

mendatory. Sixteen of these National Conventions have now been held, many of which have been large and impressive. The Association organized and conducted, during the late war, the Christian Commission, whose toils and usefulness cannot be too highly commended. There are now in the United States seven hundred and seventy-six associations and sixty-two in the British Provinces, with a membership of over one hundred thousand. Twelve of these have already erected or purchased buildings of their own, and twenty-one more at least are collecting funds to do so. The Association in New York city was the third organized in America, and has a membership at present of over six thousand. The headquarters of the Association were for several years at No. 161 Fifth avenue; and to reach the masses of young men in the various wards of the city, four branches have been formed, one of which is at Harlem, one at No. 285 Hudson street, one at No. 473 Grand street, and one for colored men at No. 97 Wooster street. Each branch is supplied with a library free to all the members, with a reading-room supplied with the principal magazines and papers of the city, and with occasional lectures from distinguished men. The Association appoints several committees to which the principal labor is committed. It has a committee on Invitation, on Membership, on Employment, on Boarding-houses, on Visitation of the Sick, on Devotional Meetings, on Choral Society, on Literary Society, and one on Churches. Young and middle-aged men from all evangelical denominations unite, forgetting denominational distinctions, and do annually a vast amount of good. Hundreds of young men loitering in the streets are picked up and saved from dens of dissipation and crime. Strangers are recommended to suitable boarding-houses, introduced to members of churches in their neighborhood, and many furnished with good situations in business. For several years the Association contemplated the erection of a suitable building, which, in addition to its ample accommodations, would furnish an income, so greatly needed in the prosecution of its work. An act of incorporation passed the Legislature April 3, 1866, granting power to hold real or personal estate for the uses of the corporation, whose annual rental value should not exceed \$50,000. A plot of land on the south-west corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue was purchased, at a cost of \$142,000. On the 13th of January, 1868, ground was broken, and on De-

ember 2d, 1869, the building was dedicated, Drs. Dewitt, Tyng, Adams, Kendricks, Thompson, Ridgaway, Messrs. Dodge, Randolph, General Howard, Governor Hoffman, and Vice-President Colfax taking part in the exercises.

The edifice, which is very attractive, is five stories high, with a front of eighty-six feet nine inches on Fourth avenue and one hundred and seventy-five feet on Twenty-third street. Immense blocks of granite form the base of the walls, and as they ascend Ohio free and New Jersey brown stone, with their varying colors, are agreeably interspersed with an occasional vermiculated block. The windows, in a variety of forms, exhibit the beauty and strength of the arch-line, and the polished archivolt are richly ornamented with carved voussoirs. The central door is marked by rich columns and surmounted by the arms of the Association.

The roof is crowned with a superb central and three angular towers. The ground floor is rented for stores. Entering on Twenty-third street, ascending a flight of stairs, you pass to the right into the grand hall, capable of seating one thousand five hundred persons, so perfectly ventilated that a crowded audience departs, at the close of a lecture, leaving the air as pure as it found it. The hall is furnished with a Chickering piano-forte and a pipe organ, which cost \$10,000, both of which were purchased with the proceeds of a concert held in the hall on the evening of the 1st of December, 1869. To the left of the staircase is a pleasant reception-room, from which is an entrance into the secretary's room, the large reading-room, to three committee-rooms, to a wash-room, a bath-room, to a gymnasium, and after descending two flights of stairs to a bowling-alley. Upon the next floor is the library, capable of containing twenty thousand volumes, a small lecture-room, with seating for four hundred persons, four smaller rooms for evening classes in penmanship, drawing, book-keeping, the sciences, and the languages. The upper stories are rented to artists and others.

The edifice cost, exclusive of the site, \$345,000, on which there remains a debt of \$150,000, which the managers hope to remove with the rent of the stores. Such an embodiment of modern Christianity is rarely seen in one building. The noble edifice presents the study of architecture, the first floor exhibits the activities of business, while farther up are found painting, music, eloquence, conversation, reading, study, recreation, and worship—all that can attract, expand, and ennoble the soul.

THE PRISON ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK.

(Bible House.)



THE Prison Association of New York was organized on the evening of the 6th of December, 1844. The objects of this Association, as set forth in its constitution, are: 1. A humane attention to persons arrested and held for examination or tried, including inquiry into the circumstances of their arrest, and the crimes charged against them; securing to the friendless an impartial trial and protection from the depredations of unprincipled persons, whether professional sharpers or fellow prisoners. 2. Encouragement and aid to discharged convicts in their efforts to reform and earn an honest living. This is done by assisting them to situations, providing them tools, and otherwise counseling and helping them to business. 3. To study the question of prison discipline generally, the government of State, county, and city prisons, to obtain statistics of crime, disseminate information on this subject, to evolve the true principles of science, and impress a more reformatory character on our penitentiary system. The Association was duly incorporated, with large power for the examination of all prisons and jails in the State, during the second year of its operations, and required to report annually to the Legislature. A female department was organized the first year (The Isaac T. Hopper Home), which soon became an independent society, abundant in labor and rich in results. Its history and workings are elsewhere traced in this work.

During the twenty-five years of its operations closing with 1869, the Association visited in the prisons of detention of New York and Brooklyn, 93,560 poor and friendless persons, many of whom were counseled and assisted as their cases required.

The officers of the society carefully examined 25,290 complaints; and at their instance 6,148 complaints were withdrawn, as being of a trivial character, or founded on mistake, prejudice, or passion. During the same period, 7,922 persons were discharged by the Courts on the recommendation of these officers as young, innocent, penitent, or having of-

fended under mitigating circumstances, making a total of 133,922 cases, to which relief in some form had been extended. During the same period 18,307 discharged convicts had been aided with board, clothing, tools, railroad tickets, or money; 4,139 of the same class had been provided with permanent situations, swelling the number to 156,368.

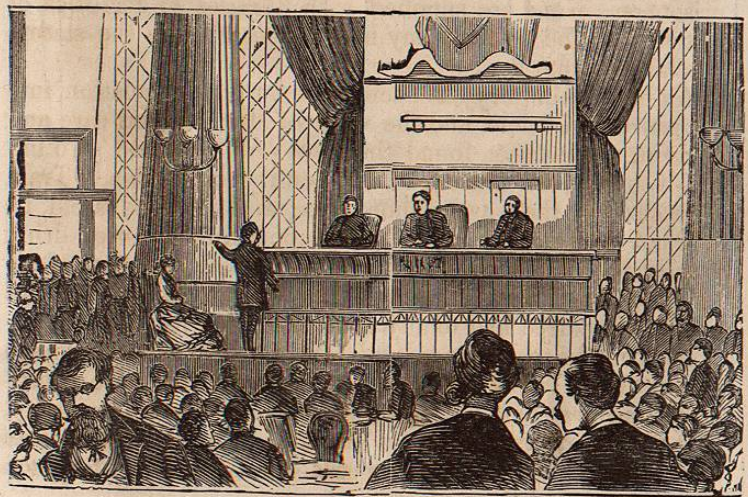
But the principal work of the Association has been intellectual. It has again and again examined every prison, penitentiary, and jail throughout the State (numbering about one hundred in all), and those of the surrounding States, and of the Canadas, pointing out faithfully in its annual reports the defective construction of these establishments, the incompetency or barbarity of keepers, the chief defects of our prison system, and has sought industriously to educate public sentiment and influence the Legislature toward a more humane, rational, and reformatory system of prison administration. The Association has conducted a valuable correspondence with enlightened men of the Old World, who have made this subject a matter of special study, thus bringing together the researches and experiments of all countries. It has collected volumes of statistics which no student can afford to do without. It informs us that the sixty-eight county jails of New York State cost annually about a quarter of a million of dollars for their maintenance, of which sum not five hundred dollars are expended with any view to meeting the religious wants of the prisoners. None are supplied with libraries or facilities of instruction, and scarcely any have Bibles, though the statute specially enjoins it.

An earnest inquiry has been made by the Association into the sources of crime, and the want of due parental care and government has been found the most prolific of all. To improve society, we must practise upon the injunction, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Of the approximate causes, drink is most potent. Two-thirds of all prisoners interrogated acknowledged that they were of intemperate habits, and not one in a hundred had totally abstained from its use.

Next in the scale comes *lewdness*. Of six thousand women committed to jail in one year, over three-fourths were prostitutes, and near half the men prisoners interrogated confessed that they were frequenters of brothels. Theaters are sources of great evil. Nearly fifty per cent. of all committed to prison have frequented these places.



"BLACK MARIA"—the carriage used in carrying criminals from the Courts and Tombs to Blackwell's Island.



COURT OF SPECIAL SESSIONS IN THE TOMBS.



BRIDGE OF SIGHTS—connecting inner and outer Prison in the Tombs.



PREACHING TO THE FALLEN WOMEN IN THE TOMBS.

The gambling saloon, above all other places, hardens man's moral nature. Of 975 prisoners at Auburn, 317 were acknowledged gamblers, about one-third; and the same proportion was found in the prisons of Connecticut.

Ignorance and vice are found in sad conjunction. In the State of New York but two and seven-tenths per cent. of the general population are unable to read; but of its criminals thirty-one per cent. do not possess that ability.

Early indolence is another source of great evil. It has been ascertained that, of the prisoners of the whole United States, more than four-fifths have never learned a trade.

The Association has contended nobly for the introduction of skilled labor into our prisons, and the retention of prisoners until they are masters of their trades, thus furnishing the means for honorable subsistence after their release.

The Association has ranked among its members many of the first men of the State. Its office is in Room 38, Bible House.