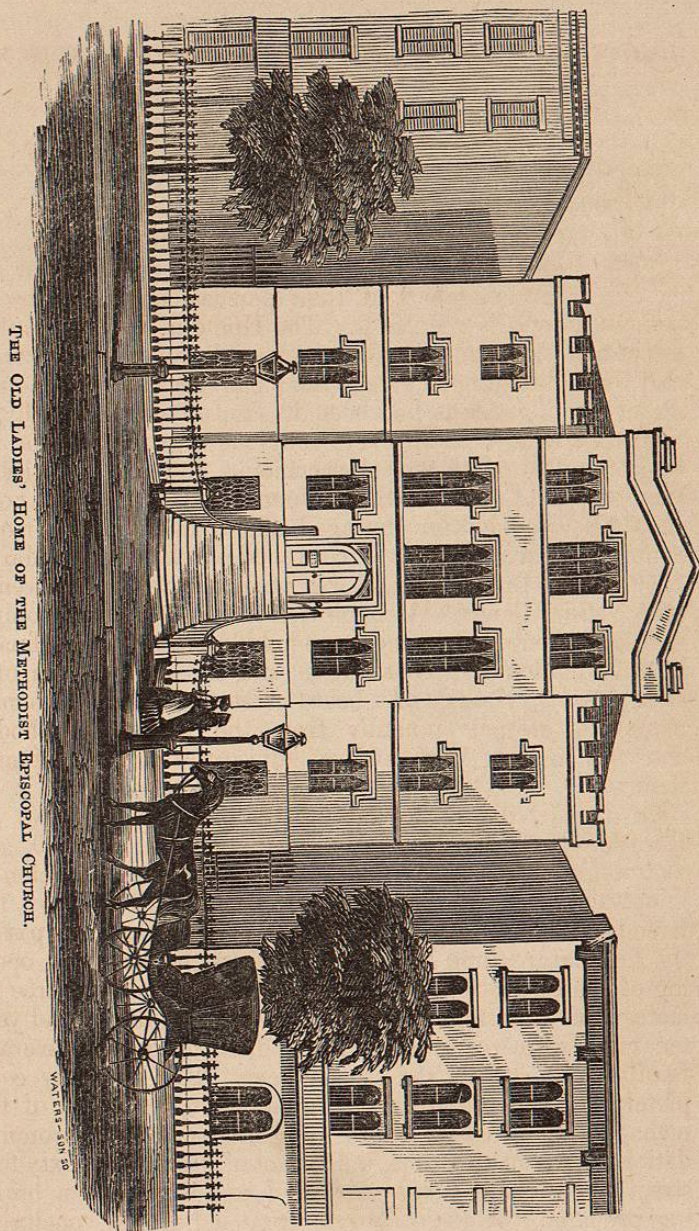
The inmates of the Asylum have numbered from seventy to one hundred for many years past, and the expense of the Institution has ranged from ten to twenty thousand dollars per annum. Plans for the erection of a new edifice on Fourth avenue and Seventy-eighth street have been adopted. The new Asylum will be of stone, five stories high, surmounted by a Mansard roof, and is estimated to cost \$175,000. When this is completed the old Asylum in Twentieth street will be disposed of. Notwithstanding the great multiplication of benevolent societies during the last quarter of a century, hundreds are still knocking at these doors who cannot be admitted until death shall remove the present inmates, or enlarged accommodations are provided. Services are held regularly by the pastors of the neighborhood, and skilled physicians have always freely rendered their services.

LADIES' UNION AID SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

(*Forty-second street, near Eighth avenue.*)

TO the ladies of the Methodist Episcopal church must be accorded the honor of founding the first denominational Institution for the support of the aged and infirm members of their persuasion, whose circumstances especially require it. The Home in East Twentieth street had preceded it twelve years, and proved the necessity and feasibility of such enterprises; but this was not denominational, and, great as had been its usefulness, there still remained a wide field in every religious organization for the largest endeavors of the self-sacrificing, and the charities of the benevolent. Under the profound conviction that a home should be provided for the aged and indigent of their own communion, a meeting was convened on the 4th of March, 1850, at 459 Broadway, and was presided over by the venerable Nathan Bangs. A committee of inquiry was appointed and several subsequent meetings held, which resulted finally in the adoption of a constitution, and the organization of a society, which consists of a board of seventy, or more, female managers, elected annually from the various Methodist churches in New York, and an advisory committee of gentlemen.

On the 1st day of November, 1850, the building No. 16 Horatio street was leased at an annual rent of \$480, and soon after its doors were thrown open for the reception of inmates. Much of its furniture was contributed by the friends of the enterprise. The act of incorporation passed the Legislature June 19, 1851, seven months after the opening of the Institution. During the first year twenty-three inmates were admitted, two of whom died, and the second year ten more were received, and one died, leaving an average family of thirty for the second year. This not only completely filled the building, but forced upon the minds of the managers the necessity of providing more enlarged accommodations. About this time, a fine plot of ground on Sixty-first street and Broadway was purchased, and a plan of a building prepared. A little consideration led to the conclusion



THE OLD LADIES' HOME OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

that these lots, situated in so eligible a part of the city, might be advantageously disposed of, and a much larger plot obtained thereby, farther out of town. In 1853 twelve lots were selected and purchased on the Kingsbridge road, at One Hundred and Forty-second and One Hundred and Forty-third streets. The increase of the price of building materials, and the want of available funds, delayed for two years longer the commencement of the much-desired edifice. But God, in His inscrutable providence, was preparing them a site for their Bethesda in one of the loveliest portions of the city, where the aged inmates might remain in convenient communication with their churches and friends. In 1855, Mr. William S. Seaman, an aged member of the Allen Street M. E. church, donated to the society two choice lots on Forty-second street, near Eighth avenue, on condition that the annual interest of the estimated value of the property should be paid to him during his lifetime. The society promptly accepted this generous gift, soon purchased the lot adjoining, and the following summer began the erection of the Home. Mr. Seaman died nine months after the conveyance of the property, but his last days were cheered with the assurance that the cherished Institution would be immediately erected, on the site he had so benevolently contributed. The corner-stone of the new building was laid with appropriate services, September 16th, 1856, and the Institution dedicated by Bishops Morris and Janes, assisted by other clergymen, April 27th, 1857. The family, after residing six and a half years in Horatio street, was removed to these more eligible quarters on May 1st of the same year.

The edifice is a substantial brick, sixty-two feet front and eighty-two deep, four stories high, with a brown-stone front, and is constructed in the Gothic order. The main entrance, over which is the chapel and infirmary, projects several feet from the body of the building, and is reached by a broad flight of stone steps. The basement, which is entirely above ground, contains the kitchen, dining-room, laundry, store-rooms, and pantry, besides a broad entrance hall, all conveniently arranged. On the right of the vestibule, on the first floor, is a commodious parlor for visitors, and on the left, one for committees. A large and airy rotunda adjoins, entered through sliding doors, lighted by a dome of sixteen large windows, which may be raised by cords for ventilation. This is surrounded by convenient rooms for inmates, the superintendent's being among them, and so arranged as to make com-

munication easy with any or all of the family. The second and third stories have circular corridors, which are surrounded by pleasant apartments, each having one or more windows, and a ventilator. On either side of the front entrance is a flight of stairs leading to the second story, where over the vestibule and the parlors is the tasty chapel, with seating for one hundred persons, and immediately above this is the infirmary, a large airy room, commanding an extended view of the city and adjacent country. When erected it was said to contain space for the accommodation of one hundred persons, but that number has never been received. It is heated by furnaces throughout, each room having its register. It is well provided with bath-rooms and Croton, has an ample cellar, and at its erection was one of the best ventilated and finest arranged buildings in the city.

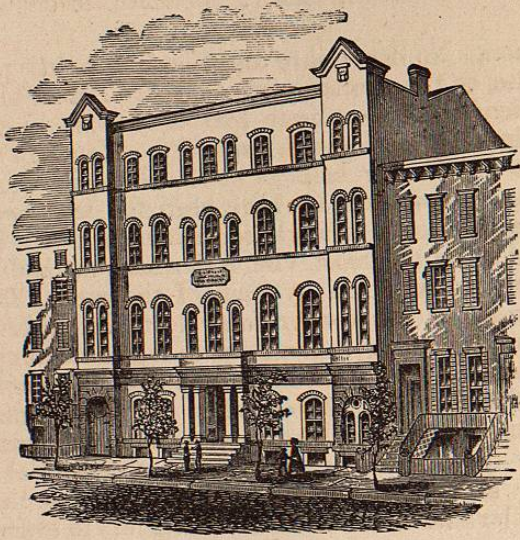
The lot purchased cost \$6,400, the edifice \$30,000, and in 1867 the building adjoining was added at the cost of an additional \$20,000. The property is now valued at \$125,000. The purchase of the last building made space for the reception of several aged men. Down to the time of entering the new building the family averaged twenty-five, since which it has been at least trebled, and now averages over eighty. Since its opening, in 1850, 194 beneficiaries have shared its generous hospitality, of whom 90 have died, and 21 have been otherwise provided for.

At the opening of the new building a debt of \$23,000 remained against the property. The number of inmates soon greatly increased, prices advanced, the war and other providences swept away many of their generous friends, and during these trying periods the managers were often, like Professor Francke at Halle, driven in deep anxiety to the Lord with the pressing wants of the Institution. With much exertion the current expenses were, however, met, and the debt gradually reduced. In June, 1864, a strawberry festival, as is their annual custom, was held, and on the first of July at the meeting of the managers the proceeds were announced to have amounted to \$588. The treasurer inquired, "Shall the money be used in paying the interest due on the debt at the Greenwich Savings Bank?" At this point Mr. Samuel Halsted, a member of the advisory committee, stepped forward and presented a receipt in full from the president of the bank. He and his excellent brother Schureman had silently by subscription, raised the amount necessary to cancel all in-

debtedness and to thoroughly repair and repaint the building. A thrill of joy at this delightful surprise ran through every heart, and found expression in the long-meter doxology, which was sung with great zest, all the members rising to their feet.

Several grants have been received from the Common Council and the Legislature, though the sentiment now very generally prevails in the denomination that such donations should neither be solicited nor received. The society has held several moderately successful fairs, realized something every year from donations, festivals, and lectures. It has also been remembered with several small legacies, among which we may mention that of Mrs. Bishop Hedding, of \$2,300.

The New York Preachers' meeting annually arranges to supply the Home with preaching, once on each Sabbath, by the pastors stationed in the city. Prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and love-feasts are held stately, and are often seasons of great interest. Many of the inmates are infirm, some have been entirely helpless for years, and most of them live to very advanced age. In 1854 Mrs. Sarah W. Cairns died, at the advanced age of 117 years, and the same year Mrs. Elizabeth Cairns, aged 100 years. "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." The New York Conferences, during their sessions in the city, have, at the invitation of the managers, enjoyed some interesting tea-meetings at the Institution, and the old ladies have several times been agreeably surprised by the members of the different churches, who have spread their tables with delicacies, and left other substantial tokens of their regard. The managers now contemplate the removal of the Institution farther up town, to secure more enlarged accommodations. The resident manager and recording secretary, Mrs. Matilda M. Adams, has held some important position in the board since the organization of the society. She is a lady of solid culture, of genial piety, and possesses in an eminent degree those varied administrative faculties befitting her position, and so rarely blended in the same person. May she and all who have toiled with her in this blessed work, and those whose sorrows they have assuaged, meet in that *Home* where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."



HOME OF THE FRIENDLESS, EAST TWENTY-NINTH STREET.

THE AMERICAN FEMALE GUARDIAN SOCIETY AND HOME FOR
THE FRIENDLESS.

(No. 29 East Twenty-ninth and No. 32 East Thirtieth streets.)

Thirty-seven years ago a number of Christian ladies in New York were moved to begin a work in behalf of the helpless, the exposed, and the forsaken. An organization known as the "American Female Guardian Society" was formed, and its executive committee for some time held their weekly meetings in a small rear basement under the old Tract House. These devoted women visited the city prisons, and the manufactories where hundreds of young girls were employed, distributing religious tracts, papers, Bibles, Testaments, giving counsel to the inexperienced, and providing situations for many out of employment. They also scanned the poorest districts, employed pious female missionaries to visit from house to house, to instruct and encourage the ignorant and desponding. Poor forsaken children, destined for the almshouse, were taken to their own houses and provided for until suitable homes could be obtained for them. At that time there were no "Girls' Lodging Houses," "Working Women's Unions," or "Homes," where innocent, penniless young females could apply for a night's lodging and the necessary helps to

a situation. No doors save those leading to the prison, the almshouse, or the brothel, were certain to open to the indigent, friendless, unfortunate girl or widow, unexpectedly thrown into the whirl of this great city. To guard young females, to provide for helpless childhood, and to care for the sorrowing widow, seem to have been the leading thoughts of the association. A work so eminently Christ-like, now commended by the most vile, was then watched with indifference and suspicion by many of the good. The managers of many of the pioneer benevolent associations, in their triumphant contests with the prejudices and calumny of their generations, have fought battles requiring a courage and deserving the honor of a Wellington or a Washington. The great change wrought in public sentiment, concerning Christian duty to the friendless and fallen, the decided support cheerfully given during the last twenty years, and the numerous similar charities that have sprung up in every section of the country, are sources of the most profound satisfaction to the surviving early friends of this excellent Institution. During the early years of the movement their records show that more than temporal advantage came to many houses of destitution, scores if not hundreds were converted to God, and drawn into the fold of the great Shepherd. Still their efforts lacked concentration and thoroughness, for want of a building suited to their undertaking. No plan for the reception of inmates really commensurate with the aims of the society was adopted until 1847, when a building situated on the corner of Second street and the Bowery was rented. About this time the managers issued a printed appeal for means to *erect* a Home for the Friendless, calling attention to the numbers of females constantly out of employment, and the scores of orphan or deserted children who, by early care, might be saved from pauperism and prison. The means came, lots were purchased on East Thirtieth street, and in December, 1848, the Home, a fine three-story brick edifice, with accommodations for at least one hundred and fifty persons, was dedicated, to the great joy of the managers, who had toiled amid embarrassments so many years. The sphere of usefulness of the society was now greatly enlarged. Hundreds were annually fed, instructed, and furnished with situations. This Institution is not a Home for those who are friendless because guilty of crimes against society; nor to adult paupers, of whom the Scriptures say, "If any will not