

AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY.

This highly popular and useful Society celebrated its twenty-second anniversary on Monday evening, May 6th, at the Broadway Tabernacle. A very numerous audience attended, forming a striking contrast with the slim assemblies that greeted its earlier celebrations, and affording a gratifying proof of the increased and hearty interest which is cherished by a benevolent public in behalf of the moral, social, and personal improvement of our seamen.

Pelotiah Perit, Esq., the President of the Society occupied the chair.

After singing and prayer, the President rose to congratulate the friends of the cause on the prosperity which, through the Divine blessing, had attended the concerns of the Society. He would recall the commencement of evangelical efforts for the benefit of seamen, which took place simultaneously in the city of New-York and the city of London—resulting in the establishment of the floating Bethel in London, and the Mariners' church in Roosevelt-street here. The few remnants present of the first association which was formed to promote this object will recollect the many discouragements which attended those early efforts, from the prejudices of sailors, the prejudices of captains, the apathy of ship-owners and the general unbelief of the practicability of changing the character of seamen. Has any change been effected? He would mention a few of the evidences. There has been a great change in the discipline of our merchant service—substituting a government by weight of character and moral influence for brute force and violence. There is a great improvement in the accommodations of seamen on ship board, and in their boarding-houses on shore. The Seamen's Savings Bank in this city holds in deposit upward of a million of dollars belonging to seafaring men. Temperance prevails extensively among them. But he would not detain them from the Report.

Rev. J. Spaulding, one of the secretaries of the Society, read an

ABSTRACT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT.

Twenty-two years have passed since this institution assumed the character and undertook the labors of a National Seamen's Friend Society.

Since its commencement many of its early friends have gone to their rest; yet many survive, and it is gratifying to see so many present to sympathize in the exercises of this anniversary occasion.

Its operations continue to be both Foreign and Domestic; extending through its chaplains and sailor missionaries, the ministration of the Gospel to seamen, kind offices to the sick, and the last rites to the dead, in the islands of the Pacific, China, Brazil, Chili, France, Sweden, and the West Indies; besides acting in concert with numerous auxiliary and local societies in sustaining Sailors' Homes, Bethels, &c., in this country. The Sailors' Home in New York has had within the past year 2421, and in eight years 27,975 sailor-boarders. All these labors have been crowned with gratifying success.

The receipts of the Society for the year ending May 1st, were \$23,497—being an increase of \$4915 over those of the preceding year; and the expenditure \$23,206. As in former years, a considerable amount of funds raised by the secretaries is not included in this Report, it being expended in the ports where raised for local objects.

SUMMARY REVIEW.

A careful review of the various efforts of the past year, and analysis of the results, conclusively sustain the following positions:

1. *Seamen are rapidly rising in the scale of social and moral improvement.*

If any doubt this position, we confidently refer to the contrast between their present condition and what it was a few years ago. To say nothing of the thousands who have signed the temperance pledge, we appeal to the manifest results of the principles and practice of temperance; to the order and quiet seen in the Sailors' Homes, in the streets and on the wharves; to entire crews going to sea and returning home sober men; to the general fact that intoxicating liquors are not furnished among the stores of the merchant, the whaling and fishing vessels, as formerly; to the improved health of seamen; to their well furnished chests, as well as to the hundreds of thousands of dollars deposited by them in small sums in Savings Banks; to their comfortable and happy families; to their growing

thrift, rising in their profession, and becoming in many instances owners in the craft they navigate, as the mechanic owns his tools; to the improvement of commanders, governing their men less by brute force, and more by moral influence; to all this and more we refer; and if any one is still in doubt, we drop the argument of facts, and despair of producing conviction in such a mind.

2. *The means employed for the benefit of seamen have been made signally efficacious by the Holy Spirit.*

In a way often no less instructive than wonderful has this divine agent led them to love and obey the Gospel. A sailor partially intoxicated strayed into one of our chapels in a foreign land. The truth he carried away so wrought upon his conscience when sober, as to lead him, while crossing the Atlantic, to give himself up to Christ. Another found peace in believing during his stay in the hospital at Lahaina. Another, who was at the siege of Vera Cruz, assisted in planting the American flag on the Castle of Ulloa, and gloried in a valor which never surrendered, knoeked under to the "Call" of Richard Baxter.

A shipmaster said to one of our missionaries: "Through the reading of the tracts you gave me, and the Bible, my views respecting religion have been changed. I now feel that I am a great sinner, and see also the utility and necessity of the doctrine of the Cross. I now see that there can be no salvation but through Jesus Christ."

In no previous year has there been so liberal a distribution of Bibles and Testaments, good books and tracts, on board vessels bound to all parts of the world. The merchant vessels bound to California and China, and the naval ships cruising wherever rights are to be protected, or scientific researches are to be made, have alike been freighted with the Word of Life. And it was to be expected that it should not return void. Last July a good supply was put on board one of the ships belonging to the Mediterranean Squadron. They were committed to the care of the boat-swain. In a letter dated "Gibraltar, Sept., 1849," he says: "We have an excellent captain, and officers and crew; and we have on board a Sabbath-school, a Bible-class, and divine service by the chaplain on Sabbath forenoon. In the afternoon I meet the Bible-class. I gave the captain a reading to your request, one of the large Testaments with Psalms; he was very much pleased with it. I served out on last Sabbath 12 of the Testaments, and all the Bibles. Dear brother, I feel there is a great work before us here for me to do; pray for me that I may be instrumental in my Maker's hands of doing some good."

Under date of "Naples, Feb. 20, 1850," he again says: "I write these few lines to inform you of the gracious work the Lord is carrying on here on board. Such a scene has perhaps never been witnessed on board of a man-of-war. The Lord is with us in the Spirit's power. Many of the men come every evening, crying, *What must we do to be saved?* and I have held meetings for their benefit every evening for two months steadily. Over one hundred have been awakened; of whom eighty are rejoicing on account of their having found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. * * * I believe that prophecy of Isaiah has commenced here, *the abundance of the sea shall be converted*," &c.—Such are some of the fruits of the Spirit; and, *lo! these are but parts of his ways.*

3. *Effort for the spiritual good of seamen is one of the best modes yet discovered for creating and supplying a demand for the Word of God on foreign shores.*

Having once tasted "the good word" themselves, they are anxious to communicate it to others. A Swedish shipmaster, who for some time has been in the coasting trade between Valparaiso and the ports North, in his last voyage took 110 copies of the Spanish Scriptures, which were all sold, and "there was a great demand for more." A Norwegian captain is very active in promoting the cause of Christ among his countrymen. In a recent visit to Gottenberg, he bought of our missionary more than fifty copies of the Scriptures to distribute among seamen and fishermen families in his native place.

Says a member of the Marine Committee in New-York: "I sold last voyage to the captain of a brig from a port in a country of Southern Europe, where the Bible is almost an unknown book, a dozen Bibles in his own language. He tells me that these volumes have created quite a sensation in his native town, and are highly prized. He seems him-

self to be much impressed with the value of the book, and to have been already much enlightened by its contents. He has made a second purchase of 36 Bibles and Testaments, and says that he intends to fill his village with them, 'so that they can all live together like a band of brothers.' He also furnished money to his crew to buy some six copies more."

Our chaplain to seamen at Honolulu writes: "Several thousands of Portuguese seamen are now employed on board American whale-ships. Those visiting this port are exceedingly anxious to obtain copies of the Bible in their own language. Last Sabbath I distributed 30 copies of the Bible among them, and the previous Sabbath as many more. Several remarked that they were anxious for the Bible to take to their families and friends in the Western Islands."

Thus God's word, in the hands of pious-seamen of different nations and languages, is having free course; is both creating and meeting a desire for it in countries inaccessible at present in any other way.

4. *With the success of the past year's labors affords ample encouragement, the sufferings and deaths in the sea plead with fresh importunity for renewed and energetic efforts in this philanthropic work.*

The perils incident to a seafaring life appeal strongly to human sympathy; but their loudest and deepest appeal is to the soul in behalf of the soul. So that when the record of the past year unrolls the long list of missing, wrecked, foundered, abandoned, and burned vessels; particularly when it tells of the nearly one hundred souls who perished from the burning ship Caleb Grimshaw; of the 99 swept into eternity from the wreck of the brig St. John: of the 134 sent to the bottom, after three minutes' warning, in the bark Charles Bartlett; of the crew of the brig Stockton, driven to the tops and living 11 days on nothing but a little water, then beginning to drop off one by one till in 26 days all but two were dead; when it tells of vessel after vessel lost, and not a soul left to tell the sad story of their fate; the heart swells and the eye moistens while the Christian mind goes off in search of their eternal destiny! Where are the dead of the sea? The very doubt which the question raises imparts energy to the motives to furnish seamen with the means of salvation. While their physical sufferings claim the kind offices of the good Samaritan, their spiritual and immortal necessities most urgently plead for the intervention of the grace and mercy of the Son of God. Motive rises upon motive, like successive mountains, each loftier than the preceding, for an energetic prosecution of this work; and each revealing bright and yet brighter glory to God and good to man in the completed gathering of the harvest of the sea.

American and Foreign Christian Union.

The anniversary exercises were held in the Reformed Dutch church on Washington Square, Dr. Hutton's, Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., President, in the Chair, Prayer by Rev. J. Hummer, D.D., of Baltimore.

The Treasurer, Mortimer De Motte, Esq., stated the proceeds to be \$53,885 84; and the expenditures, \$53,885 98.

Entire receipts for the Portuguese exiles, \$14,928 41; paid for account of Portuguese, \$14,926 15.

The Secretaries, Dr. Baird and Mr. Norton, then gave a verbal abstract of the Annual Report, which document we are obliged to defer.

Rev. Dr. Dowling, of the Baptist church in this city, moved the acceptance and publication of the Reports. This Society is a strong cord made up of three strands—each having different fields, but all having a common object. This Society embraces all these several fields—to promote religious liberty and pure Christianity wherever a corrupted form of Christianity is found, at home or abroad. Other speakers will doubtless allude to other parts of the work, but for my own part, said Dr. D., there is no portion of your field that interests my own mind so warmly, as Ireland and the masses of the people who are fleeing from that unhappy land to find freedom and plenty in this country. He would mention as an illustration of Irish wit, the reply of a recent emigrant, who had been a member of the Baptist church which was so long under the care of the late eminent Dr. Carson. I was asking him whether it was right to bring Protestant Christians away from Ireland; it is taking out the salt, and leaving the mass to corrupt and putrify. He replied, "Sure, it may be so, but we protestants are the salt, but then, what can we do with salt without potatoes?" Dr. D. alluded again to the three-fold cord, and

said that there are four anchors attached to that cord. On one of these is written RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, on the second, THE BIBLE THE RULE OF FAITH, on the third, JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and upon the last, ALL ONE IN JESUS CHRIST. It is a Religious Liberty Society, a Bible Reading Society, an Experimental Religious Society, and a Christian Union Society. He bore his testimony in favour of all that had been done for the Portuguese exiles. Among his choicest recollections would be the privilege he had enjoyed of sharing in the counsels of this Committee.

Seconded by Rev. M. Chickering, of Portland, with a few remarks.

Rev. David Trumbull, missionary at Valparaiso, was introduced. He would confine his remarks to the consideration of the Spanish population. There are more people who speak Spanish than who speak French. Including the Portuguese, which is a singular dialect, the population using this language must be between forty and fifty millions. If we mean to do anything for South America, we must buckle to like men. No country yielded so implicitly as Spain to the Inquisition. Its power remained in force in Peru till the year 1826. The Reformation had effect in all other European countries, but in Spain it was kept out by the Inquisition. In nearly all Spanish countries, the Romish religion is the religion of the State, to the exclusion of every other. In most of these countries the use of the pulpit is impossible. We must send them the colporteur with his Bible and books to work in households and with individuals. This we can do. South America is for us, and Spain is more properly within the scope of British Christians. In Madrid itself, there are now two versions of the Scriptures in preparation. We must attend to our sister republics. The South Americans apprehend that we are to overrun them. After the Mexican war, their newspapers raised the cry of a war of race; and some more bold than the rest, say that the only way to prevent their entire subjugation by the Anglo-Saxons, is to meet civilization with civilization, schools with schools, improvement with improvement. He believed there were ample opportunities for colportage, for schools, for the circulation of the Scriptures, and perhaps to some extent, for preaching. Shall we not take up this work with a manly heart, and a firm resolution, that, be the cost what it may, in dollars or in men, we will never give over until this work is done.

Mr. De Mattos was next introduced, as a native of the island of Madeira, who was led to embrace the true faith, and had been educated in Scotland for the ministry under the auspices of Dr. Kalléy, in connection with the Free Church of Scotland, and had been chosen by the Portuguese exiles as their pastor. Mr. De Mattos, who has a considerable command of our language, spoke of his gratitude to this people for their kindness to his afflicted fellow-countrymen, and expressed the anxiety he had experienced to be among them, but he had been afflicted. He is now recovering his health. He had visited Madeira, and was satisfied that the work of God is going on there, privately. He went to the West Indies, and found that an unexpected change had taken place; the Portuguese from the other islands have all come together in the island of Trinidad, where they are comfortable in outward circumstances, but greatly need a pastor, and one is presently expected from Scotland.

Mr. Leo, a native of Ireland, a convert from Popery, and for the year past a colporteur among his countrymen in this city, was the next speaker. He is a young man, fluent and fearless. He labored freely among his countrymen, and had never once been insulted or offended, because he had been careful not to insult them or wound their feelings. He had distributed hundreds of Testaments, and many of them have left the Church of Rome and united with evangelical churches. Accounts from Ireland, recently received, show that the work of God is going on in that country, especially in the priest-ridden south of Ireland, with a power never known before; and the emigrants who arrive in this country come with less reverence for the priesthood. Popery can never thrive in this free country, even though it here hides its more revolting features, and even prates of liberty!

Rev. Dr. Bacon, of New Haven remarked. The Report calls our attention to the relations of the Christianity of this country to the Christianity of Papal lands. We see the representatives of all these countries among the emigrants who form our domestic field; and when