

lously developing its energy and usefulness. The convention had been appointed for St. Louis in the spring of 1861, but the outbreak of the war prevented its meeting. The committee, therefore, called a convention at New York in the month of November to see if the agencies of the association could not in some way come to the aid of the country in that fearful struggle. The result was the formation of that noble organization, the Christian Commission. All the world knows the history of its labours, which gleam like golden embroidery on the ensanguined robe of war—or like the silver lining of the sombre clouds of fate, irradiating the gloom of battle by glimpses of the heavenly light of love and charity. The agents of this Commission carried at once the bread that perishes and the bread of life, and healed the wounds both of the body, and the soul. They nursed the sick back to life, and by their hallowed ministrations quickened in the soul aspirations for that higher life that is undying. The “Christian artillery” of the battle-field—the coffee waggons and supply trains of the Commission—succoured many a wounded warrior, whose bruised body the deadly enginery of war had well-nigh crushed to death. These plumeless heroes of the Christian chivalry exhibited a valour as dauntless often as his who led the victorious charge or covered the disastrous retreat. By their gentle ministrations to the stricken and the dying, amid the carnage of the battle-field and in the hospitals, they have laid the nation under obligations of gratitude which should never be forgotten. From November, 1861, to May, 1866, this Commission disbursed both for the benefit of the patriot soldiers of the Union and for the rebel wounded the sum of \$6,291,107. It employed 4,859 agents, working without recompense an aggregate of 185,562 days. These agents held 136,650 religious services, and wrote 92,321 letters for the soldiers. They gave away 1,466,748 Bibles (whole or in part), 1,370,953 hymn-books, 8,603,434 books or pamphlets, 18,189,863 newspapers and magazines, and 30,338,998 pages of religious tracts. They also greatly assisted the operations of the Sanitary Commission, which expended in the same time \$4,924,048, making an aggregate by the two of \$11,215,155 poured out as a freewill offering by a grateful country for the moral and physical welfare of its brave defenders. The