

FROM PHILADELPHIA.

From Our Own Correspondent.

PHILADELPHIA, March 16, 1858.

It may be supposed with reason that in a population of some 600,000, such as this city now possesses, a Winter such as we have gone through must have been accompanied by vast amounts of destitution and suffering. As the seat of an immense manufacturing business, greater by far than the census would indicate, as recent local investigation has shown, there have been thousands of families discharged from work and idle since October. Many of these have subsisted on their former earnings, but many more, less provident than they, have become the pensioners of the numerous public and private charities to be found among us. It is true we have no public dining-house where all the world is notified that there is plenty to eat and nothing to pay, because our population in the aggregate has never been so roving, shiftless, and hopelessly destitute as to need it. But there are kindred institutions, the offspring of the same comprehensive humanity, which are silently dispensing food to the hungry and clothing to the naked, in abundance suited to the need. Last week a single soup-house in Moyamensing—a section noted for its immediate destitution—gave out a tun of corn meal, 2,000 loaves of bread and 14,000 pints of wholesome soup, thus supplying daily 2,500 persons with food. Within gunshot of this soup-house are more than twenty cellars in which the destitute victims of the grog-shop seek refuge every night at a penny a head. All colors and both sexes turn in promiscuously at nightfall, lie down in bunks that rise one above the other against the bare walls, and there spend the night in utter darkness, the soft side of a pine-board being their only bed. For two cents extra they may have some filthy straw to lie on. Each one pays his penny as he enters, and none are admitted without it. In the confined atmosphere of these vile dungeons the victims of the dramshop dose the night away. How these unhappy creatures escape suffocation may be left for science to determine. But when morning breaks, though it be cold and crisp, with snow a foot deep upon the pavement, the keepers of these dens throw open the door and warn the miserable congregation that it is time to get up and clear out. Sick and shivering they rise, and hungry and unrefreshed they are driven forth into the street, there to wander off to the friendly soup-house, or otherwise to pick up by theft or beggary subsistence for another day, whose close will be a repetition of the scenes of the preceding one. Strange as it may sound, the keepers of these disgusting hells almost uniformly become rich by ministering to the wants and vices of the poorest class of customers on earth. Yet these unhappy people are not left wholly to themselves. There are men and women pleading among and for them as devotedly as our missionaries labor among the heathens of foreign countries. Many brands have these self-denying souls snatched from the burning; and though the volume of pauperism seems hopelessly great, yet they labor on in faith, and verily they have their reward. Meantime the rum-seller plies his toddy-stick with undiminished industry, making new drunkards faster than treble the number of missionaries can reclaim them. The number of female drunkards to be found in these low haunts is alarmingly great. Some of these have once seen better days; some have been educated and lovely in their early youth, but are now sunk almost beyond hope of reclamation.

Among the modest charities of our city is an institution called the House of Industry, established many years ago by members of the Society of Friends. The object of this association was to furnish employment to reputable but poor women during the Winter, and to supply them somehow with means to live and keep their families from suffering. During nearly eighty years of benevolent exertion—for it is one of the oldest charities we have—its generous directors contrived to make happy one hundred and fifty poor women every Winter, and from the contributions of the benevolent to lay up a handsome capital, from the income of which it has of late years been mainly supported. But the wicked plunder of the Bank of Pennsylvania by Allibone has swept every dollar of this capital into oblivion. He has made the House of Industry a beggar, and compelled the managers to turn adrift a hundred and fifty virtuous mothers, with children crying to them for bread, to save themselves from starving by beggary. Oh! there is a long unwritten catalogue of horrors which the villainy of this unpunished wretch has occasioned. Yet while these poor creatures shiver in their bleak retreats at home, or go hungry and despairing to their scantily-covered beds, this pious swindler is faring sumptuously every day, and, to the amazement of the whole community, goes unwhipt of justice. Porter, the retail swindler of the Sunday School Union, has been indicted, brought back from his quiet hiding place in Ohio, and is now under bonds to answer before a Jury. But the wholesale robber of the bank, through some inexplicable laxity of public duty on the part of those intrusted with the punishment of thieves, struts unmolested with impudent bravado in the face of all. Verily, if Scripture be true, he, too, shall have his reward. The official appraisers of the bank have valued its entire assets at \$152,830 94.

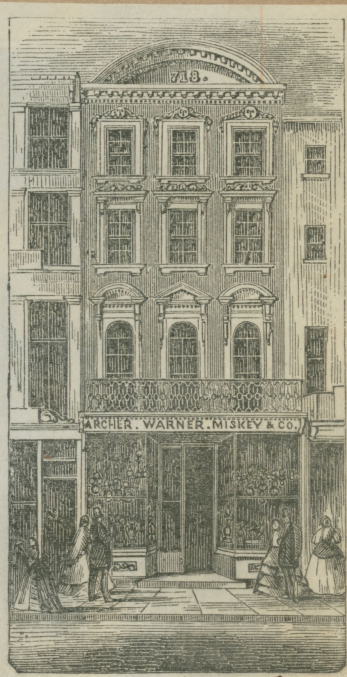
Among the debtors to this institution eight of our newspapers are returned. Two of these, now defunct, owe 5,878; one other received \$652; the fourth 3,437, the fifth \$7,708, the sixth \$6,514, the seventh \$2,512, another \$250. Now, you may remember that reference was made some months ago to the remarkable fact that, all our newspapers were profoundly silent on the great iniquity of the management of the bank, except *The Press* and *The Sunday Dispatch*. What connection there may be between this silence and the above cited indebtedness, others may conjecture for themselves.

Another remarkable charity is found in the Society for Relieving the Miseries of Public Prisons. The good accomplished by this organization is truly wonderful. It employs a most humane and indefatigable man as its agent—Mr. William J. Mullen—whose devotion to the cause of prison reformation rivals that of Fry or Howard, with results quite as remarkable. Last year alone he was instrumental in releasing from prison no less than 1,249 persons, most of whom he ascertained by personal investigation were innocent, or whose real offenses were of too trivial a character to justify either imprisonment or trial. Hundreds of these were restored to their families, and some 200, who were found to need it, were provided with the additional boon of a good home and plenty of work. The statistics of this wide field of benevolent exertion are so curious, that the residents of all large cities ought to be made acquainted with them. They prove conclusively that very few of the whole number liberated were committed for sufficient cause. The agent, by personal appeals to magistrates and judges, made this fact appear, and liberation followed, in most cases even without payment of costs. He was so successful in this humane effort as to cause 1,152 to be discharged without the payment of a dollar, while in the remaining 97 cases the costs were only \$213, a trifle over \$2 each. Yet in accomplishing this comprehensive charity the utmost care was taken not to do violence to the demands of justice, nor to attempt to screen the guilty from punishment. The really innocent, sometimes the victims of knavery or malice, ignorant of their rights or too poor to assert them, were taken by the hand and made to go free. On one occasion, Mr. Mullen obtained the release of 40 persons within 48 hours, every one of whom had been unjustly committed to prison. He succeeded in obtaining their release at a cost of only a dollar. Many affecting incidents might be related as the result of this remarkable charity, and of the peculiar tact and skill of the agent in the great cause to which his life has been for years devoted. Beside the domestic blessings which have been thus secured, the public saving in dollars and cents has been very large. While hundreds of families have been prevented from being broken up, the tax-payers have saved \$5,000 in food alone by the release of so many persons wrongfully accused. Had they gone through the formality of trial, it would have cost the tax-payers \$10,000. Every large city needs a Good Samaritan like Mr. Mullen, and ours is blessed in the possession of one so unassuming and indefatigable as he has shown himself for many years to be. One of the discoveries developed by his labors is that no crime increases so rapidly as that of perjury. In many cases it arises from sheer ignorance, but in others it is too often willful and deliberate. Hereafter I may give you some striking illustrations of the misery and wrong which this crime has occasioned in our Courts.

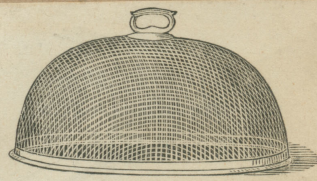
If Spring comes on with laggard pace, her tardy progress has its compensating good. The cold snap has been the salvation of the fruit crop throughout the country. The farmers tell me that without it we should have had neither peach nor apple, so, since it is over, let us not only be thankful, but jubilant, seeing it costs nothing to be both. Meantime, the hammer of the carpenter and the sharp ring of the mason's trowel begin already to be heard in city and suburb. Labor begins to move, and is slowly emerging from its long hybernation. Money is plenty, and good security will bring all you want at six per cent, unless you have a mortgage to sell, in which event you undergo a shave of ten. Seven hundred men are employed at the Navy Yard, mechanics of all trades, getting out the frame and timbers and iron-work of the Lancaster, a new sloop-of-war. Then the Congress frigate is to be overhauled and thoroughly repaired as soon as orders reach us from the Circumlocution Office at Washington, to which the surveys of this vessel were sent some time ago. These works have kept many families from suffering during the season. But, where one streak of light appears on the horizon, there are gloomy spots looming up in token of impending disaster. Many business firms, which suspended in November and obtained extensions, are now breaking down again. They could make neither sales nor collections, and their matured paper finds them with no assets more available than they could show four months ago. Meantime, the general forbearance is giving way; suits are multiplied in the courts, and judgments are sought for with an eagerness unknown in the panic. Behind all this the shadow of a Bankrupt law lifts up its ominous head—the symbol of a new oblivion for old indebtedness. In the face of this extraordinary state of things among us, bank stocks continue to rise in price, and promise to reach the level of six months ago. The marvel is how the business community can become insolvent without the banks encountering monstrous losses. Thoughtful men know that they must have sunk immense sums, that their capita's are at this moment seriously impaired, and that



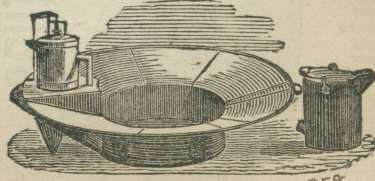
1857-
Sharpless' store, on the
Corner lot, N. W. corner
of Chestnut & Eighth St.



- Dec. 11-58 -
Chestnut St. ab. 7th -



1858.
WIRE DISH COVERS.



1858.