

which can correct their every error, support their every trial, and guide their every perplexity.

It is delightful to think of the many thousands thus engaged in every quarter of the world, and could we but bring into one view the manifold blessings which have resulted from their labours, we should then appreciate, in all its intensity, the good which this Society has been the means of effecting.

The funds by which the cause has been sustained next demand our observation. It was not until the fourth year that the receipts were doubled. The Society was largely and liberally supported in Scotland. Congregational collections were recommended by the general Presbyteries, an example which was followed by the whole Wesleyan body in the year 1811.

The total expenditures has reached nearly £4,000,000, sterling, a sum, indeed, noble and magnificent, if considered by itself, but a mere unit if we contrast it with the outlay of a single war, or the annual expenditure in Great Britain for articles of luxury alone.

But of this large total a considerable amount has arisen from legacies,—a species of income uncertain and fluctuating it is true, but we think it will be found on comparison, that no religious institution in this country has farred more largely than the Bible Society from this source; and we deduce from this fact an inference,—viz, that the object which the testators cherished and advocated in life they remembered with still deeper interest in the anticipation of death—that the feeling clung to them to the end; and we would fain hope, that, in the case of many it proves that that Word which was their consolation in the hour of their greatest need they were anxious should have the widest circulation, that others in like extremity might find its unfailing support and peace-speaking power.

It would appear that, out of the 43,000,000 of copies which have been circulated over the whole habitable world, no less than 17,000,000 have been circulated in the languages spoken in the British Isles, and, whilst many have found their way to every portion of our Colonial Empire, doubtless the far larger number have been dispensed at home. The mode of their circulation has been through the valuable aid of our different auxiliaries,—a statement which it would be easy to confirm by multiplied instances, did time permit. We would, however, refer with confidence to the records of Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Birmingham, &c., &c., most of which towns were connected with the Parent Institution about the same period.

It may, perhaps, be well to state a little more in full the circumstance which led to this unprecedented demand. In the year 1846, some friends visiting Blackpool, a small watering-place on the coast of Lancashire whilst deriving invigoration from the refreshing sea-breeze, and wandering upon the beach, cast their eyes along the villages which deck that line of coast, and the thought occurred to them whether the inmates of those houses were possessors of the Sacred Word; acting upon the thought, they made a visitation, opened a sale for the Scriptures, formed an Association, and, ere a few months closed, they had circulated 1,800 copies in that limited district. A person from Manchester, who had witnessed the success, and had greatly co-operated towards it, returning home shortly afterwards, conferred with a few friends like-

minded with himself in that great city, and a determination was made to offer the Scriptures amongst the immense mass of operatives who crowd the various mills and factories.—The result far exceeded all anticipation, for the issue, which had for some few years before been limited to 5,000 annually, but in the one immediately preceding that of which we are now speaking had amounted to 15,000, suddenly reached, in one month, 20,000; and, in the six months, had extended to 80,862; so that, before the close of the year in which the movement was made, the total issues had considerably exceeded 100,000 copies.

Since that time there has been a distinct agency established, and each year has shown the continued prosperity which attends it. The results, too, which have followed this extensive distributions are highly gratifying when you walk the street of that thriving city your eye is not offended by any exhibition of gross drunkenness or immorality, neither is your ear offended by the sound of obscenity or blasphemy. The calendar of crime has become greatly diminished, the number of its different places of worship attest the prevalence of a religious feeling, and the crowds of willing worshippers in the present sanctuaries indicates a paramount regard for the Word of Truth. Whilst the throng that muster in the ample dimensions of the Free-trade Hall at the anniversaries of its auxiliary, and the loud and heart-cheering echo which responds to the assertion of the supremacy of Scriptures is no doubtful augury for good in days such as these in which we live.

I might also mention the result in the venerable town of Leicester, whose halls were made memorable for the eloquent advocacy of Robert Hall, and Robinson and Vaughan. Not fewer than 80,000 copies have left its depot and even now a re-division of these districts has been entered upon with zeal and energy.

To every class in this country has the beneficence of this Society been extended. In its earlier days, gaols and convicts, the poor, the sick, and the degraded, were approached with its bestowment; many a culprit, in his solitary cell, has felt the power of the Saviour's voice, whilst the sick man on his pallet, whether at the hospital or in his private home, has been cheered by its kind words of solace. To the peasants in their seclusion, and the artisans in their hives of industry, as well as to the barracks and the battle-field, has its mission been made known. Thousands of copies have been circulated amongst the prisoners of war.

Frenchmen, and Spaniards, Dutch, Swedes, and Portuguese, when resident amongst us, have been presented with copies in their own tongue. Not fewer than 30,000 prisoners of war were thus supplied during their period of exile in England.

For the benefit of the young, large sacrifices have been made, grants have been liberally bestowed wherever schools have been formed, and in many lonely neglected hamlets is seen the stamp of your Society in the hands of those who are too poor to purchase. Not less than £30,000 has been already sunk in this one item. Not even yet is the hand of your Committee stayed from giving. No application, where necessity is manifest, is sent empty away.

Since the appropriation of a special fund for grants to schools was established, 118,387

Bibles and Testaments have been issued to 2,096 schools.

Nor are our seamen overlooked or even our emigrants.

The Merchant Seamen's Bible Society for the River Thames will, by its chronicles for thirty-four years, furnish abundant proof that they are not forgotten. Even during the past two years, no fewer than 33,902 visits were made by our Bible-boat to vessels within the limit of the port of London, when 12,300 copies were sold. More than 2,300 of these were thus placed in the hands of foreign seamen,—in the hands of many, who, had they wished it, could not have supplied themselves in their own country, such as Spaniards, Italians, &c., &c. In this port alone have 174,933 copies been supplied to our various seafaring people.

Nor have the efforts been less at Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol, Plymouth, &c. &c.—Your Committee are fully alive to the peculiar claims our seamen possess to sympathy and care; cut off, by the very nature of their life, from those helps to devotion which arise from the services of the sanctuary, they have a deeper need that the Word should be brought nigh unto them; so that whilst they see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep, their hearts may be drawn up in communion, and they may acknowledge with confidence His power, who can command the winds and they obey Him, and can say unto the waves, "Peace, be still, and immediately there is a great calm."

To the London City Mission, too, have your Committee gladly rendered their assistance. More than 60,000 of copies of the Scriptures have been consigned to the care of the several Missionaries, to be used by them as a loan stock. The need of such a stock will be readily admitted by those who know that one-seventh of the entire population of London is Irish in its extraction. These, as a general rule, being Roman Catholics, are prohibited by their priests from possessing the Scriptures and their ignorance and indifference make them yield a ready obedience.

A large proportion of our operatives are indoctrinated in the principles of infidelity, and live totally unmindful of all religious claims. Under these circumstances, if the Bible be not brought unsolicited, there would, humanly speaking, be no movement towards its attainment. To such parties, therefore, these devoted men lend a copy for a month, or longer, as they deem expedient. Upon each return of their visit, they carefully inquire for the copy they had left, that they may trace if any use has been made of it. In many instances, the temporary possession has produced the desire for the permanent, and in one district alone, during past year, not less than 52 heads of families were induced to become purchasers by weekly instalments.

Your Committee feel an especial sympathy with this Missionary Institution; its basis is as broad as their own; and it is pleasing to them to know, that between the rising and setting sun, on six days of every week, that goodly band of 234 men read more than 1,000 portions of that blessed Word. This grant, also, is not limited to London, but Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, are freely furnished.

To the Ragged School Union, grants have frequently been made; and in the success, which has attended all these philanthropic efforts, your Committee cordially rejoice. No fewer than 18,000 children are now receiving