



REPORT

OF THE

Ladies' Health Protective Association

OF NEW YORK.



1885 AND 1886.



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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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LADIES' HEALTH PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION.

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ON Thursday, November, 21st, 1884, eleven ladies met at No. 35 Beekman Place to discuss the advisability of organizing a Society, the immediate purpose of which should be, to protect the people living in the neighborhood of the slaughter houses of First Avenue between 43rd and 47th Streets, from the nuisance arising therefrom.

After much deliberation as to the work of the proposed Society, "The LADIES' HEALTH PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION" was the name which seemed to best express the hopes and purposes of the ladies then assembled, and in December of the same year a charter was obtained under this name, and the following Directors were elected for the first year :

Mrs. MATHILDE F. WENDT,
" IRENE E. HARLAND,
" ELIZA J. SPARKS,
" MARY E. TRAUTMANN,
" MARY R. NORRIS,
" CECILIA FENDLER,
" HEDWIG WILE.

So zealous were this handful of women in the work for which they had organized, that a second meeting was held on Friday, the 22nd of November, and the Association, then consisting of but seventeen members, adjourned to

visit the manure yard of Michael Kane at the foot of East 46th Street, this being the most flagrant nuisance in the neighborhood.

Some four years before, an indictment had been found against Michael Kane, but notwithstanding this fact, the nuisance still continued. After investigating Kane's premises a complaint was made to the Grand Jury, and on Monday, November 25th, three ladies of the Association were summoned to give their testimony before that body.

Prompt action was taken by the District Attorney, and before January 1st, 1885, not only was Michael Kane again indicted, but this time tried and convicted, and his manure heap entirely removed by the middle of the following February.

During this time, the members of the Association were acting as vigilance committees in visiting the manure yards and reporting upon the progress of the removal of the heap. During one of these visits of the ladies' committee, made by order of Judge Barrett, previous to imposing sentence on Michael Kane, the ladies were attacked by a mob, instigated by some of the workmen, which necessitated police escort in further investigations.

From the very first, the ladies had had the sympathy of the press, and were greatly indebted to the various leading newspapers of the city for their support and encouragement.

Having been so successful in their onslaught upon Michael Kane's nuisance, the Association next turned its attention to the investigation of the slaughter houses themselves. The President first had a plan, or map, of the slaughter houses and their premises made, to show wherein they violated the regulation of the Board of Health. The committee from the Association then waited upon the Board of Health, to ask their co-operation in any effort the Association might make, to remove the slaughter houses from the city limits, or to compel them to conform to proper sanitary regulations. But after three unsuccessful interviews, meeting with no encouragement from the Board of Health, the Directors decided to present a bill to the Legislature, providing better regulations for slaughter

houses. Accompanying this bill was a memorial calling attention to the evils attendant upon the manner in which the business of slaughtering animals is now conducted in the city of New York.

By advice of counsel and friends of the Association, a mass meeting was held in April in Steinway Hall, for the purpose of arousing public interest in a subject of such vital importance to the citizens of New York. In this effort, the Association received assistance and encouragement from the leading members of the medical profession, as well as many other prominent citizens. The Hon. Noah Davis, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, presided. The memorial prepared by the Association, was read by Miss Julia Thomas, and addresses were delivered by the Hon. Algernon S. Sullivan, Rabbi Jacobs, Henry Bergh, Esq. Dr. J. C. Peters, Rev. C. H. Eaton, Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn, and other distinguished gentlemen of New York City.

The work attendant upon such a meeting was cheerfully and successfully done by the ladies, and though the bill did not pass the Legislature, the Ladies' Health Protective Association proved that it had a wide and extended influence, and that its labors had not been in vain.

In March, a committee of the Hudson County Citizens' Association of Union Township, presented itself at our regular meeting with the following resolution, and requesting the aid of the Association :

HUDSON COUNTY, N. J., March 31st. 1885.

To the Ladies' Health Protective Association :

At a recent meeting of the Hudson County Citizens' Association, held at Schuetzen Park Castle, Hudson County, N. J., the following preamble and resolutions were adopted :

Whereas, The almost certain visit of the cholera to our shores during the coming summer renders prompt and efficient sanitary measures necessary in order to limit, and if possible, prevent its deadly results ; and

Whereas, The filthy and offensive condition of the northern portion of our county, due to the accumulation of filth, and the sickening stench from swill, garbage, offal, dead and putrid animals, including dead babies, brought daily from New York, and dumped through the townships of Union and North Bergen, renders it impossible to effect any sanitary measures while such a state of things is permitted ; and

Whereas, Both the Board of Health and the Court of Hudson County have failed to afford any measures of relief, though the swill mongers were indicted, tried, and found guilty of maintaining a nuisance; therefore,

Resolved, That this Association respectfully solicit the co-operation of the Ladies' Health Protective Association of New York City, in abating this nuisance, by inserting in the bill now pending in the Legislature of the State of New York, a clause prohibiting cartage or removal of swill, garbage, offal, old or decayed bed fillings, or other offensive matter, through the streets or avenues of New York City, to any place except the public dump.

Resolved, That the Secretary of this Association be, and he is hereby directed, to transmit a copy of this resolution and preamble to the Ladies' Health Protective Association of the City of New York.

CHARLES H. WELLMAN, *Chairman*.
P. O'CONNOR, *Secretary*.

The Association took immediate action and wrote to Judge McGill, stating the nature of the complaint, and asking why parties were allowed to maintain this nuisance, etc., to which the following answer was returned:

Mrs. M. E. TRAUTMANN, Cor. Sec. of Ladies' Health Protective Association:

DEAR MADAM:—Yours of the 22nd inst. has been duly received and referred to Hon. C. H. Winfield, Prosecutor of the Pleas of Hudson County. Nuisances similar to that you mention have been ordered to be abated by the Court. If they yet exist, your complaint, with proofs, properly presented to the Court by the State officer, will receive due consideration. The Court has no power to act until after indictment and conviction. You may speak of nuisances which have never been before the Court. I think you should confer with Mr. Winfield as speedily as possible.

Yours very respectfully,

April 23rd, 1885.

A. T. MCGILL.

Acting on this suggestion, we then wrote to the Hon. C. H. Winfield, Prosecutor of Pleas of Hudson County, who took immediate action, as shown in the following communication:

UNION TOWNSHIP, HUDSON Co., N. J.,
May 19th, 1885.

Mrs. M. E. TRAUTMANN, Cor. Sec. of Ladies' Health Protective Association:

MADAM:—At its last meeting, the Hudson County Citizens' Association passed a vote of thanks to the Ladies' Health Protective Association of New York, for its practical and efficient work, aiding the people here to suppress the nuisances which have existed in the northern section of this county. Your communication with Justice McGill and Prosecutor Winfield, produced a marked and immediate result. The case most difficult to deal

with on account of political influence, was tried immediately, and a conviction secured, and one who was acquitted on a former trial, has been again indicted and has pleaded guilty.

In view of the importance of the question of improved sanitary regulations, our Association has appointed a permanent Sanitary Committee, consisting of Messrs. Wellman, Schindlar, Fox and O'Connor.

Respectfully,

P. O'CONNOR, *Sec.*

In October, by vote of the Association, the ladies aided in a fair given for the benefit of the Diakonissen House, which would consist of a training school and home for nurses to take care of the sick poor, free, and educate them in sanitary laws.

In the fifteen meetings held by the Ladies' Health Protective Association, this first year of its existence, to which there has been an average attendance of nineteen members, much sanitary work has been done outside of the removal of the manure heap and the investigation of the slaughter houses. Tenement houses and public schools have been visited, and the attention of the Board of Health called to the improper sanitary conditions of such houses and schools. Discussions as to general sanitary laws, prevention of cholera, and the abatement of various nuisances have received much attention at the meetings, both of the Directors and of the Association.

In March, 1885, a branch Association was formed under the name of "The Seventeenth Ward Association."

Committees have been formed for receiving and visiting other sanitary societies, philanthropists, public officials, etc., in short, the labor has been unceasing, and the Directors of the Association untiring in their efforts to promote the work for which they organized.

From the eleven who first met a year ago, the membership has extended to over six hundred, and the advice, patronage and co-operation of the Ladies' Health Protective Association is now sought by many who are earnest in the hope of achieving better sanitary conditions for the public at large.

Mrs. I. E. HARLAND,
Secretary.

REPORT FOR 1886.

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The LADIES' HEALTH PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION begun its second year, 1886, with the feeling that good progress had been made, especially in the matter of the removal of the nuisance at East 46th St., but it soon appeared that constant vigilance was required to *maintain* the advance made. It was discovered that the pile was again rising, but after a complaint to the Board of Health it was soon removed. While the letter of the Code might have been afterwards observed, the spirit of it was evaded in various ways, one of which was, by using the scows and floats around the dock for storing, forking over and trimming the stuff, till it suited the convenience of the owners to remove it.

Other piers were inspected where dumps were reported. At East 105th St. was found a very large accumulation, some rods from the river front, extending over about one city block. Around the dock, then undergoing repairs, was the same pitching and trimming as at 47th Street.

At West 40th St., about the same condition prevailed, and we learned that the straw trimmed out of the mass, when not clean enough to serve again for bedding for horses, was used for making tar or sheathing paper for building purposes. The offensive odors complained of here were occasioned, we were credibly informed, not only by the manure dump, but also by the wash of the slaughter houses, which was carried out by sewers opening under the piers, above low water mark, the tide bringing it back and depositing it about the docks. A new, and we hope, an improved pier had been contracted for.

At West 58th St., a limited business was carried on with somewhat less objectionable conditions. The owners

evidently respected and feared the vigilance of the Ladies' Health Protective Association.

At East 48th and West 44th Sts., were the docks of the "New York Horse Manure Co." which are models of cleanliness, the manure being dumped directly from the carts into scows, at their regular waiting hours, and towed from the pier immediately, leaving the dock with hardly a suggestion of its uses.

In Central Park, near 68th Street and 8th Avenue, and 79th Street, near 5th Avenue, were accumulations to be used for fertilizing the ground, of which complaint was made to the Park Commissioners, who took immediate measures to prevent its being in any degree offensive to the public.

In the early part of the year, it was discovered that Michael Kane, through his brother-in-law, Senator Cullen, was trying to get a bill through the Legislature, ordering the Board of Health to locate a permanent dumping ground, between 95th and 97th Sts. and 1st Avenue and East River. By advice of counsel, the Association sent a protest to the Legislature. In an interview with parties interested, they were told that, on account of the opposition of this Association, the bill had been withdrawn.

A delegation from this Association had been invited to attend a meeting of the County Medical Society, (Chapter on Hygiene), to discuss this subject. At that meeting, it was announced that the bill, reported withdrawn, had passed the Senate. Prompt measures were imperative to prevent its passing the Assembly, and rendering all the past service of the Association futile. The representatives of the several organizations present telegraphed the Chairman of the Committee on Cities for a hearing on this bill, and on the following morning a delegation, consisting of Drs. Sturgis and De La Rosa, from the County Medical Society, Dr. Woolsey Johnson and Col. Prentice, from the Board of Health, Frederick Owens, from the "Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor," and five ladies from this Association, went to Albany to use their efforts to prevent the passage of the bill. After two days of hard work on the part of the ladies, who also had an interview

with Governor Hill, obtaining his promise to grant them a hearing before taking any action, in case the bill passed the Assembly, they returned home fully confident that their efforts had not been in vain. The following day came the satisfactory assurance that the bill had been killed, in large measure through their influence and disinterested efforts.

The establishment, by Act of Legislature, of a dumping ground, has been prevented, but there are other evils in this line more widespread, and affecting every part of the city. The removing of the refuse from the stables, and carting through the city, are subjects of annoyance and complaint, and although there are Acts limiting the hours and the manner of removal, they are continually disregarded. Even if done in conformity to the Code, it is *still* an evil, affecting especially the comfort of the sick, and retarding, if not preventing, recovery in many cases.

This Association has had conferences with representatives of the Board of Health, of the County Medical Society, and gentlemen who have proved by experiment, the practicability of baling the refuse of the stables, and transporting without anything offensive to the senses or the health, and without damaging its fertilizing qualities. This method has been adopted in some private and livery stables, with very satisfactory results to the stables themselves, as well as their neighborhoods. This Association has solicited the co-operation of the Presidents of some of the larger horse car companies, and proprietors of large livery stables, in disposing thus completely of the whole nuisance, without detriment to any.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The question of presenting another bill to the Legislature, for the removal of slaughter houses, was frequently discussed, but before doing so, it was decided to invite the more prominent butchers to meet the directors, in order to learn what measures of reform they were willing to take. The meeting was held Feb. 19th, at which the following gentlemen were present, in response to invitations: Messrs.

Eastman and Stern of the West side, and Messrs. Harrington, Wagner, Swartzchild & Fleischauer, of the East side. Our counsel was also present, to advise on any legal points that might arise. The meeting was a very animated one, and the butchers, with one exception, admitted the evils which had been complained of, and were willing to receive suggestions for improvements. Several of the ladies, accompanied by a delegation from Boston, had previously visited Eastman's model abattoir, at 11th Avenue, between 58th and 59th Streets, and there learned how scientifically slaughtering could be conducted, and how perfectly the meat could be kept and sent to market, without being a nuisance in any way.

After long discussion, two committees of butchers were appointed to inspect the various slaughter houses, and report at a future meeting. Messrs. Eastman and Stern were appointed to inspect the East side, and Messrs. Harrington, Wagner and Fleischauer the West side.

The second conference took place March 27th, and the same gentlemen were present, together with Mr. Rafferty, of Rafferty & Williams' bone-boiling establishment.

The committee for the West side reported that no improvement could be suggested in Mr. Eastman's establishment. Mr. Stern's slaughter house *could* be improved by substituting asphalt flooring for the wood.

The committee for the East side reported the stock yards as in excellent condition, and believed they could not be improved with the limited space at their command. The slaughter houses themselves could be much improved, by using cement or asphalt for flooring, rendering it non-absorbent; by making the drainage perfect; and by keeping the slaughtering of animals shut out from the public gaze. The improvement further demanded by *this Association* was that, for the benefit of the public, requiring First Avenue as a thoroughfare, as well as for the cleanliness and healthfulness of the meat, it should not be hung on the sidewalk, or loaded on trucks on the Avenue side, but on the street, where it would not interfere with ordinary travel. In answer to the question whether the building of an abattoir, with all desirable improvements,

would not prove the easiest method of removing the sources of complaint, Mr. Swartzchild informed the committee that he was planning to build such an abattoir, which, though differing from Mr. Eastman's, being used for the home supply, while Mr. Eastman's was used for export trade, should be an equally perfect model for a slaughter house, if he could have the assurance of non-interference. The other gentlemen present expressed a willingness to make the improvements suggested and necessary in future, with the same proviso.

The Ladies' Health Protective Association, laboring solely for the health and comfort of the whole city, are satisfied and pleased if they can secure these, without interfering with the business or income of any one.

Occasional passing inspection since these conferences, has shown promised improvements in some of the slaughter houses as not yet made, but the Association awaits with hope the completion of Mr. Swartzchild's new abattoir, when further action will be decided upon.

GAS HOUSES.

During the summer, the odor of gas was frequently observed, and was found to proceed from the gas works at 41st St. and 1st Ave. No satisfactory cause for the escape of gas could be discovered, till an investigation was made by a committee of ladies; they learned that the works were not complete, inasmuch as they had failed to put in the apparatus which condenses the odors.

The Corresponding Secretary then wrote to the Board of Health, requesting Inspector Goldsmith to accompany them on their second visit. He explained everything very explicitly, enabling them to investigate more intelligently.

The Superintendent said they could not have the apparatus for condensing the odors completed before the autumn, as it involved a great deal of time and expense.

We are not able to state whether the Company have completed their works, as no recent investigation has been

made by this Association, and only on one or two occasions since have causes of complaint been perceived.

The matter will be taken up at an early day.

"LITTLE ITALY."

A tract of land lying just east of Central Park, between 5th and Madison Avenues, known as "Little Italy," has received some attention. Within a stone's throw are some handsome residences, and quite near are several institutions, including a refuge for women and for the aged. Complaints were received by the Association from residents two blocks distant, of sickening odors from that quarter, compelling them to close their windows in hot weather for partial relief. Inspection found a large colony crowded together in rickety, tumble-down hovels, with the utmost disregard of cleanliness and decency. The yards were a mass of filth and corruption, with piles of street pickings drying in and on their sheds; closets filthy and without sewerage; stoves, filthy bedding, rags, dried fish and meat, and sausages made of goat meat, were part of the furnishing of most rooms. It was not deemed safe for a committee of either men or women to enter, without police protection, and even the police thought it not prudent to enter singly. In the neighborhood, to add to its unhealthfulness, was a large pond of stagnant water, the drainage of cow yards, etc., and proof of its poisonous effect was found in cases of malaria and death in the dwellings close by. While on this tour of inspection, the attention of the committee was directed to several cow stables in 89th St., near Madison Avenue. The cows were found in small, ill-kept shanties, drained by the surface, if there was any grade, into the street. Cans of milk stood all about, absorbing this effluvia, and this milk was peddled out in the city as pure, fresh, healthy milk; some bales of hay were shown, but brewers' refuse constituted a large share of their fodder. These matters were brought before the Board of Health by the Association, resulting in the breaking up of this colony, and an order forbidding the cows to

be kept there, but in our last report from that section, the cows, or a part of them, still remained. Several attempts have been made to fill up or drain the stagnant pool, but with only partial success at our last report.

In the spring, a concert was given, under the auspices of the Ladies' Health Protective Association, in aid of the Diakonissen fund, mentioned in the report for last year, by which nine hundred dollars (\$900) was realized.

Numerous tenement houses and some schools houses located in various parts of the city, have been examined by the Association upon complaint, and reported to the Board of Health when circumstances required. In many cases the fault is with the tenant, but more frequently the landlords or owners are to blame.

In the coming year we propose to give the tenement house question still more attention, as well as the street cleaning work.

The work is great. We invite the sympathy and cooperation of ladies all over the city who care for their own households, and who love their neighbors as themselves.

Mrs. M. J. HERBERT,

Secretary.

105

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