

With the Compliments of the Prisoners' Aid Association.

The Proposed Changes in Toronto Jail.

The year of grace 1897, will be a red letter year throughout the whole of the British Empire. Every Country, every City and Hamlet under the sway of our good and Gracious Queen, from India in the East, to British Columbia in the West, will unite in commemorating the Diamond Jubilee. Canada, ever distinguished for her loyalty, will no doubt celebrate the event in a manner worthy of the occasion, and at the same time acceptable to Her Majesty. And what more worthy, what more acceptable method could be found than for the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments to unite in inaugurating this year an era of Prison Reform, which would be felt from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In this fair City of Toronto, the Queen City of the Dominion, many suggestions have been made as to the best mode of celebrating the Jubilee. Whatever else may be done there is one thing in connection with Prison Reform in our own City which should not be left undone, viz: The reform to which our Association has repeatedly called the attention of the authorities, but so far in vain. The special reform on behalf of which we now appeal, hoping that in the present state of public feeling an appeal may not be in vain, is that the City Council should make more suitable and humane provision for two classes of prisoners now confined in our City Jail, viz; (1) The destitute poor, whose only crime is poverty and (2) First offenders, many of whom are innocent, and who certainly should be kept separate from prisoners undergoing sentence. To shut up our destitute poor in Prison with criminals is surely a cruel and inhumane practice. They should unquestionably be sent to a proper Poor House or Farm Colony as is done in England and elsewhere. Again as regards first offenders, they certainly should not be compelled to associate with Prisoners undergoing sentence, often hardened and incorrigible offenders, whose society is pollution. Some effort should be made to provide at least some efficient classification for this class if we cannot secure for them absolute separation in a distinct building. Such a means of classification could, we have reason to believe, be secured in our City Jail by altering the cells in one of the flats of the Jail after the mode of the English Prisons for Cellular imprisonment. This change could be effected at an expenditure of \$4,500. This is not a large amount for such a purpose and it would, we are satisfied, be repaid within a few years through the great reduction in the number of imprisonments and the shortening of the sentences.

With a view of putting the matter in shape so that our City Authorities and others may know definitely what is required, we print herewith a copy of the specification of the architect as well as reduced plans of his drawings; and with a view of contrasting our present faulty system with the model jail system, we have added copious extracts regarding the separate system as carried out in Great Britain and on the continent, and we have quoted expert opinions from well-known penologists with regard to the general question of jail imprisonment.