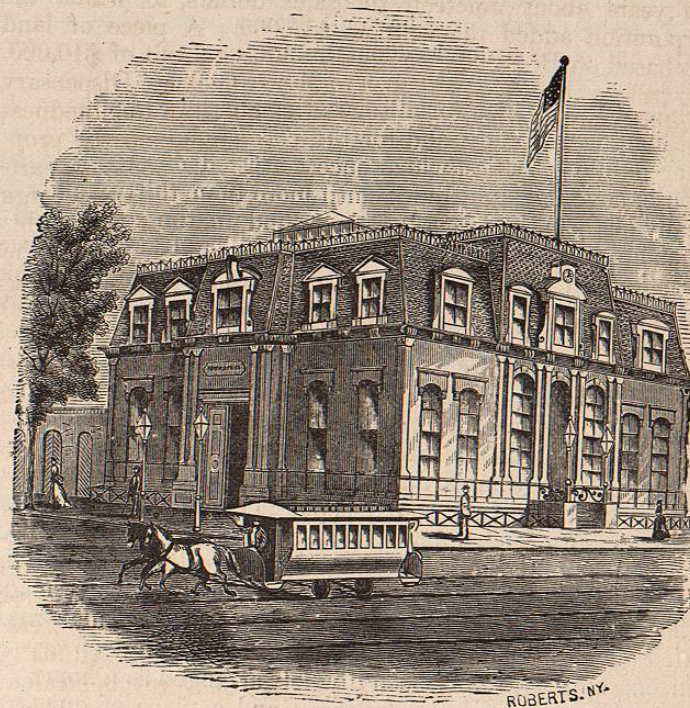


two years about nineteen thousand dollars, to which the Corporation added the sum of \$15,000. A piece of land purchased on Broadway was again sold at a profit of \$10,000. The trustees have now completed one of the finest Dispensary buildings on the island, at a cost of \$83,000, an indebtedness of over thirty thousand dollars still remaining on the property. Besides affording very ample and commodious apartments for the use of the Institution itself, it contains a large store, and a beautiful hall rented for divine service. When this indebtedness is removed it is believed the income from the building will render the Dispensary nearly self-sustaining. The number of patients treated varies from 10,000 to 15,000 per annum.

Besides these there are also various other Dispensaries established for the treatment of special diseases, as the *New York Dispensary for the Treatment of Cancer*, the *New York Dispensary for Diseases of Throat and Chest*, the *New York Dispensary for Diseases of Skin*, and others.

Most of these Institutions receive \$1,000 per annum from the Corporation, to which the State sometimes adds an additional thousand or more as they may need. Aside from this they are supported by private donations. The amount of good resulting to the city and country from the kindly treatment administered to these 200,000 patients, who annually apply to these well-arranged Institutions of mercy, is incalculable. The results from the system of free vaccination alone, are ample for all the expenses of the entire undertaking. This charity of all others is least liable to abuse, and is annually attended with great and manifest advantages to our whole population.



CHAPTER VI.

INSTITUTIONS OF BLACKWELL'S ISLAND.

THE ISLANDS AND THE AUTHORITIES.

(Office of Commissioners of Charities and Corrections, corner Eleventh street and Third avenue.—See cut above.)

Before entering into a detailed account of the institutions located in the East river, let us pause and consider briefly the history of the Islands themselves and the policy of those who control them. One cannot contemplate without feelings of high satisfaction the extensive municipal charities of the city of New York. In their origin they were few and meager, dating far back when the city was small, and the public mind but

poorly enlightened on questions of this kind. The little hovels and shanties of the past have all been superseded by colossal brick and stone structures, containing all the modern improvements of the age, with every known convenience for the relief of the indigent of all ages, the blind, the afflicted, the insane, the inebriate, and for the correction of the criminal. Our public charities, which once consisted of a little Alms-house, have now multiplied until more than thirty buildings, many of them the largest of their kind in the country, have been brought into requisition. The penal and correctional institutions, though they have not kept pace with the charitable, have also been greatly enlarged, and are now valued at nearly \$3,000,000. The charitable institutions, with their grounds and furniture are valued at \$5,500,000, and the annual expenditures in the maintenance of these buildings, with an annual register of 92,000, and an average population of eight thousand, and the necessary expenditures in new buildings and grounds, amounts to \$2,000,000.

The great increase of our population, and the consequent enlargement of our municipal institutions have necessitated the outlay of large sums in securing real estate, and the selections for the most part have been very judiciously made. Those beautiful islands of the East river, in particular, separated on either side from the great world by a deep crystal current, appear to have been divinely arranged as a home for the unfortunate and the suffering, and a place of quiet reformatory meditation for the vicious. A brief sketch of these islands will not be out of place in this volume.

BLACKWELL'S ISLAND is a narrow strip of land in the East river, extending from Fifty-first to Eighty-eighth streets, about a mile and a half in length, and contains one hundred and twenty acres. It was early patented to Governor Van Twiller, and was subsequently owned by the Blackwell family, from whom it derives its name, for more than a hundred years. The ancestral residence, a cozy wood cottage over a hundred years old, situated near the centre of the island, is still in fine repair, and likely to long survive the present generation. This island was purchased by the city July 19, 1828, for the sum of \$30,000, but the authorities were compelled in 1843 to expend \$20,000 more to perfect the title. The little steamers owned by the Commissioners, making several trips per day in the interest of mercy and justice, are the only vessels allowed to land at her piers with-

out special permit. The labor of docking, building sea wall, and the admirable grading by which the island is made to slope gradually on either side to the water brink, has all been performed by inmates of the Penitentiary and Workhouse. The island is now valued at \$600,000 exclusive of buildings.

WARD'S ISLAND, situated immediately above the preceding, takes its name from Jasper and Bartholomew Ward, its former proprietors, and extends from One Hundred and First to One Hundred and Fifteenth streets, containing about two hundred acres. It was formerly known as "Great Barcut," or "Great Barn" Island, and was termed by the Indian "Ten-ken-as." It was purchased by Van Twiller in 1637, confiscated in 1664, and granted to Thomas Delavel. The Wards obtained it in 1806, and in December, 1847, a part of it was leased (afterwards purchased) by the Commissioners of Emigration for the establishment of the Emigrant Refuge and Hospital. Over half of the island is now owned by these Commissioners. The Commissioners of Charities and Corrections purchased a portion of it June 18, 1852, and have since made several additional purchases. The Potter's Field, the place of interment for paupers and strangers, was for some years located here, but has recently been removed to Hart Island. Ward's Island is wider than Blackwell's, and the soil more arable. The portion of this island owned by the Commissioners of Charities and Corrections is valued at \$360,000.

RANDALL'S ISLAND takes its name from Jonathan Randall, who purchased it in 1784, and resided upon it nearly fifty years. It lies north of Ward's Island, and extends nearly to Westchester county. It was formerly known as "Little Barn" Island. This island was also patented under the Dutch Government, and, like Ward's, was confiscated in 1664, and also granted to Thomas Delavel. It was subsequently at different periods denominated "Bell Isle," "Talbot's Island," and "Montessor's Island." It was purchased by the city in 1835 for \$50,000. Thirty acres of the southern portion have since been sold to the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents. Besides furnishing ample grounds for the numerous Nursery buildings it contains a large and productive farm, cultivated by the Commissioners of Charities and Corrections, furnishing large amounts of vegetables for the institutions. Their portion of the island is valued at \$520,000.

HART ISLAND is situated in the town of Pelham, Westchester county, in Long Island Sound, about fourteen miles from Bellevue. This island became the property of Oliver Delancey in 1775, who sold it to Samuel Rodman for £550. In 1819, it was deeded to John Hunter, who died September 12, 1852. After his decease his heirs deeded it to John Hunter jr., grandson of the preceding, July 10, 1866. The United States Government leased it for army uses December 5, 1863, for one year, for the sum of \$500, with privilege of retaining it five or less years longer at an increased rent, the buildings erected by government to remain the property of the lessor. A village of one-story wood buildings, for the accommodation of troops, was soon erected, spreading over the principal parts of the island. Under authority of an act of Legislature passed April 11, 1868, authorizing "additional facilities for the interment of the pauper dead in the city of New York," the Commissioners of Charities and Corrections on May 16, 1868, purchased all except three acres of the southern point (which the owner hopes to sell to the United States for the erection of a light-house), for the sum of \$75,000. The island is estimated to contain about one hundred acres, but is suffering constant loss from the action of the tides. It is probable that the Penitentiary will be removed to this island in a few years at most.

The management of the municipal charities and corrections of Manhattan was for years committed to five Commissioners appointed by the Common Council. In 1845, the whole was placed under the charge of one Commissioner; in 1849 the number was increased to ten; and in 1859 the number was again changed to four, to be half Democrats and half Republicans, appointed for the term of six years by the city Controller. The new charter of 1870 increases the number to five, to be appointed by the Mayor for the term of five years, abolishing the equal political representation.

The present board is composed of intellectual, high-minded gentlemen, representing both political parties, as well as the Protestant and the Roman Catholic faith. Their annual report now amounts to an octavo volume of five hundred or six hundred pages, and one cannot examine one of these without perceiving that our municipal institutions are managed with great discretion and skill. Those great problems which have puzzled the humane and thoughtful in all ages such as the best moral treatment for the insane, the relief and elevation of

the indigent, the reformatory discipline of criminals, the recovery of vagrant and truant youth, the measures for securing the lowest bill of mortality among foundlings, the reformation of the inebriate, and the best hygienic and economic conduct of public institutions, are made matters of constant study, resulting in frequent and manifest improvements. As might be expected, visitors in large numbers throng the institutions, but all are treated with decided urbanity. Many of the Superintendents, Wardens, and Chiefs of Departments, have retained their positions many years, a few more than a quarter of a century, and to whose intelligence and kindness we cheerfully acknowledge our indebtedness for many facts presented in this volume.

A Protestant and a Roman Catholic chaplain give daily attention to the spiritual wants of the inmates of these buildings, holding brief and earnest services in each every Sabbath. Missionaries from any and all of the denominations are granted every reasonable opportunity to carry the messages of the gospel to those receiving either corrections or charities. In conclusion, we can but feel that our municipal institutions, are a credit and an ornament to the great city which fills and supports them.

THE HOSPITALS OF BLACKWELL'S ISLAND.

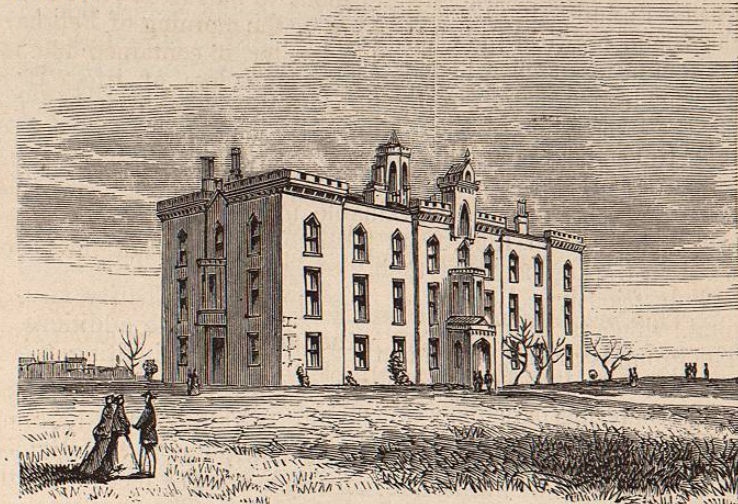
BELLEVUE was for some years the only hospital under the management of the public authorities of New York City. After the erection of the Penitentiary, one of its rooms was set apart for a hospital. In 1848, during the administration of Moses G. Leonard, Commissioner of the Almshouse, at that time acting under the Common Council of the City, the first hospital building was erected on the Island called the "Penitentiary Hospital." The building was of brick, and was completed in 1849, the same year that the "Ten Governor" system came into existence. The name was changed to the "Island Hospital" by resolution of the Governors December 15th, 1857. The Governors appointed a committee to examine the building soon after its

completion, who reported that they found it "constructed in a most reckless and careless manner, and was as a public building a reproach to any city." It was pronounced insecure, and the Governors were about to pull it down, when it was accidentally destroyed by fire on the morning of February 13, 1858. At the time of the disaster, it contained 530 inmates, who were all removed without loss of life. It is believed that it would soon have fallen down if it had not been thus destroyed.

The corner-stone of the *Charity Hospital*, erected on the site of the one so happily destroyed, was laid with appropriate services July 22, 1858. An address was delivered on the occasion by Washington Smith, Esq., President of the board of Governors.

This magnificent structure is of stone quarried from the island by the convicts, and is the largest hospital about New York, and probably the largest on the continent. It is a three and a half story, 354 feet long, and 122 wide. The two wings are each 122 by 50 feet, and the central building 90 by 52, and 60 feet high. The entire hospital is divided into twenty-nine wards, most of which are $47\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, and ranging from 23 to 44 feet in width. The smallest ward contains 13 beds, and the largest 39. The Hospital contains 832 beds, but has capacity for 1,200, and each bed has 813 cubic feet of space, affording an abundance of pure air in all its parts. In 1864 no less than 1,400, most of them sick and wounded soldiers, were domiciled here. The eastern wing of the building is occupied by the males, and the western by the females, and the whole so classified as to accommodate to the best advantage the large number of patients always under treatment. Wards are set apart for consumptives, for venereal, uterine, dropsical, ophthalmic, obstetrical, and syphilitic disorders. Also for broken bones, and the other classes of casualty patients. Two wards are set apart for the treatment of diseases of the eye and the ear, and are in charge of distinguished physicians, who have made the diseases of those organs their special study. The stairways are of iron, the floors of white Southern pine, which, with their frequent ablutions and scourings, and the snow-white counterpane spread over each bed, gives such unmistakable evidence of neatness, as to quite surprise many not familiar with the conduct of public institutions. From six thousand to eight thousand patients are annually treated in this Hospital, most of

whom are charity patients, four hundred or five hundred of whom die, and most of the remainder are discharged, cured or relieved.



SMALL-POX HOSPITAL.

A short distance below this main Hospital, situated on the extreme southern point of the island, stands the *Small-Pox Hospital*, erected in 1854. It is a three-story stone edifice, 104 by 44 feet, in the English Gothic order, with accommodations for one hundred patients, and cost \$38,000. This is the only hospital in New York devoted to this class of patients, and hence receives them from all the public and private hospitals, from the Commissioners of Emigration, and from private families. It is a fine building, well arranged and admirably conducted, designed not only for paupers, but for pay patients, where, secluded from friends to whom they might impart their disease, they receive every attention that science and the most skillful nursing can bestow. This Hospital is rarely empty, and receives from two hundred to one thousand patients annually. For want of suitable buildings persons afflicted with other contagious eruptive diseases have been from necessity placed in the Small-Pox Hospital, sometimes to their detriment. This difficulty is being obviated by the erection of separate pavilions for such cases.

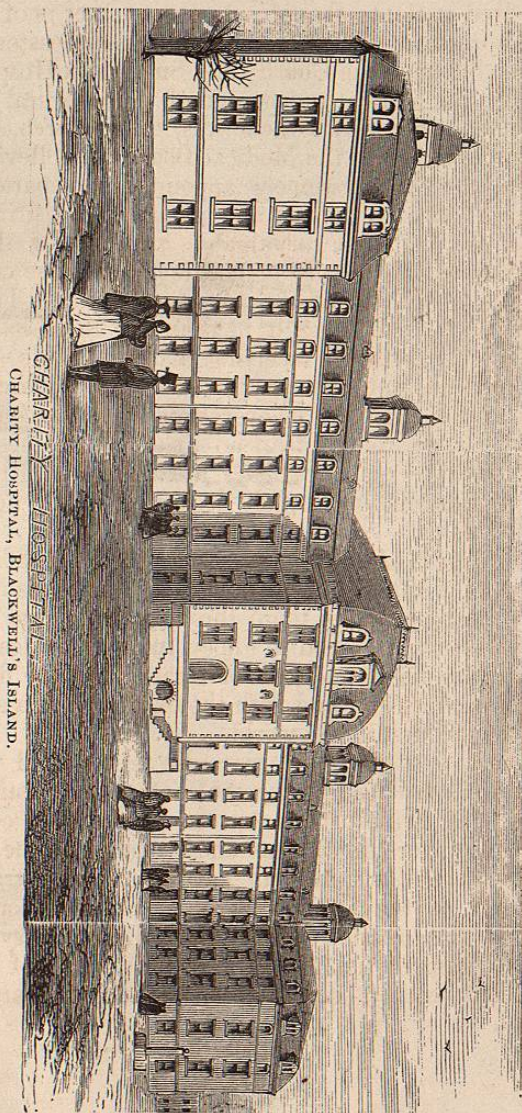
The Fever Hospitals, devoted principally to the treatment of typhus and ship fever, consist of two wooden pavilions,

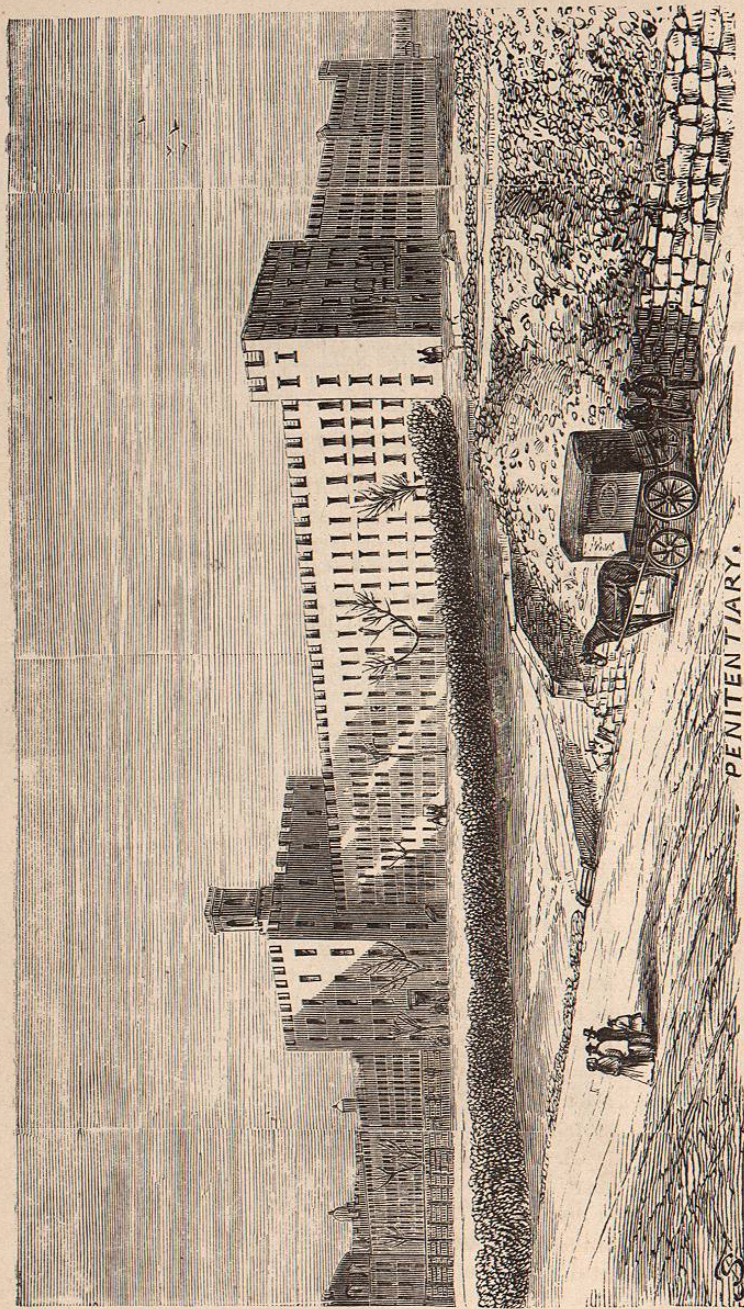
each 100 feet in length, one of which is assigned to either sex. These structures are capable of accommodating about one hundred patients, though a larger number is of necessity at times admitted. They are situated on the eastern side of the Island, between the Charity and Small-Pox Hospitals. A warden has the general supervision of these several hospitals. The medical direction of them was, until March, 1866, under the supervision of the Medical Board of Bellevue, but at that time the Commissioners appointed a separate board, consisting of two consulting and twenty-two visiting physicians and surgeons. Two valuable members of this board lost their lives in 1868, from pestilential disease contracted while in the discharge of their hospital duties. This board is industriously collecting a museum in the Charity Hospital, which is annually receiving many valuable additions. The grounds around these institutions are very inviting, the view rich and diversified, and everything, save the countenance of the suffering patients, wears an air of cheerfulness.

The Hospitals for *Incurables* are situated on the Alms House grounds, and are briefly described in the account of that Institution.

The Epileptic Hospital was established in 1866, for the treatment of a class of unfortunates hitherto abandoned as incurable, and permitted to go through the several stages of their disease until it ended in idiocy, insanity, or death. The Commissioners have the credit of establishing the first of its kind on this continent, and with the exception of a small one in London, the first in the world.

The Paralytic Hospital was also established in 1866. These were first placed under the control of a distinguished physician with two assistants, but as he was soon compelled to retire, they were for a time under charge of the Medical board of Charity Hospital, but have since been transferred to the board of the Lunatic Asylum. These hospitals are pavilions on the grounds devoted to the Lunatic Asylum, and their establishment has already been a source of relief to many. They contain sixty-five beds each, and are always well filled.





PENITENTIARY, BLACKWELL'S ISLAND.

THE NEW YORK PENITENTIARY.

THE New York Penitentiary on Blackwell's Island stands nearly opposite Fifty-fifth street, and was the first institution established on the island. The southern wing of the building was begun soon after the purchase of the island in 1828, the central portion was next added, and the northern wings are the result of subsequent additions.

The building is constructed of hewn stone and rubble masonry, and consists of a central portion 65 by 75 feet, with three wings each 50 by 200 feet, and several stories high. The floors are of stone and the stairways of iron. There are 500 cells for males, and 256 for females, yet the building is often rather small to accommodate the aspiring candidates. The prisoners sent here are from the New York courts, whose term of confinement with the majority is from one to six months, though occasionally one remains several years. When a prisoner is received, a record is made of his name, age, weight, and the condition of his health; also of his nationality, history, and the offence for which he was committed. Every convict is expected to perform some service unless sick, when he is sent to the hospital. Most of them are allowed to follow their former occupations, and are employed at times as blacksmiths, wagon-makers, boat-builders, carpenters, coopers, painters, wheelwrights, shoemakers, tailors, gardeners, stone-cutters, boatmen, etc.; and others, whose former indolence has kept them from every useful occupation, are instructed in the sublime arts of blasting, quarrying, and pounding rocks. The island originally abounded with rich quarries, most of which have now been exhausted in the erection of the princely edifices that crown its surface, a very large proportion of the toil having been performed by the convicts. A gang of men is daily sent to Randall's and another to Hart Islands; to the latter of which, on account of its isolated condition, there is prospect of the entire Penitentiary establishment being removed. The erection of the Infant Hospital, the Inebriate Asylum, the new Insane Asylum, and every other new edifice, furnishes a large amount of toil in grading and ornamenting, to which their time and