

REPORT
OF THE
TORONTO
PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY,
FOR THE YEAR 1874-1875.

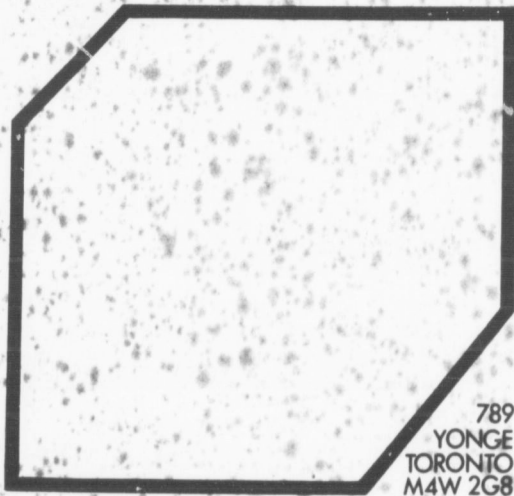
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1875.

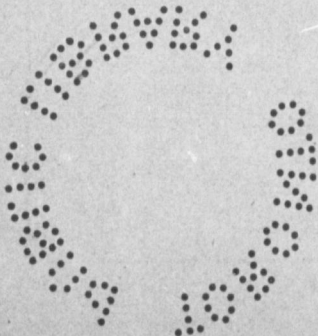
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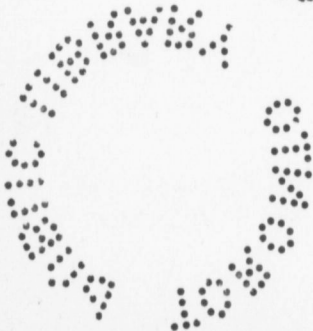


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REPORT
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PRISONERS AID ASSOCIATION
FOR THE YEAR 1874-5.

The Managers of the Prisoners Aid Association desire to present their report for the year 1874-75, as follows :

It is now more than a year since the Sunday School was established in the Central Prison. Since then it has, (under the Divine blessing), met with a degree of success which has called forth the spontaneous gratitude of all parties connected with it, to the Giver of all good for the encouragement which they have met with in their work.

The number of teachers who have voluntarily and cheerfully engaged in this work, has varied from 25 to 40. The demeanor of the prisoners in the various classes has been most respectful and attentive. In a large number of cases the teachers have every reason to believe that great and lasting good has been accomplished in the awakening, if not conversion, of not a few. On this point, however, we refer to the accompanying extracts from the reports of teachers received by the Superintendent, and also to the fuller report of Mr. Softley, the agent of the Association, to whose valuable and indefatigable labours the managers have great pleasure in bearing most cordial testimony.

The Managers know full well the force and character, and even correctness in many cases, of the popular objections

against the genuineness of the profession of prisoners that they are changed in heart, feeling, or practice. But they also know equally well that while under punishment some may act the hypocrite, yet in the case of a large number of the younger prisoners, who have been convicted for thoughtless or sudden crimes, the sorrow and repentance of such is not the less sincere and genuine. The Managers have been careful to distinguish between the two classes of deliberate crime and of men "overtaken in a fault; and their references in the following paragraphs have been only to the more hopeful class, who, so far as evidence satisfactory to them goes, have shown themselves worthy of confidence and sympathy. The managers would, therefore, earnestly solicit the continued confidence of those kind friends who have voluntarily supported the mission with their contributions, on the ground that in practice, and, as a matter of fact, they have been and are as careful to discriminate wisely in these cases as the most fastidious objector could be.

In proof to some extent of these statements the managers would say that more than one of the officers of the Prison have borne unsolicited testimony to the salutary effects of the teaching in the Sunday School, as evinced by the subdued and thoughtful demeanour of many of the Prisoners, and by the evident desire of others of them to do right, and to submit willingly to the discipline of the Institution.

From the reports submitted to the Superintendent of the Sunday School, we make the following extracts:—

Two teachers who have charge of a class write:—"God has been very gracious to our class; one of the members of it particularly thanked God for his incarceration in the Prison, as it had been to him instead of a prison a place where liberty had been proclaimed to the captive, and he is now a believer, rejoicing in that Saviour, "who hath power on earth to forgive sins." The rest of our class are gradually becoming enlightened by gospel truth, and some we trust are very near the Kingdom."

Another writes:—"The first Sunday I attended this class I taught them individually this short prayer:—"Lord give me thy Spirit, for Christ's sake: They all learnt it and continued to

say it; and had received showed his Mr. Softley prize them. was even satisfaction

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version. but before class earn I believe that he ha

say it ; and one of them told me afterwards, that he believed he had received the answer. I think he had, for his countenance showed his joy. I have occasionally visited the prisoners with Mr. Softley. They are all glad to receive the tracts and to prize them. One of them told me that he thanked God that he was even sent there, as he had found the Lord, to the joy and satisfaction of his precious soul."

Another teacher, (who is a Methodist class leader) writes :—
 "I have labored in Sunday Schools for years, but in no place where I have been, have I seen the bright prospects that I realize in this work. I do believe that every one in my class is under deep penitential sorrow for sin, and resolving with God's help to do better in the future."

Another, also a divinity student in Trinity College, writes :
 "I have always found the prisoners both attentive and respectful. For my own part, I find great pleasure in doing what I can to lead the poor creatures to seek an interest in Him who came to seek and to save those who have gone astray."

Another, also a divinity student in Knox' College, writes :
 "Two men from my class have left the prison apparently grateful for the instruction and benefit received. They have all been invariably attentive, seeming anxious to hear the Word of God, and most of them converse freely on their personal state. They engage heartily in singing. Many appear to have studied and thought over the lesson before coming to class, and during the recital are interested and eager to understand the word. Some ask questions to parry a personal appeal ; but others state their difficulties to know the truth. The prayers they appear to follow attentively, and some earnestly. Two of the class have professed to have found peace in Christ. One who has left the prison was a man of considerable intelligence, strength of mind, and had a good knowledge of the scriptures. So far as I was able to judge his was a real conversion. He had for some weeks past been under conviction ; but before he left he said he had found peace, and in the class earnestly commended Christ to his fellows. * * *
 I believe that our labour in the Lord has not been in vain, but that he has freely blessed His own word to the salvation of

one here, and another there among them ; and that he is knocking earnestly at the door of many and many a heart."

Another teacher writes :—"I have been very much pleased and encouraged at the serious attention given by most of my class, and I have great hopes that some have received impressions that will by the blessing of God's Holy Spirit lead to a better life. While trying to point others to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and have felt my own soul very much blest."

Another writes :—"I am most happy to state that as a whole the undivided attention of the class, and in some cases the very deep interest taken in the exercises, are most encouraging. I do hope and trust that the fruit will be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life to very many."

Another writes :—"With the exception of two, the class has been very attentive. They are always glad to see me, and ask questions, desiring to know more of the word. The address given at the close of the school, would at different times be spoken almost as I had given it to the class. This would make them smile, thus to hear the word confirmed. There are many that before they were cast into Prison, scarcely ever read God's Word. Several were thankful that they were ever sent to Prison."

A teacher who has long been engaged in Prison work writes :—"One of my class called upon me after his discharge ; and as far as I could judge from his appearance, conduct and language, he appeared to have taken a fresh start to live a better life. I was especially pleased with the apparently trivial circumstance, that he did not ask for, or accept any assistance, either in money, food or clothing. Another man, who always greeted me with a hearty shake of the hand, assured me that he had found Jesus while in the Prison. I learned that his conduct had undergone a marked change during his incarceration. I have frequently seen him in tears during the hour devoted to the Sunday School lesson. A Swede who could speak only a few words of English was very grateful for a Swedish testament. The last Sunday I was in the Prison I took his testament and turned to St. John iii, 16 ; and after he had read it, I made a

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gesture to know if he understood it. Immediately he placed his hand on his heart and with moistened eyes he exclaimed, "so glad" so glad!"

Another devoted teacher writes:—"I have derived the greatest possible good to my own soul in connection with the Sunday School. I have realized the fact that in distributing to others, I have received bountifully myself. In fact I even look forward with delight to the returning Sabbath morning when we engage in our work. Several in my class have professed to yield to King Jesus, and I have no doubt they have chosen that good part which will not be taken away from them. One who has left the Prison, writes me from the States and says, he is happy to say that Jesus is with him, and makes him so happy, and he intends to love Him, and intends to serve Him to the end of his days. Others who have left the Prison not professing to have found the pearl of great price, have acknowledged the benefits and good influence of our teaching."

Mr. Roberts, the indefatigable Superintendent of the Jail Mission Sunday School, reports to the Committee that the work under his care progresses favourably and steadily. The school is regularly maintained every Sunday morning, and is, we feel assured, doing a good work. More labourers are however required to aid in its successful prosecution.

Appended is the reports of the Missionary Agent to the Prisoners, and of the Treasurer.

REPORT OF MISSIONARY AGENT.

Toronto, July, 1875.

DEAR FRIENDS,

When I first undertook the work as missionary agent of the "Prisoner's Aid Association," I felt somewhat unequal to the large field of labor before me.

I made it a subject of prayer that God would direct me to do what was best. I believe he heard my prayer, for the many scenes of tears and repentance and gratitude from those, who have before been hardened in crime, convinced me that God alone could touch these hard hearts. Many have also expressed their thankfulness to God for sending them to prison, where they have learned valuable lessons in the S. School, also from the tracts and other books distributed there, which I am sorry to say have been taken out of the cells and destroyed, to the great grief of many of the poor fellows, who had derived much benefit from them, and wanted to take them home for others to read. Many have come to ask me to give them more when liberated, to take home. I have spent between three and four hours every Sunday afternoon, visiting the prisoners at their cells, accompanied by one of the S. School teachers, which has given me an opportunity of finding out the chief cause of so much crime and misery. Often have I had to shed tears at the cells while hearing the humble confession and bitter remorse of the poor prodigal while far away from his once happy home. I have also visited the Jail every Thursday afternoon and held services in several of the corridors, assisted sometimes by some friend who is interested in the work. All seem to enjoy them, and often we have had from 10 to 20 express their desire for an interest in the prayers of God's people.

I have met with many interesting cases of repentance in the Hospital while on their death-bed, and in many cases of linger-

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ing sickness, which time and space forbid giving in detail now. During the past year I have distributed 30,720 tracts in the prisons, on the road, and in hotels. Have visited 880 places on behalf of prisoners such as collecting clothing, looking after pawn tickets, and going amongst the friends of prisoners. Also have written a great number of letters about employment on their behalf. Have found employment for 134; held 112 services; given 143 articles of clothing. Also given 226 meals to the poor men who were looking out for work, or waiting for the train to take them home. Got lodging for 102, chiefly for those who came out of prison on Saturday, and could not leave the city, or get employment until Monday following. Relieved 17 families, which I have found while visiting relations or friends of prisoners. Have found boarding houses for 40. Visited 155 either at their homes, or the boarding house, after being liberated from prison. Given 33 bibles and the same number of New Testaments, also several Prayer-Books. Distributed 33 pairs of spectacles. 55 have signed the temperance pledge in my office when liberated. 32 have professed to have experienced a change of heart while in the prison, of this number 6, I am sorry to say, have gone back to their evil ways. I hope and trust the others are doing well and living Christian lives. 14 have given written testimonies of their conversion to God. I have also received several very encouraging letters from prisoners who have left the city. Many thanks are due to the Managers of the Bible and Tract Depository for donations of Bibles, and New Testaments. 50 copies of little book "Come to Jesus," and also for the large supply of tracts, kindly given for distribution among the prisoners. Also to Messrs. Morphy and Potter for spectacles, and other kind friends who have given articles of clothing, boots, shoes, &c.

And now in conclusion, let us thank God for what He has enabled us to accomplish during the past year, and take courage for the future, being fully persuaded that eternity alone will reveal all the fruits of our labours; and may the thought of those blessed words which the Great Judge shall pronounce on the last Great Day to the faithful, be incentive to all who

take part in this noble work : " Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me. I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me."

Yours respectfully.

HENRY SOFTLEY,
Missionary Agent, Prisoners' Aid Association.

The Committee would feel obliged for donations of cast-off clothing ; for the benefit of discharged prisoners, many of whom are in a very destitute condition, and have no friends to aid them. Any contributions in the shape of clothing, boots, &c., will be thankfully received by Mr. Softley, Missionary Agent of the Prisoners Aid Association, No. 32 King St. East, or by Mr. Pike, 132 Victoria St. who has kindly offered to assist in collecting the same.

In addition to gifts of old clothing, &c., to discharged prisoners, the Association have also expended \$64.26 in the purchase of additional clothes, paying for 226 meals, 102 lodgings, &c., or as detailed in the Missionary Agent's Report on the preceding page.

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RECEIPTS

*And Disbursements of George Hague, Treasurer, on account of the Toronto
Jail Mission and Prisoners' Aid Association, 1874-1875.*

By balance on hand, 30 June, 1874.....	\$80 72
“ Sundry individual subscriptions received by Treasurer.....	78 00
“ Sundry amounts received, collected by Mr. Softley.....	545 41
“ amount from sundry Sabbath Schools.....	54 30
“ Bank interest.....	4 90
	<hr/>
	\$764 53

DISBURSMENTS.

To H. Softley on account of salary.....	\$321 75
Do. sundry small disbursements for discharged prisoners.	61 26
“ Printing and advertising.....	36 00
“ Conveyance of Teachers to and from S.S.....	62 00
“ Repairs, seats, &c., per Mr. Roberts	27 29
“ Dr. Hodgins, disbursements for discharged prisoners	3 00
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Total.....	\$511 20
Balance in hand.....	253 23
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	\$764 33

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July 22nd, Northern Cong'l S. S.	\$10
1875	
Jan. 14 Bond St., Baptist S.S.	\$10 00
" 18 " " Cong'l S. S.	10 00
April 6 Northern " S. S.	10 00
" 28 Bay St. Presbyt'n S.S.	10 00
" " College St. " S. S.	4 50
West End Primitive M. S. S.	5 00
" " Presbyt'n S. S.	5 66