

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT.

As the world grows old and its people increase in intelligence, civilization, social refinement, and whatever constitutes power, any changes in the state of its nations assume an aspect of unwonted importance, and render not inappropriate, exclamations concerning the stirring nature and strangeness of the times. With these we have been somewhat familiar during the last quarter of a century. The year 1848, however, will assuredly stand out in the history of the past and present, as an era of unlooked for, sudden, and unique changes, unparalleled in their nature and extent. At other times more human blood has been shed by European revolutions, and distinct and prominent powers have been brought out upon the field of action; but in one short year we have seen changes effected, reaching down to the lower strata of society as well as rising to the highest, removing all ancient landmarks, throwing all things into confusion, and that here and there worse confounded, and baffling the most far-seeing and sagacious anticipations regarding the form of the final issue. The movement has thoroughly stirred the nations in totally different stages of civilization, from the refinement of Paris to the peasantry in parts of Germany still in a state of serfdom. Meanwhile, as a Bible Society, we are enabled to look on with calmness, relying with earnest faith upon the declaration, and doing our part to fulfil the injunction—"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Our business is with Truth, which is unaffected by the changes of empires, except in so far as they confirm its prophetic portents, and make a broad way for its more glorious triumphs. In the spirit of this conviction we address ourselves to the narrative now to engage our attention.