

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

SOBRIETY AMONGST SEAMEN

In the last ten years, in the ordinary course of spiritual work on board ship and in seamen's churches and institutes on shore, 77,828 total abstinence pledges were taken by seamen, fishermen, and bargemen in the Missions to Seamen Branch of the Church of England Temperance Society. This was exclusive of members of their families, and made an average of 7,782 seamen pledged per annum. As this forms a considerable proportion of the seafaring community it might be expected that the enrolments of abstainers would now begin to diminish from year to year, and this is found to be the case. Whereas 9,578 seafaring men were pledged in 1886, and 8,620 in 1887, only 7,949 new names were added by the Missions to Seamen to the ranks of total abstainers in 1888. Remembering, however, that the Missions to seamen is not a temperance society, but a religious organization for the spiritual welfare of the seafaring classes at home and abroad, increased spiritual results might fairly be expected. Accordingly, we find, as in some measure testing the effects on the spiritual life of sailors, that 53,714 bibles and prayer books were bought by seamen, fishermen, and bargemen out of their own wages, during the last nine years, from the hands of the Missions to Seamen chaplains and readers. This gives an annual average of 5,968 bibles and prayer books sold to seamen, the number sold last year being 7,019. Another test is that 208 captains, officers, and seamen, nearly all of whom are total abstainers, undertook last year to conduct deep sea mission work on board their ships, under the guidance of the chaplains and readers, as Missions to Seamen helpers, or associates. A thirst for literature supplants the thirst for intoxicants. No less than 12,051 outward bound ships and fishing vessels left port last year with bags of reading in their fore-castle, besides 4,809 other vessels whose crews were supplied with packets of reading for which there were no bags to contain them. This temperance movement is strongest in the harbour of Bristol, where 1,329 total abstaining seamen and bargemen were enrolled last year, or 13,356 temperance men in 10 years; 23 public houses frequented by seamen being closed in the same period. 738 seamen and fishermen were pledged on the Humber last year, making 2,580 temperance men enrolled there in five years, 659 total abstaining seamen being added at the port of Sunderland last year; that branch has now, after five years, 5,366 temperance seamed. The chaplain at Bilbao, in Spain, pledged 519 British seamen last year, making 1,996 temperance men enrolled there. The Missions to Seamen on the Tyne have 6,535 total abstaining seamen, of whom 409 were pledged last year. The Mersey Missions to Seamen pledged 611 sailors last year; the Newport, Monmouthshire, Chap-

laincy pledged 503 seafaring men, whilst the Hongkong Chaplaincy enrolled 418 seamen. At most of these places the Missions to Seamen chaplains have the aid of well appointed churches and comfortable institutes for the exclusive use of seafaring men and their families, where most of the abstainers have worshipped. From 2,000 to 3,000 different seamen annually join in the week day morning worships, in each of these special Mission churches. But in Cork harbour, where the chaplain ministers solely on board ships at anchor, away from the shore, 5,128 seamen have been pledged afloat in the last 11 years. As a rule, it has been found by the Missions to Seamen chaplains that the pledge separates sailors from evil companionships, denies them the public houses and its associations, and makes them more willing to seek recreation in the seamen's institutes and churches, more ready to purchase bibles and prayer books, and to listen to that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.

Hence the effortories are largest where temperance work is most forward, and the tale of communicants follow the same rule, whilst the congregations, both on Sundays and on week days, bear a like evidence of the help which the movement renders to seamen desirous of leading a "Godly, righteous, and sober life."—*The Family Churchman*.

"GENTLEMEN, EXCUSE ME."

A public dinner had been given to Gen. Harrison on one occasion. At the close of the dinner one of the gentlemen drank his health. The General pledged his toast by drinking water. Another gentleman offered a toast, and said, "Gentlemen will you not favor me by drinking a glass of wine?" The General, in a very gentlemanly manner, begged to be excused. He was again urged to join in a glass of wine. This was too much. He rose from his seat and said in the most dignified manner:

"Gentlemen, I have twice refused to partake of the wine cup. I hope that will be sufficient. Though you press the matter over so much, not a drop shall pass my lips. I made a resolve when I started in life that I would avoid strong drink. I am one of a class of seventeen young men who graduated at college together. The other sixteen members of my class now fill drunkards' graves, and all from the pernicious habit of wine drinking. I owe all my health, my happiness and prosperity to that resolution. Would you urge me to break it now?"—*Youth's World*.

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A Weekly Newspaper.

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Is published every Wednesday in the interests of the Church of England in Canada, and in Rupert's Land and the North-West.

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