

SUNDAY AT SEA.

From a forthcoming book by Mr. James Croil of Montreal. His many friends, the readers of the "Record," will be glad again to greet him and to see, from the extract here given, that his pen is facile as of yore.

"As far as circumstances permit, Sunday is observed with as much decorum on shipboard as it is on shore; that is, on the British and American lines. As for the Continental steamers, the traveller may expect to become acquainted with a Continental Sabbath, which, in most cases, means the ignoring of the day of rest altogether. On our Canadian steamships weather permitting, public worship is usually held in the saloon, at 10.30 a.m. Sometimes there is an evening service as well, but more frequently an impromptu service of song, much enjoyed by the musical portion of the company, and that is frequently a large proportion of the passengers—ladies especially.

The order of service is entirely at the discretion of the captain. In the absence of a clergyman, the captain reads the morning service and the Scripture lessons for the day from the Book of Common Prayer. If there is a Protestant minister on board it is customary to invite him to take the whole service; if there be more than one minister available, each of them may be asked to take part in the service. On the New York liners, as a rule, there is no sermonizing, no matter how many ministers may be on board. The captain and purser read the morning service, or portions of it; a couple of hymns are sung; a collection is taken up for the benefit of the Seamen's Home, or kindred object, and that is all.

There are, however, exceptions to this rule. When the captain is prevented by his duties on deck from conducting the service, a clergyman, if there be one among the passengers, is usually asked to assist. A deviation from the rule is often made when a minister of outstanding celebrity happens to be on board. Ministers like the late Dr. Norman Macleod, or Dr. William M. Taylor, would invariably be asked to preach, no matter what line they travelled by. The servicebook of the Cunard Company consists of selections from the Book of Common Prayer, with the addition of a form of prayer prepared by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, for the use of sailors and persons at sea. A singularly beautiful prayer it is:

"Almighty God, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea; under whose protection we are alike secure in every place, and without whose providence we can nowhere be in safety; look down in

mercy on us, thine unworthy servants, who are called to see thy wonders on the deep, and to perform the duties of our vocation in the great waters. Let thine everlasting arm be underneath and round about us. Preserve us in all dangers; support us in all trials; conduct us speedily and safely on our voyage, and bring us in peace and comfort to our desired haven.

"Be pleased to watch over the members of our families and all the beloved friends whom we have left behind. Relieve our minds from all anxiety on their account by the blessed persuasion that thou carest for them. Above all, grant that our souls may be defended from whatsoever evils or perils may encompass them; and that, abiding steadfast in the faith, we may be enabled so to pass through the waves and storms of this uncertain world, that finally we may come to the land of everlasting rest, through Jesus Christ, our Lord Amen."

The service-book also contains the Psalms of David in prose, and a collection of 107 hymns, including four of the Scotch paraphrases. The hymn most frequently sung at sea is the one beginning with "Eternal Father, strong to save," and next to it, "O God, our help in ages past." Evangelistic services of a less stately kind than in the saloon are often held in the afternoon in the second cabin or steerage, and are usually much appreciated; while in the evening the deck hands will join with groups of emigrants in singing Moody and Sankey hymns, such as "Revive us Again," "Rescue the Perishing," "Whiter than Snow" etc. It is often remarkable to notice how familiar people of diverse creeds and nationalities are with these hymns, and how heartily they unite in singing them.

A favorite text with preachers on shipboard is Rev. xxi. 1: "And there was no more sea." The theme, associated as it is, with so many fathoms of profundity, has yielded to many forms of treatment. I remember that a young minister, my roommate, by the way, on his first voyage out from Quebec, chose this for his text, and that he launched out, as well he might on the charms of the sea in poetical flights of fancy. But the while we were sailing in smooth water. When outside the Straits he laid his head on the pillow and underwent a change of environment, recovering from which, after many days, he vowed that should he ever preach from that text again, he would have something more to say about it. I remember, too, that an elderly gentleman—a Presbyterian of the Presbyterians—was asked by the captain to preach one Sunday morning. He readily complied, taking it for granted that he was to conduct the whole service. Imagine his chagrin when an Anglican brother unexpectedly appeared on the scene and went