

# HOW THE Y. M. C. A. BENEFITS CAMDEN

GREAT INTEREST TAKEN IN ASSOCIATION WORK AND RESULTS ARE MOST SATISFACTORY.

## A "GYM" WORTH PRAISING

The New House of Muscle Is One of the Finest in the Eastern Section of the Country—Its Features, Methods and Instructor.

The inestimable benefit of a Young Men's Christian Association branch to a large city has never been more forcibly demonstrated than in Camden, where for the past eighteen years an association has flourished, accomplishing good work with the most satisfactory results.

From the time of organization the work has been constantly enlarging, until now the association is one of the most healthy, in a financial way, in this section. Its splendid facilities for every branch of association work, the gymnasium, college, literary and religious departments make it exceedingly popular and its work is supported by a large number of Camden's best known citizens.

The enthusiasm in matters relating to the association is at times remarkable and the churches assist greatly in the work, by pulpit utterances and help by the members of the congregations. The Y. M. C. A. and the churches work harmoniously together, and by co-operation mutual benefit is the result.

The present organization was formed at a private house, corner Front and Cooper streets, October 10, 1877, it being the outgrowth of a union young people's prayer meeting. Meetings were held for a short time in

castle, Pa., then to Allentown, and then to Norfolk, Va., where he was stationed when he received his appointment as physical instructor at Camden.

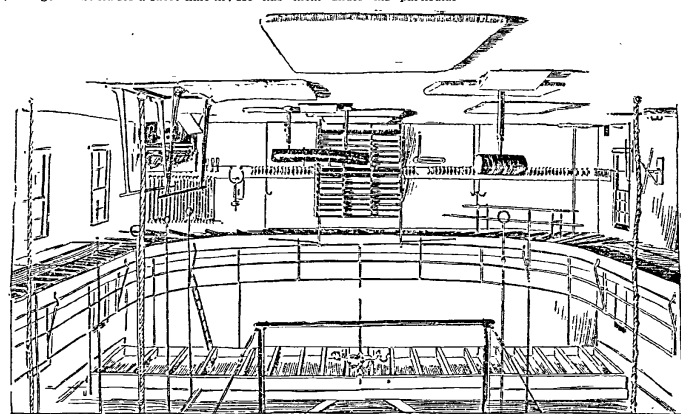
Through Mr. Villee athletics have taken a healthy, vigorous turn, and there is a live, wide-awake interest in everything gymnastic in the Camden Association. The classes average eighteen a week, while the usual attendance by the senior members is thirty and the junior members thirty-five. The business men's class at 5.15 has a usual attendance of fifteen.

With this year came a new feature in the association's gymnastic work, that of indoor competitive athletic sports. The third of the series took place last evening. These meetings are trials or preliminaries to the final, which is slated for April. The men who have qualified in these trials will be handicapped according to their abilities for the finals, and the first three competitors will receive gold, silver and bronze medals respectively.

The class drill system introduced by Instructor Villee is an excellent one, and a person having a knowledge of gymnastic work will readily appreciate its good points. First there comes the health drill, which includes the free hand, arm, leg and body movement. Then the educative, which means work on the various apparatus, while the third, or recreative, covers games of various sorts on the floor of the gymnasium, exclusive of basketball. This system is always maintained.

A leaders' class is also a new feature adopted by Mr. Villee. The men who are included in this class are the best athletes in the association, who lead the different classes and assist the physical instructor. They meet once a week, practicing advanced work and becoming better acquainted with Mr. Villee's system of physical education.

The junior membership is very large and among the boys, all of whom are under 16 years of age, there are some clever athletes. Mr. Villee also has junior leaders, the boys doing the best work being honored with the positions. This junior department also has a class of twelve club swingers, in which Mr. Villee takes great pride. He has them under his particular



CAMDEN Y. M. C. A. GYMNASIUM.

the rear room of what was then the Trinity Baptist Church, now known as the Hatch Post Building. Later quarters were secured at 318 Federal street, where they were located for more than a year. Then a move was made to Lincoln Hall, Third and Market, the second and third stories of that building being secured, where for ten years they remained. Then the Third and Federal streets building was used and from there the association moved to its present quarters.

Since the association moved from its old quarters at Third and Federal streets, the membership has been almost doubly increased, principally by the construction of one of the finest gymnasiums in this section of the country, being more complete than the central association of this city and possessing a fine swimming tank, which the mother branch here has not.

**THE "GYM'S" GREAT ATTRACTION**  
There can be no doubt but that the athletic work in the Y. M. C. A. is its greatest attraction. It draws young men to the building, gets them interested in the work and lays the foundation for the accomplishment of the association's purpose, leading them in the right path.

The Camden Association has had long and varied experience with gymnasiums, and the addition of this great feature has more than proven its value to the work. The first "gym" in Camden was in the old building at the southeast corner of Third and Market streets. The space was very small, the athletic work suffering severely in the cramped quarters. However, the work was carried on there with great success for nearly four years, when the building at the southwest corner of Third and Federal streets was erected and the two upper floors engaged.

This change proved to be successful. A large gymnasium floor space was now at hand, with shower baths, dressing rooms and other features necessary for the carrying on of gymnastic work. The great drawback, however, was the ceiling, which was not more than fifteen feet in height. This prevented any development of flying and traveling ring work, while horizontal bar work was also handicapped to a certain extent. However, for nearly six years the work progressed there in the most satisfactory manner, the classes being large and interest at times very great.

### THE PRESENT QUARTERS.

The building now in use at Broadway and Federal streets is the most complete the Camden Association ever had, and while the reading rooms, parlors and game rooms were not constructed especially for the work, yet they are almost exactly the desired arrangement. Just above the house was a space of ground nearly one hundred feet wide and very deep. On this space the "gym" was erected, and a beauty it is. It runs east and west, the front facing Federal street, and getting a good Southern sun exposure. The gymnasium has a thoroughly modern equipment and, as said above, it has no superior in this section of the country. It is 43x70 feet, with a peaked roof thirty-two feet high. The running track overhead is a good feature in the "gym," and it is, of course, very largely patronized.

Then the pool has been the means of drawing many men into the Association work. It is 21x30 feet, with a depth of water from four feet four inches to six feet. The slides and bottom are lined with white enameled bricks, and has a capacity of 33,000 gallons of water.

### PHYSICAL INSTRUCTOR VILLEE.

The gymnastic work is under the direction of A. G. Villee, who during his two years' connection with the Camden Association has advanced and created great interest in the work. Mr. Villee is a follower of the Chicago Training School system, having received his gymnastic education there, and naturally believes in its teachings. He is 25 years old, a native of Lancaster, Pa., and has been in gymnastic work for the past five years. After his course at the training school he was appointed assistant at Milwaukee, going from there to New-

care, and without doubt they are a clever lot of boys.

There are many other interesting features in the gymnastic work, and the two fine bowling alleys and shuffleboards should not be forgotten in this brief review.

A feature in the winter's work has been the series of "Health and First Aid to the Injured" talks. These began in November and will continue until April, the course being closed by Dr. E. M. Howard. The Saturday outings in summer will be continued the coming season. These delightful affairs are under Mr. Villee's direction. A crowd of probably twenty leaves the association about 10 o'clock of a Saturday morning, riding as far as they can in the trolleys, then walking to some pretty spot, where all sorts of sports and games are indulged in.

### THE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS.

The officers of the association are composed of Camden's best-known men, and there is not a better known and more highly respected citizen than Walter M. Patton, who is now president. For years he has been an enthusiastic worker and supporter of the association. The secretaryship is in the hands of Harry Curtis, who has now been with the Camden Association about two years. Mr. Curtis is very popular with the members and has done much toward placing the branch where it is to-day.

The vice-president and treasurer is William J. Coxe, who has been long identified with the work. C. L. Craig is recording secretary. The Board of Directors is composed of Schuyler C. Woodhull, Joseph E. Roberts, William C. Lore, W. A. Davis, M. D., W. Bechtel, Gelbert Landis, Judge Frank Burdall, Frank Sibley, Samuel B. Goff and Dr. E. M. Howard. The trustees are Abraham Anderson, Wilbur F. Rose, Harry Humphreys, Luther H. Kellum, W. J. Coxe, Carlton M. Williams, Joseph B. Van Sclver, Joseph E. Robert and Thomas E. Gifford. Frank Pierson is assistant secretary.