

pots; which books are, from time to time, to be given to the Captains of his Majesty's ships in the proportions directed by their Lordships. And their Lordships have further signified their pleasure, that a special account be kept by the Society of all books thus issued, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the same. This pious and beneficent purpose promises to be attended with the happiest effects: and every good man will rejoice at the contemplation of the enlarged opportunities thereby afforded of the consolations and the instructions of religion to the defenders of our country.

In like manner, from the earliest period of its institution, the attention of the Society has been directed, as occasion required, and their means would allow, to the religious wants of the poor and afflicted in Hospitals, Prisons, Work-Houses, Alms-Houses, and other public institutions. In the year 1710, they promoted a subscription for fixing large 4to. Bibles, and other Religious books, in the prisons in and about the cities of London & Westminster. In 1725, they presented a packet of books to every County Gaol in the kingdom; and in the year 1731, and at other periods, they exerted themselves, not without considerable effect, (printing in 1732 one thousand copies of a Proposal, &c.) to promote the introduction of Divine Service into those institutions; as they did about the year 1729, and at other times, to establish family prayer, and to set up schools for the education of poor children in Work-Houses. And, with regard to all these establishments above enumerated, which are not provided with any proper fund for the purchase of books, the Society, desirous that a repository should be known, to which they might have the power to resort in the hour of necessity, did, in the year 1811, extend to them

also its offers of *gratuitous* supplies, not doubting but that upon a public representation (should such representation at any future time become necessary) any extraordinary pressure upon the Society, hereby occasioned, would speedily be relieved by the bounty of the charitable and well-disposed: and still further, from the same motives, and with similar hopes, it invited the making of inquiries *generally*, through the parochial Clergy and other Members of the Society, into the wants of the indigent and labouring classes in all parts of the kingdom, in order to a removal of those deficiencies, so far as the means reposed in its trust shall allow, by grants of the Holy Scriptures, and other publications of the Society, at the usual reduced prices.

The sources from which the Society has hitherto been enabled to carry on all these and other important and extensive designs, have been the annual subscriptions of its Members, together with the legacies and occasional donations of very many pious and charitable benefactors: and the General Board, when they adopted those very considerable enlargements of the beneficent and *gratuitous* undertakings last mentioned, did not take that step, but in the humble trust that the same gracious Providence, which for so many years has enabled them to carry on their designs for promoting Christian knowledge, and edifying the body of Christ, will still furnish the means whereby those objects may be pursued with increased activity and vigour.

And, while the General Board express reverently this their assured reliance in the Divine protection, and add their persuasion that the above statement of the designs of the Society will not have been in vain, but will continue to call forth, from year to year, the cordial aid of mem-