

contributed \$89,996.98 to aid in erecting a new structure.

From this time the "Concern" has had a career of unparalleled prosperity. In 1820 a branch house was opened in Cincinnati, which was a small room fifteen by twenty feet; the agent combined in himself the functions of manager, buyer, stock-keeper, salesman, entry-clerk, book-keeper, packer, and shipping clerk." In 1839, this house was made independent of New York House, and is now known as the "Western Book Concern," with depositories at Chicago and St. Louis. The Western House has had its share of disasters. It lost by fire in Chicago in 1871, \$102,221.48, and paid as the result of the suit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South \$92,926.61. It now has a net capital of \$739,161.18, and during the last quadrennium the sales amounted to \$2,582,464.91.

The New York Book Concern has had more than twenty agents, all of whom, except Dr. Lanahan and the present incumbents, are dead. Five of the number became Bishops. All were ministers except one, the late Mr. J. M. Phillips, who, with the exception of Rev. T. Charlton, was the longest in office.

It has sometimes been said that the Methodist Episcopal Church has been exceedingly wise in its selection of men for the office of Bishop. Of all the honoured men who have held the office of Bishop not one has ever been charged with the smallest breach of morality. No stain has ever been brought upon the Church by any act of personal indiscretion. A similar remark might truthfully be made respecting the Book Agents. Considering that with one exception they were all taken from the ministerial ranks, it is marvellous that they have displayed such rare business ability. The wonderful success of the "Concern" is largely to be attributed to the business talents of the honoured men who have sustained the position of book agents.

So far as we know there has always been the best of understanding between the agents, of whom there have always been two since 1804. During one period an unhappy dif-

ference broke out between the incumbents which occasioned much strife and litigation and led to a lengthened controversy in the Church. The referee to whom the whole business was consigned for thorough examination, reported that only in one department "were there irregularities and evidences of slight loss," and he was of opinion that "it is a matter of wonder that in so large business as the "Book Concern" has been doing for so many years, the frauds and irregularities after scrutinizing examinations are so small—smaller than would be found, on the average in houses of equal business and employing as many persons."

The "Concern" has depositories in the following cities: Boston, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, San Francisco, Syracuse, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Harrisburgh and Detroit, besides those heretofore named connected with Western House. In addition to all these there are numerous book-stores sanctioned by the annual Conferences where all the publications of the "Book Concern" are always kept for sale, so that every means is adopted to circulate good books and spread religious knowledge among the people.

The object contemplated by establishing the "Book Concern" was not primarily to make money, though money has been made. The capital has increased since 1836, from \$281,650.74 to \$1,653,197.76, in addition to which more than \$2,000,000 have been paid to various objects by order of the General Conference, which would make the total profits amount to \$3,371,567.02. Including the two houses, the profits have exceeded \$4,000,000 since 1836. One writer questions "whether there is a religious publishing establishment in the world that can furnish such a record."

A fear of extending this paper beyond a reasonable limit compels the writer to omit many valuable statistics respecting the "Concern," but, the reader may consult this *MAGAZINE* for April, 1890, page 379, where he will find much interesting information.