

tively guiltless, are herded together promiscuously with old and desperate offenders. In the female ward matters are, if it were possible, still worse. A number of benevolent ladies, members of the Society of Friends, who, for ten years past, on Sabbath afternoons, have administered religious instruction to the female prisoners, bear emphatic testimony to "the confusion, uncleanness, and utter want of discipline resulting from the present crowded state of the prison." In brief, out-spoken, energetic language, they declare that, "at this time, the female convicts present the shocking spectacle of a lawless gang of the most degraded of human beings—setting at defiance, in a great degree, the authority of both Warden and Matron, and, for the want of suitable cells where the greatest offenders can be put away into solitary punishment—the LASH is the only punishment!" These revelations of prison life in the State Penitentiary of Maryland, terrible they appear to be, are yet far from expressing the grossness of the excesses, and the magnitude of the evils which now

Christian teachings. Female members of the Society of Friends have, for nearly a decade, sought unweariedly, on each recurring Sabbath, to win back the wretched prisoners of their own sex to paths of virtue and fecundity. The success which once crowned their efforts stimulated them to persevere; but now, they have not only to contend with sullen and intractable spirits, but are also alarmed for their personal safety, while the warden confesses the impossibility of correcting by discipline depravity so foul, and conduct so outrageous.

Doctor Frick, the able physician to the Penitentiary, bears testimony to the fact, that through the ministrations of these ladies—ladies in the true meaning of the old Saxon compound word "Laff dien," or bread-giver—there are in our community many discharged convicts who are leading upright and honest lives, in consequence of the Christian instruction received while inmates of the prison. But he is constrained to add, that seeing the utter impossibility of accomplishing their benevolent purpose, the members of this praiseworthy association "have resolved to abandon their charge unless some change can be effected which promises them a better opportunity of doing good than at the present." When such noble-hearted philanthropists as Hannah Talbot, Hannah Ann Tyson, Margaret Cheston, and their companions, are forced to retire in despair from the field of their labors, the case must be desperate indeed. Were the whole truth told, we should judge, even from the brief and vivid glimpses revealed in the pamphlet before us, that our Penitentiary is a perfect Pandemonium, where vice and lawlessness run riot, where good counsel is met by ribald words and obscene jests; and threats of punishment with contemptuous bravado. How shall the lost authority of the prison officials be restored? How shall the young and comparatively guiltless prisoners be restrained from becoming recipients of the evil suggestions of older convicts? How shall those unruly women be reduced to subjection, whose condition is such as to forbid the approach of the members of an association organized expressly for the purpose of promoting their present and future welfare? We need an additional dormitory, exclaim the Directors. We need a new dormitory capable of holding six hundred persons, cries Dr. Frick. The Institution stands in pressing need of a large and spacious dormitory containing some six or eight hundred cells," says the Warden. *The State stands in need of a new Penitentiary, say we.* The whole interior arrangement of the present building is faulty in the extreme. The prisoners, even when confined in their cells, can communicate with each other, and concoct all sorts of villainous plans with impunity, and no degree of vigilance on the part of the officers can prevent the evil.

The structure now occupies the whole of the ground belonging to the State, and cannot be enlarged, even for new dormitories without involving the necessity of purchasing from the city a portion of the jail lot adjoining. To remodel the present Penitentiary, and put up such additional buildings as are absolutely required, would cost as much, or more, than to erect a new one; while the cramped limits to which any improvements on the structure now standing must necessarily be confined, would preclude the possibility of making those future enlargements which the increase of population will inevitably call for.

A suggestion has been made which we think a wise one. It is to purchase one of the islands in the Bay, and construct upon it a Penitentiary on the plan most approved by modern experience. There the prisoners might have all the isolation which is necessary for their punishment and reform—surrounded by water, the buildings would need no protecting wall, while many of those who do not now work at all might be employed in such farming operations as would provide ample supplies for the use of the Institution. The suggestion comes before us in a crude shape, and we have neither time nor space to-day to elaborate it. We simply give it, therefore, in connection with the present review of the condition of our Penitentiary, with the hope that some action will be taken speedily to examine into the best mode of correcting those fearful evils which are daily increasing in magnitude, and for which there appears at present no adequate remedy.