THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF NEW YORK.

The immense advantages bestowed upon the city, upon all classes of the community, and, indeed, upon the whole country, by even the existence of such institutions, is so generally admitted that to advance an argument in their behalf would seem almost superfluous; yet to write of them and describe them may not be, for although what can be told is, or ought to be, known to all residing in the city, yet it is doubtful whether many have taken the trouble to become informed upon the subject. An anecdote is told of two men who met accidentally at a fashionable watering place, and the acquaintance proved mutually agreeable. At parting they expressed some regrets, and upon exchanging addresses discovered that they had been near neighbors for many years, wholly ignorant of each other. May not something like this be said of a majority of the residents of New York and her public libraries? There are many born and raised in this city who have never been inside of either one of these institutions. To such this brief account will not be wholly uninteresting.

THE LIBRARY OF THE NEW YORK SOCIETY.

This is the oldest library in the city, and for that reason deserves to be the first mentioned. Its history commences in the year 1700. At that period, during the administration of the Earl of Bellamont, Governor of the province of New York, his chaplain, the Rev. John Sharp, bequeathed his private library to those coming after him, and upon this, as a nucleus, "The Public Library" of New York was founded. This library continued to increase and acquired considerable importance. In 1729 another clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Millington, rector of Newington, England, "bequeathed his library to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and they presented it to the city of New York "for the use of the clergy and gentry of New York and the neighboring provinces." These books were incorporated in the public library already founded. The whole collection was placed in charge of the corporation of the city, but it appears to have been mismanaged and neglected until 1754, when an association of gentlemen was formed for the purpose of carrying on such an institution more efficiently. These gentlemen raised the sum of £600, by subscription, which they laid out in the purchase of some 700 new books. They also offered to take charge of the public library, which proposition being acceded to, they incorporated the books collected with those of the old library, and all were deposited in the City Hall under the care of trustees chosen by them. The institution was then called "The City Library"—a name by which it has been commonly designated ever since. The collection appears, from the minutes of the trustees, to have largely and constantly increased by purchase of books from 1754 down to the breaking out of the Revolution. In 1772 a charter was granted to it, and the official style of "The New York Society Library" adopted. The events of the war nearly destroyed the library. "This war threw the country into a state of confusion not easily realized at the present day, and New York, being peculiarly exposed, suffered greatly. The library was left as a spoil to the invading army. An eye witness (Mr. John Pintard) has affirmed that the British soldiers were in the habit of carrying away the books in their knapsacks and bartering them for grog." No meetings of the trustees were held from the last Tuesday in April, 1774, until Saturday, December 21, 1788, when twelve trustees were chosen. The fragments of the library were gathered together—800 volumes were found in a room in St. Paul's church, but no one could tell how they came there—new subscriptions were obtained, and the institution resumed its quiet course. A portion only of the original books given by Dr. Sharp were recovered; these are still preserved in the library, and consist mostly of the writings of the Fathers and standard authors of the Church, with a few classics and histories.

In 1789 an act of the legislature of the State of New York was passed confirming the charter. In the same year the first Congress under the constitution met in the old City Hall, and George Washington was then sworn in as first President of the United States. The federal Congress had also previously met in the same place in 1784, and their deliberations were, no doubt, materially assisted by this collection of books, which constituted at that time the only library of Congress. An additional value is thus lent to many of the volumes.

The growing importance of the establishment demanded more extensive accommodations; accordingly additional subscriptions were obtained, land was purchased and a building erected expressly for the use of the library in Nassau street, opposite the Middle Dutch church, now used as a post office. To this building, which was of considerable size and one of the most conspicuous public edifices of that day, the library was removed from the old City Hall in 1795, and there it remained until 1826, when the increasing commerce of the city compelled the trustees to seek another situation, when the property at the corner of Broadway and Leonard street was purchased and another edifice erected.

There is no record of the number of volumes when the library was scattered by the Revolution. The minutes of the trustees and other documents, however, warrant its being estimated at that period at several thousands of volumes. In 1793, the date of the first catalogue printed after the war, it is stated to have possessed at that time 5,050 volumes; in 1813 the number was 13,000; in 1823 it was 16,000; in 1828 it had reached 25,000; in 1850 it was 38,000, and the present number amounts to about 64,000 volumes.

Printed catalogues of the library are known to have existed before the Revolution, but the dates of their publication are not accurately ascertained. The earliest after the war was that of 1793. The next of any importance in 1813, with a supplement in 1823. In 1838 a new one was made, as complete as possible, containing both an alphabetical and an analytical arrangement of titles. In 1841 a supplement, on the same plan, was published, and a second one in 1843. The one now used has been prepared with great care and expense, and is arranged on the plan of the former one of 1838, which is admitted to be the best adapted for convenience in use and now generally followed.

In 1828 the New York Athenæum was merged in the New York Society Library. In 1836 the property in Nassau street was sold, and the library was removed to the Mechanics' Society, in Chambers street. In 1840 the new building on Broadway was finished, and it removed there. In 1853 this property was sold and the library removed to the Bible House. In the same year the society purchased its present site in University place, and erected its present edifice, into which it was finally moved in 1857.

Many rare and valuable books have from time to time been presented to the library; among the most noted gifts of the kind may be mentioned that of Mr. Robert Lenox Kennedy, which consists of 1,850 volumes, being the greater part of the Circulating Library of the late James Hammond, of Newport, R. I. It is a very curious memorial of the taste, manners and light literature of the country from the period of 1783 until about or near 1830. Another is that of Oliver Bronson, M. D., and consists of 351 volumes of standard books of medical science, all of them the best editions and well bound. This same gentleman had previously given about 100 volumes of excellent works of foreign literature, with some of physical science. Mr. Winthrop, too, made a donation of some 300 most curious and valuable books. Mr. Gulian C. Verplanck has also been a constant and most liberal donator of books to the library during a series of years; but the list of this character is too long for a notice like the present. It is a noticeable fact in the history of this library that its resources have been confined almost exclusively to the individual subscriptions of members and the annual fees, there having been but one pecuniary donation of any importance, and that, too, from a woman, Miss Jane Demilt, who, by her last will, among other bequests, bequeathed $5,000 to the institution. It seems a little strange that in a period of a century and a half no one of the many thousands of merchants who have grown rich in this metropolis, and who in no inconsiderable degree have been assisted in the acquirement of those riches through the influence of this institution, have failed to imitate her example. Yet the society has been called upon and has met the requirement to procure expensive works of reference and to supply books of standard and current literature, besides repairing and replacing thousands of books that have been worn out; they have also erected several large and conspicuous edifices, ornamental to the city, and have aided in redeeming it from the imputation of indifference to such institutions.

The number of its members in 1793 was 900. Having been reduced from time to time and again increased, through renewed efforts of the trustees, the number in 1853 was 1,100, and at the present time is about 1,200. It will thus be seen that while the number of its supporters has remained almost stationary in the midst of an unparalleled growth of population, the Society Library has continued to increase and to extend its resources for usefulness.

Attached to the library there is a spacious and comfortable reading room, well supplied with newspapers and periodicals.

Hours when open—Library from eight A. M. to six P. M.; reading room from eight A. M. to ten P. M.

Persons entitled to the use of the establishment are—Members not in arrears for annual payments, fines, &c.

Temporary subscribers—Strangers (for one month), when regularly introduced by members. Persons not members or subscribers have the privilege of consultation by the payment of twenty-five cents.

Terms.

One share (with annual dues commuted) $150
One share (subject to annual payment of $10) 25

These shares do not merely gain the use of the Library, &c., but are interests in the real estate, books, &c., and can be bought and sold like any other stock.

Temporary Subscriptions—For both Library and Reading Room.

One year $15
Six months 8
Three months 5

For Either Library or Reading Room.

One year $10
Six months 6
Three months 4

Regulations.

Members not indebted for annual payments, fines, &c., may take out one work, if it consists of not more than one folio, or one quarto, or three octavo, or six duodecimo volumes.

Folios may be kept six weeks, quartos three weeks, octavos two weeks, duodecimos one week.

Members residing more than ten miles from the library are allowed one week longer. A book may be again taken out unless another member has applied for it.

Fines.

One cent per volume must be paid for each day it is detained over the time allowed. Loss or damage of books must be paid for; if a part of a set the value of the entire set must be paid.

No member can lend any book belonging to the library.

The following is the list of officers of the Society for 1868:—

Trustees.

Gulian C. Verplanck, Chairman.
Otis D. Sivan, Treasurer.
William J. Hoppin, Secretary.
Wentworth S. Butler, Librarian.

Charles R. Sands,	Charles E. Strong,
William Adams,	Robert Lenox Kennedy,
Thos. W. Clerke,	John Romeyn Brodhead,
Henry C. Dorr,	Thomas Ward,
Stacy B. Collins,	William Allen Butler,
William McMurray,	Evert A. Duyckinck.

Library Committee.

Robert L. Kennedy,	Charles E. Strong,
William J. Hoppin,	John R. Brodhead,
Evert A. Duyckinck,	Otis D. Swan.

Inspectors of Annual Election.

Sylvester L. H. Ward,	Albert Cardozo,
Henry R. Winthrop.	

THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY OF NEW YORK.

This library is the next in order of date, having been founded in 1820, expressly for the benefit of merchants' clerks. The first meeting of the Mercantile Library Association was held at the Tontine Coffee House November 3, 1820, and on the 27th of November a constitution was reported and adopted and a board of directors elected. In February, 1821, the library was opened, with a collection of about 700 volumes and with 150 members. They at first met with much opposition from old merchants, but the persevering efforts of the several boards of directors in time effectually overcame all obstacles; their appeals for assistance and co-operation were responded to, and they leased a room in Fulton street, in which the books were placed and where the library was first opened. In 1826 the location was changed to Cliff street. In 1827 the lecture system was determined upon and commenced, and has been maintained ever since, adding considerably to the resources of the institution. In 1828 the guardians of the association formed the design of soliciting subscriptions for building a suitable hall which would supply sufficient room for their books, a reading room and a lecture room. This design caused the formation of a new and separate association, called the Clinton Hall Association, which should act as guardian to the first society, while securing to it all the privileges of ownership in the new building. Thirty-five thousand dollars were collected, Mr. A. Tappan giving at the head of the list the sum of $1,000. A site was purchased and Clinton Hall erected at the corner of Nassau and Beekman streets, and in 1830 the Mercantile Library Association took possession and moved in to it. At that time they numbered 1,200 members, and had accumulated 6,000 volumes. In the same year Columbia College conferred two scholarships on the institution; and in 1845 the New York University also placed two foundations at their disposal. From these many members have graduated. In 1849 increased accommodations were felt to be necessary, and were the subject of frequent reports and discussions, but the Clinton Hall Association, being still in debt for a part of the original outlay for building, were unwilling to assume from responsibilities. However, at a meeting of the two bodies in 1852, it was resolved that, "in the opinion of this Board, in view of the gradual change of residence to the upper section of the city, it is expedient to purchase a new locality for the library, not above Astor place nor below Canal street."

This led to the purchase of the then Astor Place Opera House, though there was much squabbling between the two bodies, in which an angry and active part was taken by the papers of the day; but all this has long since passed away, if not forgotten. Great alterations had to be made to render the building suitable, and other arrangements also, so that while securing ample accommodations for the library a revenue from rents should also be secured from the remaining portions of the edifice, which were to be applied to the liquidation of the large debt unavoidably created. This has been done. In the basement there is a lecture room capable of seating 1,100 persons. On the first floor there are stores and the reading room, which is sixty feet deep and ninety feet broad. It is lighted by ten large windows and from the dome of the library, and the ceiling is supported by twenty Corinthian columns. It is supplied with nearly 200 magazines and 150 newspapers in five different languages. This reading room is well appreciated by the public, as may be judged from the fact that in 1866 it was visited by 114,700 persons, and it is said that the annual number of visitors is on the increase.

The library is of the same dimensions and occupies the third and fourth floors west of the main hall. Its centre is an elliptical room, surrounded by sixteen Corinthian columns supporting a dome. The bookcases radiate from these columns, forming alcoves, each lighted by a skylight besides the external windows. There are also bookcases around the walls to the height of twenty-three feet, divided by iron balconies and reached by flights of stairs. The rest of the building is divided into librarians' offices, class rooms, committee rooms and other apartments, which are rented.

The association is managed by a board of directors, elected annually from the members; the president by ballot; the other officers by a general ticket. All persons engaged in mercantile pursuits as clerks can become members, if approved by the board, on subscribing to the constitution, paying an initiation fee of one dollar and one dollar and a half for the first six months, further regular dues being seventy-five cents quarterly in advance. This confers all the privileges of the institution upon them, including all the classes and a thorough collegiate education to such as desire it, through the free scholarships in its gift. Merchants and others become members by paying five dollars annually, but they cannot vote and are not eligible to any office—or such persons are admitted to the reading room alone, on the payment of three dollars annually.

The association now numbers over 11,000 members paying three dollars annually and about 500 paying five dollar subscriptions. These, with the stockholders of the Clinton Hall Association and some honorary members, make over 13,000 persons entitled to the use of the library. There is also a down town branch at No. 50 Liberty street, where the leading commercial papers are kept, some periodicals and works necessary for immediate reference.

The income of the institution is something over $40,000 per annum. The library is circulating, with about 5,000 books of reference only. The total number of volumes at present is about 100,000, with an average yearly increase of nearly 10,000. The specialty of the library is popular and practical works—strongest in history, biography, political and moral sciences. Fiction has the largest portion of the books in use, and is about seven-tenths of them. The yearly circulation is 250,000, less than 4,000 being consulted in the building. The books are arranged without classification, alphabetically by authors, except novels, which are arranged alphabetically by titles. The capital in books is about $70,000. The library real estate is estimated at $300,000 and the Grosvenor and Demilt funds are $13,000. The library has exerted a most beneficial and practical influence, and is still doing so; indeed its usefulness can hardly be estimated, and it is no undue compliment to say that it is worthy of the liberal donations it has from time to time received from the citizens of the city, which cannot be far from $200,000.

Mr. F. H. Houston is its courteous and obliging librarian and can almost always be found at his post from eight A. M. to nine P. M., during which hours the library is open.

THE ASTOR LIBRARY.

This institution, the largest of the kind in the city, is too well known to require any lengthy comments. It was founded in 1849 by the late John Jacob Astor, who by will bequeathed the sum of $400,000 and eight lots of ground for this purpose. Of this sum $200,000 was expended in the present fine buildings in Lafayette place, in its furniture and in the purchase of books; the other $200,000 was invested so as to render a yearly income for its maintenance. The library was first placed in a private building in Bond street, but in 1854 it was removed to and was opened to the public in the present building. It is divided into two departments—the scientific and the literary and historical. For the latter Mr. William B. Astor, in 1859, made an additional donation of $100,000, of which $75,000 was devoted to the erection of the new addition which contains this department and $25,000 in the purchase of books to supply it. Various other donations have from time to time been made to the library by Mr. W. B. Astor and others, both of money and books, until the original endowment of its founder is now duplicated. The number of volumes has reached 100,000 by purchase and donation, which, together with its real estate, is estimated to be worth $2,000,000; in fact, that sum would not purchase the building and its contents as it now stands. It would require quite a volume to enumerate the donors of books. They have come from nearly all the civilized nations of the earth, from the governments as well as from individuals.

The number of books in each of the two departments is about equal, care being taken in making purchases to maintain an equal distribution. The number of books read in the halls of the library reaches nearly 80,000 volumes annually, and the number of readers is about 40,000. The yearly increase of books averages over 4,000.

The management of the library and its business affairs is entrusted to a board of trustees, who have a regular meeting on the first Wednesday of every month, any six of whom form a quorum for the transaction of business. The officers of the institution are:—William B. Astor, President; Samuel B. Ruggles, Secretary; F. Schroeder, Superintendent; E. R. Straznicky, Librarian in the Department of Science and Art, and F. Saunders, Librarian in the Department of History and Literature. The executive duties, however, fall chiefly upon the superintendent, as he has the management of the library building, the books and other property therein; also of the assistants and servants; also attends to the accommodation of visitors and to the enforcement of the rules; under the direction of the proper committee of the trustees attends to the purchase, receiving and marking of books and other articles coming to the library; to their being properly entered and catalogued; to the accounts generally, and to such matters as the trustees may direct. The library is free to all, and is open from nine A. M. to five P. M., Sundays and holidays excepted. It is to be regretted that the library is not open at night, for there are thousands who would gladly avail themselves of its gathered treasures who are now debarred, because they cannot spare the hours of the day from their occupations to visit the library.

There is a large assortment of rare and valuable and curious old books and manuscripts in this library—too numerous to enumerate all, but the following are selected as a sample:—A copy of the first edition of Shakspeare's Works, dated in 1623, of which there are but three copies known to exist in the world, and said to be worth $3,000 in gold; a copy of Cicero, dated 1463; an edition of Caxton's Chess, dated 1487; a French manuscript of Chronicles, dated in 1307; and an edition of Homer's Iliad printed in Florence in 1488. The curious in such matters can find material for many weeks of enjoyment in the examination of numerous other equally venerable tomes, and they will encounter little or no difficulty in finding them, as the entire collection is most admirably catalogued alphabetically, in that monument of the industry and intelligence of the former superintendent, Dr. Joseph G. Cogswell.

THE APPRENTICES' LIBRARY.

The Apprentices' Library was established in November, 1820, by the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. It then consisted of about 800 volumes, most of which had been contributed by the citizens on the solicitation of philanthropic gentlemen, members of the society and others, the most prominent among whom were the late Thomas R. Mercein and William Wood. They formed a most heterogeneous collection, as was but natural, from the manner in which they had been obtained—some of them being odd volumes, others imperfect, and nearly all somewhat worn. At first its use was restricted to the male apprentices of mechanics and tradesmen, and was only kept open in the evening, the books being handed out to the readers by the members of a committee from the society under whose management it was placed. For many years it maintained but a feeble existence, depending solely for its support upon such pecuniary aid as the Mechanics' and Tradesmen's Society could afford to bestow upon it; but such aid, though all it had, was barely enough to sustain its life, as the income of the society was at that time wholly inadequate to give it much and meet the drafts upon their resources from their other and more special benevolent operations. Appropriations were, however, made annually for this purpose by the society, which in 1823 was but $400 and in 1850 had not risen above $1,000.

At that date the number of volumes had increased, by purchase and donations, to about 14,000, and there were not more than 1,300 readers. Since then the appropriations have been gradually increased, with the increase of the society's income, until it has reached the sum of $10,000, and the number of volumes is now 48,000, with fully 7,000 constant readers.

This is unquestionably one of the most useful institutions of the kind in the city, as it furnishes gratuitously to a large number of young persons of both sexes, many of whom would otherwise be unable to obtain such advantages, the means of improving their minds and elevating their characters, and at the same time by supplying them with the means of rational amusement, serves to withdraw them from other ways of spending their leisure hours, which would have a contrary effect.

This library is situated at No. 472 Broadway, and is open from eight A. M. to nine P. M. The rooms are comfortably and conveniently furnished, well warmed and well supplied with daily and weekly newspapers, pictorials, magazines and reviews. It is free to all; no questions are asked as to whether you are rich or poor, well clad or ragged, clean or unclean; a proper decorum and quiet are all that is demanded. Apprentices and females employed by mechanics and tradesmen in their business may take out books gratuitously, and other approved persons can enjoy the same privilege by the payment of two dollars a year.

The admission of females was strongly opposed for some time, many members of the society being doubtful of the propriety and fearful of the result of mingling the sexes; but it was finally determined to make an experiment of the measure, and happily with the most beneficial influence. The number of readers and attendants rapidly increased, the larger portion being females; and during several years not one single instance has occurred to cause a regret; on the contrary, the tendency has been to render the rooms more attractive and to restrain and improve the manners of the male visitors. There are two departments of the library—one the free circulating department, and the other a reference department, for the use of which a small fee is paid. This division was made in consequence of the bequest of the Demilt family, consisting of a library of very valuable books of reference and a sum of money, but in the terms of this gift a condition was made that a fee should be paid for its use. The guardians therefore determined, in order to harmonize the matter, to make the two divisions, placing all the works of reference with the Demilt Library, and all others in the circulating one, and in all subsequent purchases this distinction has been carefully preserved and the apportionment of money to the two perfectly equalized.

The history of this library from its organization, a little over forty-eight years ago, is an interesting one. From a very small beginning it has grown up under the fostering care of the Mechanics and Tradesmen's Society to be an institution of which the mechanics of New York may well feel proud.

WOMAN'S LIBRARY.

This library is as yet in embryo, although it has had an existence of some ten or twelve years. It was originated by a Miss Powers, who was indefatigable in her exertions, aided by a committee of gentlemen of this city, of whom Mr. Benjamin H. Field was one of the principal, and who furnished a greater portion of the means. The object was to create a library for the use of a class of our female citizens who, from adverse circumstances, were unable to obtain access to larger and more extensive establishments at such hours as they were able to devote to reading, and who were unable to pay the necessary fees—the seamstresses and other working women, though all classes of females are entitled to and do enjoy its advantages.

It was first opened in the University building, where it remained until May, 1866, when it was transferred to its present quarters, the Working-women's Protective Union, in consequence of a visit made to a meeting of this Union by Miss Powers. She there became convinced that the original object could best be carried out by them; and in consideration of the fact that the committee of gentlemen had become somewhat lukewarm in providing the requisite means to defray its expenses, through her influence and management it was donated and some 2,537 miscellaneous volumes were turned over. At present the library contains a small increase over that number, probably 3,600 volumes. Many books have been added to it, but the unavoidable losses have prevented the increase from being large, and the resources of the Protective Union, by which it is wholly maintained, are not sufficiently great to justify the expenditure of any considerable sum for its management.

For the use of the books the nominal fee of $1 50 per annum is charged, but they are never refused to the careful and worthy, though unable to pay that sum. It is located at No. 44 Franklin street and is open daily from nine A. M. to four P. M. Mrs. M. W. Ferrer is the kind and obliging superintendent.

It will be observed that this union and library has no connection whatever with the "Women's Relief Association" of strong-minded women; on the contrary, it is under the direction of a committee of gentlemen of high standing in the community and is intended expressly for the benefit of the weak women, those who not only do not claim to be but who are not able to take care of themselves unaided. Donations of books or money would be thankfully received, and no more useful employment of even old books could be made. The officers are:—C. P. Daly, President; James W. Gerard, Vice President; Moses S. Beach, Treasurer; Wm. B. Colby, Secretary; John H. Parsons, Attorney, and a board of twelve directors, all of whom render their services gratuitously.

THE CITY LIBRARY.

A visit to this institution by the curious or general reader is not likely to prove interesting. It is open from ten A. M. to four P. M. daily, and is free to all persons. It has a librarian (Mr. James Barclay) and an assistant, who are paid liberal salaries by the city government. It contains no miscellaneous work of any importance or interest, being composed almost entirely of the published proceedings of the City Council and the reports of the several boards, together with the Laws of the State of New York, Supreme Court Reports and some few other books of a similar character. The collection is not large—in fact, it hardly deserves its high-sounding title, and would be much more appropriately designated if called a record room.

LIBRARY OF THE NEW YORK LAW INSTITUTE.

This institution was established in 1828 and was chartered by the Legislature of New York on the 22d of February, 1830. It now contains over 12,000 volumes of well selected law books, and ranks among (if it be not) the first institution of the kind in the United States. There are some few miscellaneous works—chiefly historical. It is sustained by the subscriptions of about 600 members of the bar, each member paying a fee of $150, and is subject to an annual assessment. Previously to 1853 the library was furnished rooms by the city, but since that period it has received no aid from it. Many valuable books were destroyed by the fire of that year, but most of them have since been replaced.

Eight members and the librarian constitute the Library Committee, and the entire management is conducted and controlled by them. The officers are elected annually from among the members by those present at the annual meeting. The committee holds a monthly meeting and in cases of necessity.

The collection is a most valuable one and contains upon its shelves a number of exceedingly rare old law books not to be found elsewhere in this country. But its influence is not a local one entirely; for its reputation is so wide and favorable that it has been made the agency for the purchase of law books by many of the law libraries throughout the country, by some of the States and repeatedly by the general government—in fact, they purchase nearly all of them for the national library.

It is a pity that so valuable a collection and so useful an institution is not provided with better apartments. The rooms it occupies at No. 41 Chambers street are badly lighted and are utterly insufficient for its requirements. The officers of the city government and the heads of its various commissions and boards are admitted to all the privileges of members and to the consultation of its treasures free of charge. Why, therefore, cannot the City Council unite their own so-called City Library with this one and furnish it with suitable and commodious apartments?

THE LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE.

This Institute was incorporated in 1829 and was first opened in Liberty street; in 1834 it was removed to Cortlandt street; in 1836 to No. 187 Broadway; in 1838 to the Park, in rear of the City Hall; in 1847 to No. 353 Broadway; in 1848 it purchased the property No. 351 Broadway, to which it was removed, and where it remained until 1859, when it was again removed to its present locality in the Cooper Union Building. The property in Broadway is still owned by the Institute and is rented for $22,000 per annum, which revenue is appropriated to the maintenance of its several branches.

The library is but a part of the Institute and has no separate purpose. It has been collected, maintained, controlled and used almost exclusively by it. For several years past the Library Committee have purchased no other than scientific works, and although it contains a good assortment of historical and biographical works, accounts of voyages, &c., in addition, it is considered, and doubtless justly, the finest scientific collection in the city. It contains at present over 10,000 volumes, among them very full sets of English scientific works, mechanical, chemical and agricultural, that cannot be found elsewhere. The largest part of the collection are solely for reference; the remainder are loaned to members of the Institute. An election of officers is held in February of each year. The terms of membership are five dollars initiation fee and three dollars per annum. Open daily from nine A. M. to nine P. M. John W. Chambers, Librarian.

LIBRARY OF THE COOPER UNION.

This is a collection of something over 5,000 volumes, attached to the reading room of the Cooper Union. It occupies one entire floor of the building, and is the natural sequence of free night instruction, for here all classes have unrestricted admission to the current literature of the day, as well as of the past. It is open, free to all, without any other restrictions whatever as to admission, but cleanliness and good behavior, from eight A. M. to ten P. M., and is supplied with nearly 300 current publications of this and foreign countries. The library has been collected by the binding of these publications, though there have been several important and valuable donations to it. The trustees, in order to secure a select and more extensive library of reference that shall be open at night for the use of the working classes, have fitted up the rooms adjacent to the reading room, with the view of giving accommodation to such special collections as can be secured, upon condition that they are to become and remain the permanent property of the Cooper Union. These conditions have been accepted by

THE LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL AND STATISTICAL SOCIETY,

of which Mr. Charles P. Daly is President and E. R. Straznicky Recording Secretary. It was established in 1854 and incorporated by the Legislature. The library will soon be opened to the public, from nine A. M. to five P. M., subject to such rules as may be necessary to protect the valuable collection from injury. It now contains over 7,000 volumes of the very choicest geographical works, including accounts of voyages to all parts of the world, with maps and globes, &c. It is maintained by the initiation and annual fees of members, which are ten dollars for the first year and five dollars thereafter, and there are about 500 paying members. The officers are elected annually.

Among the rare works observed during a short visit may be enumerated the following:—A large and valuable collection of atlases, published in Amsterdam in 1705 by Gerardin Valk; a map of the United States, dated in 1783, and said to be the first ever published. It was issued by Abel Buell, at New Haven, Conn., and is dedicated to the Governor and Connecticut Company; also a map of the city of Jeddo, probably the only one in the United States; Salts' Voyage to Abyssinia, published in London in 1814, showing that something was known of that country prior to the late English war; a complete set of books and of Pinkerton's Voyages; a map, the identical one by which the northeast boundary question was settled, published in 1775, a full set of topographical maps of Switzerland, which are most minutely accurate, some of the plates having occupied ten years in their preparation; and lastly Sanson's Map of the World, dated Paris, 1668, drawn by hand and illuminated, and curiously enough there is delineated upon it the two African lakes, Big and Little Nyanza, claimed to have been discovered by the two recent English travellers, Captain Speke and Mr. Baker, and called by them Victoria Nyanza and Albert Nyanza. They are so accurately laid down as to raise a question as to whether the visit of those two gentlemen to them is entitled to be classed as a discovery.

LIBRARY OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

This was instituted in June, 1852, and contains with its four branches about 6,000 volumes, chiefly commentaries on the Scriptures, illustrated standard histories and some novels. Here is the only complete set of Calvin's works to be found that is fully accessible to the public, consisting of fifty-two volumes. It is free to the use of every one in the room, but members of the association only are permitted to take books out. The library is maintained solely by the association. The main library is in the reading room, at No. 161 Fifth avenue; the branches are located at corner of Third avenue and East 122d street, 285 Hudson street, 473 Grand street and 97 Wooster street—the latter is exclusively for the use of the colored young men, who manage its affairs themselves, under the supervision and advice of the association.

The association have now in course of erection a handsome building at the corner of Fourth avenue and Twenty-third street, opposite the Academy of Design, which will contain the rooms of the association, lecture room, social rooms, gymnasium and the library, and into which they hope to remove at an early date.

THE TELEGRAPH MONOPOLY.

SELMA, Ala., Dec. 24, 1868.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

In an article in your weekly of December 12, headed "The Telegraph and the Government," you express your views so much in accordance with my own—and as entertained for many years—that I must be allowed to congratulate you, and trust that your efforts may be seconded by other leading journals in the country, and a revolution be brought about to crush out, and forever, the tremendous monopoly which now exists in this country in the form of the telegraph. I would urge nothing in competition with individual enterprise based upon just and reasonable grounds; but as there seems to be something peculiar in this greatest of modern discoveries as a heaven's blessing to earth, there is a sort of natural claim by all classes of persons to its benefits, and that it should not be confined to the few alone. The argument is undeniable that a complete and radical change should take place in this mode of intercommunication that will put it upon such a basis as will place it within the reach of all.

England has set us a fine example in this proposed reform, as set forth in a string of "reasons," published in the article mentioned, and especially in the "seventh," where the growth of telegraphic correspondence had been greatly stimulated in Belgium and Switzerland by the annexation of the telegraph to the Post Offices of those countries and the consequent adoption of a low scale of charges.

Your own words seem so appropriate to the interest and action which our own people and the government should take in the matter that I quote them:—"The truth is, our government should take the business of the telegraph wholly into its own hands, as a part of the Post Office system of the country, and should build new lines to every post town in the United States."

Let the lines be built and the tolls reduced (as you justly remark) to about the present cost of letter postage, and as a matter of pecuniary benefit to the government it can hardly be overestimated, for the simple reason that the ease and cheapness of the reform mode of communication will make it deservedly popular with the masses and command its patronage. Let the experiment be tried.

ROMANTIC STORY ABOUT CARL SCHURZ.

[From the Milwaukee Wisconsin, Dec. 30.]

Our readers remember Carl Schurz, formerly of this city, and the many incidents connected with his early life. A correspondent says:—In 1867 I was told an incident in the life of Carl Schurz, which was very interesting. It is so long since I heard it that I may be incorrect in some particulars, but I will relate what I remember of it. Schurz in his fatherland, was the student of a celebrated philosopher, political thinker and writer. During the revolutionary troubles in Germany both the Professor (whose name I think is Kinkel, and who now resides in London) and Schurz were arrested by the monarchists, but Schurz effected his own escape and fled to Italy. The democratic cause failed in Germany, but Kinkel was still a prisoner. Schurz in his exile determined to attempt the liberation of his teacher. He acquired a perfect knowledge of the Italian language, and, adopting the Italian costume and manners, procured a hand organ and proceeded on his tour among the German prisons to find out, if happily he could, the whereabouts of Kinkel. There was a certain song which in the olden time always charmed the Professor and ever drew from him some response, and this song, among others, Schurz sang in his prison visitations. Finally he arrived at the prison where Kinkel was confined, and when he sang this song, to the great delight of the jailer and guards, the listening Kinkel knew the presence of a friend and broke out in joyful song, his voice passing beyond the confines of his solitary cell and gladdening the heart of his itinerant pupil. Schurz hovered around the prison, delighting the employés by his minstrelsy, and finally effecting the escape of his teacher. Both reached a seaport, where they engaged on an English vessel as coal heavers and finally reached England in safety.

ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.

The New Haven Enoch Arden Case Decided.

[From the Hartford Courant, Jan. 2.]

The New Haven "Enoch Arden Case," so called, was terminated before the Superior Court in that city on Thursday. The facts are these:—John A. Wilcox went to the war, leaving a young and pretty wife at home. Years passed, and hearing nothing from him she believed him dead, and, having vainly sought to learn that he still lived and mourned for him in widow's apparel for two years she married a respectable mechanic named Benjamin Hotchkiss. She lived happily with her second love until a few months ago, when the first husband appeared and brought a suit against his wife for bigamy and against her second husband for adultery. As soon as these suits were brought, which was the first intimation the woman had of her first husband's existence, she separated herself from her second husband, to await the result of the trial, and, like a good woman, conducted herself blamelessly throughout. She also presented a petition for a divorce from Wilcox. The court on Thursday acquitted both honorably of the charges of bigamy and adultery, granted the petition for a divorce, changed the name of the petitioner to that of Mary L. Martin, her maiden name, and gave Mary the custody of a child by her first husband. The conclusion of the story will be the legal marriage of Miss Mary L. Martin to Mr. Benjamin Hotchkiss.

MILITARY NOTES.

We understand that an order has been issued from headquarters at Albany directing that the cavalry brigade of the First division do duty for the future as infantry. The order was quite unexpected by our troopers and is received with great dissatisfaction. It is true that little can be said in praise of our city cavalry regiments as such, but we insist that it is possible to have one or two good regiments of mounted troops even in New York, and that if proper measures are taken to provide a riding school in the way indicated in our article on armories in yesterday's issue the First and Third cavalry and the Washington Gray battalion can be made a credit to the National Guard. It is to be hoped that the new Commander-in-Chief will rescind the order.

The following order has been promulgated by General Shaler:—

SPECIAL ORDERS—NO. 320.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, STATE OF NEW YORK, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, ALBANY, Dec. 22, 1868.

Upon the recommendation of Brigadier General J. H. Lieboldt, acting assistant inspector general and commissary general of subsistence, the First regiment of artillery, National Guard, is detached from the Second brigade, National Guard, and will, until further orders, constitute a part of the First brigade of cavalry, National Guard, and as a part of said command will parade on foot and be subject to such orders and instructions as govern the infantry forces of the National Guard.

Major General Alexander Shaler, commanding First division National Guard, will promulgate this order and attend to its execution.

By order of the Commander-in-Chief.

S. E. MARVIN, Adjutant General.

Upon the receipt of this order the commanding officer First regiment artillery will report to the commanding officer First brigade cavalry for duty in said brigade.

By order of Major General Alexander Shaler.

CARL JUSSEN, Major, Aide-de-Camp and Acting Assistant Adjutant Gen.

It is right and proper that the artillery should be brigaded with the cavalry; but it is difficult to see the wisdom of dismounting the artillery as well as the cavalry. There is a bee in somebody's bonnet at headquarters.

The annual meeting of the New York State Military Association this year promises to be of very unusual interest and pleasure. For the first time in many years the meeting is to be held in New York city, and the members of the association attached to the First and Second divisions National Guard propose to give a grand full dress reception to their fellow members from the other divisions. This reception, which will take place in the armory of the Twenty-second regiment, on Fourteenth street, is in charge of an active executive committee, with Major General Shaler at its head; and of sub-committees presided over by the several brigade commanders of the two divisions. The entertainment will take place on Tuesday evening, January 19, and will comprise an exhibition drill by the Twenty-second regiment, a grand promenade concert, and dancing after the concert. The officers of the two divisions have entered into the matter with enthusiasm, and expect to prepare the finest military entertainment ever given in the State. The building will be beautifully decorated, and every effort made to make the occasion brilliant and gratifying. The number of tickets is strictly limited to the capacity of the building (4,000), and they are apportioned pro rata to the different regiments in the First and Second divisions. As the demand will certainly exceed the limited supply early application for them is necessary. The officers and men of the different regiments will obtain tickets from their respective regimental commanders. Officers of the other divisions who desire extra tickets for themselves or their friends can obtain them at two dollars each, upon immediate application to the secretary (Lieut Col. Henry Heath), at No. 4 Bond street, New York. The annual meeting of the association will begin at twelve o'clock on Tuesday, January 19, in Steinway Hall, and continue two days. On Wednesday evening, January 20, the annual address before the association will be delivered by Joseph H. Choate. Governor Hoffman has also promised to be present and participate. The officers of the association are as follows:—President, Brigadier General Lloyd Aspinwall; First Vice President, Colonel C. H Thomson; Second Vice President, Major General R. L. Howard; Third Vice President, Brigadier General E. A. Brown; Fourth Vice President, Brigadier General H. D. Barto; Recording Secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Heath; Corresponding Secretary, Major F. M. Wheeler; Treasurer, Colonel P. A. Conkling; Chaplain, Rev. T. C. Strong, D.D.

The Twenty-second regiment has agreed to adopt the uniform furnished by Brooks Brothers, which consists of a blue dress coat, plainly and neatly trimmed with gold lace, with two rows of buttons on the breast (the only trimming on this part of the coat), and light blue pants, with two threads of gold lace down the sides. The uniforms will cost forty dollars each. The grand ball of the regiment is to take place at the Academy of Music on the evening of the 1st of April.

It is expected that the ball of the Ninth regiment, at the Academy of Music, on Thursday evening next, will be worthy the reputation of the corps. If a liberal expenditure of money, taste in the decorations and a wise selection of music will secure success, then the Ninth may confidently expect to realize their highest hopes in this respect. The following circular has been issued by command of Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General John H. Wilcox:—

The officers of this command are hereby notified of an amendment to the "bill of dress," as follows:—Gold stripe to be worn on seam of pants. The Committee on Invitations of the reception to be given by the Military Association of the State of New York, on the 19th of January