the erection in Wilmington of the first Jewish house of worship in the State.

That our Jewish fellow-citizens held religious services in the city prior to that time we are assured by the oldest inhabitants; but this was done occasionally only, although late in the sixties there was here a quasi-congregational organization under the spiritual leadership of the Rev. E. M. Myers. He conducted services, when a ritual quorum—ten adult males—attended, in an old building on South Front Street, formerly a Presbyterian Chapel. The earliest permanent organization, however, dates from November, 1872, and its birthplace was the hospitable home of the late Abraham Weill, at the northeast corner of Front and Mulberry (Grace) Streets.

On November 21, 1872, Dr. Marcus Jastrow, of Philadelphia, addressed a general meeting of Israelites in the city court room, and under the inspiration of his address and the chairmanship of Mr. Solomon Bear, an organization was effected, and committees were named to solicit members and subscriptions and to select a suitable location for a synagogue. As membership in Jewish congregations was confined to men, the women, anxious to aid in the good work, organized an auxiliary association under the name Ladies' Concordia Society, "to promote the cause of Judaism, and to aid by its funds the maintenance of a temple of worship in our midst." The wording of this resolution probably suggested to the men the name of the congregation, *Mishkan Yisrael*—Temple of Israel.

Together the men and women worked zealously with the desired end in view. Eventually they secured the lot on the southeast corner of Fourth and Market Streets, just across from St. James's Cemetery, which shelters the ashes of the builders of Wilmington and where also is the grave of the Samuel Adams of North Carolina, Cornelius Harnett, and contracted with the Abbotsburg Building Company, General Abbot, president, for the erection of a $20,000 church edifice, according to plans drawn in Philadelphia and altered and amended by our townsman, James Walker. Capt. R. S. Radcliffe was engaged to superintend the work. Ground was broken in March, 1875, and on the 15th day of June the cornerstone was laid. The Rev. Dr. Jastrow, whose exhortations had given the first impetus to the congregation, was present to bless the work; Hon. Alfred Moore Waddell, in a splendid oration, delivered the greetings of the city and of the Masonic Order, under whose auspices the

cornerstone was laid, and with a beautiful benediction the rabbi closed the ceremonies, which were participated in by representatives of several churches.

In February, 1876, the congregation, looking forward to the early completion of the building, called Rabbi Samuel Mendelsohn to assume the rabbinate. The call was accepted, and Rabbi Mendelsohn came to Wilmington February 29, 1876, at once assuming the duties which he is still discharging. He organized Sabbath-school classes, inaugurated regular Sabbath (Saturday) services, both of which were domiciled in the basement of the building, and otherwise aided in arousing a spirit of congregational life among his parishioners.

On May 12, 1876, Rabbi Mendelsohn, once a pupil of Dr. Jastrow, solemnly dedicated the temple whose existence primarily owed so much to the eloquent addresses of this great teacher and famous scholar (1829-1903); and ever since the temple has been open and the rabbi at his post for divine services on the eve and morn of every Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) and of every Jewish festival, and on every occasion that calls for a solemn convocation.

The Ladies' Concordia Society still continues its activities and the Sabbath-school Aid Society, consisting of former and present pupils, is doing good work in providing for the needs of an institution of this kind.

Connected with the congregation is a Hebrew Relief Association, whose aim and object are to prevent an Israelite, resident or transient, from becoming a burden on the community or its charities; and we are assured that throughout the years of the existence of the Associated Charities only one Jewish applicant has received aid from that beneficent source.

But while the congregation is pursuing the even tenor of a Jewish institution and the Temple of Israel naturally resounds with the worship of the God of Israel, the Scriptural word employed by Dr. Mendelsohn in the course of his dedicatory sermon, "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people," was practically exemplified during the spring of 1886 and thereafter. On the 21st day of February the beautiful and commodious edifice of the Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church went down in ashes in a conflagration that destroyed an appalling number of buildings, and the congregation became homeless. The morning of February 23, however, brought relief to that congregation in the form of a cordial invitation from