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THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

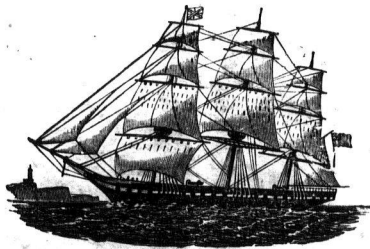
OF THE

Night Refuge for the Homeless

AND FIRST OF

Seamen's Bethel and Reading Room,

186 Lower Water Street, - - Near Shipping Office.



HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED BY J. BURGOYNE, "REPORTER & TIMES" OFFICE,

1879.

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CIRCULAR

We, the undersigned, fully sympathise with the Appeal on pages 9 and 10, believing that such a well established and permanent Bethel, Recreation Rooms and Refuge, would not only be a great boon to seafaring men, but prove a blessing to the whole community.

E. A. INGLESFIELD,
S. TOBIN,
J. WIMBURN LAURIE,
JAS. B. MORROW,
J. S. MACLEAN,
CHARLES F. DeWOLF,
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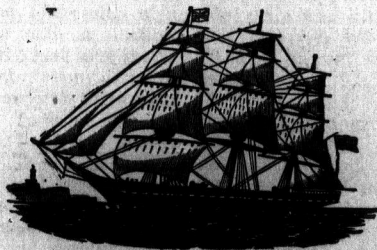
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THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NIGHT REFUGE FOR THE HOMELESS
AND FIRST OF
Seamen's Bethel and Reading Room.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"—Isaiah lviii, 6, 7.

It is with devout thankfulness to God, the giver of all good that the following Report is submitted with the earnest prayer that He may be glorified thereby.

It is now three years since the "Night Refuge" was first established, and though it may have appeared then, or does now, to the mind of any that there was little need, if any, for such an institution in this city, yet the hundreds who have been sheltered and fed is proof sufficient of the great necessity of such a home.

Its object is three-fold :

1. To shelter and feed the destitute stranger.
2. To prevent crime.
3. To be a check on imposition.

In all three particulars it has in a great measure accomplished its mission.

First.—The fact that 660 persons have slept in the Refuge, and received supper and breakfast—very many of them dinners—is a practical proof. To the above number of persons 1,340 nights' lodgings were given. Several of them after leaving the city wrote expressing their gratitude for kindness received. One young man, who

came from Scotland and went to the States, writes at the close of his letter, "and hoping God will bless you for your kindness to poor strangers including myself while I stayed with you." Another young man, who had walked from Yarmouth, came here penniless. After two days he shipped in a vessel, and when he received his money came and desired to pay his expenses, saying, "It will help another poor fellow along; I have been treated kindly and I can never forget it."

An old man who came from Amherst and had walked 25 miles, came to the Refuge on Sabbath day, his feet and ankles all skinned and swollen, without socks to his feet.

A boy 15 years of age, whose mother died when he was eight, and whose father left him, followed the sea as cabin boy, was discharged in St. John, N. B., came to Halifax, applied at the police station for shelter, was sent here by City Marshal.

A young woman who having neither money nor friends, and who, so as not to be seen in the city during the night, went to the north common to walk about, but was observed by the policeman who brought her to the Refuge about 1 a. m. She afterwards obtained a good place in the country. Case after case might be cited but space will not permit.

Second.—As to it being a preventive to crime, it must be quite clear to every mind that while there is a class who would rather suffer than ask, or do anything dishonorable to obtain food, yet the great majority are those who get their wants supplied from one source or another; therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that if such are penniless and friendless and no man give them to eat, that rather than want they will be led to steal, or associate with those who will lead them into crime. Who is there, that is ignorant of the fact, that in this, as in other cities, there are open doors for the young man or woman to enter into, that leads to paths of crime and vice? and who can tell how many of the 660 have been saved from such? Take for instance the young woman referred to above. What if it had been one of those who so often prowl round that part of the city, instead of the police sergeant who observed her? doubtless she would have found a home! but not the one she was brought to.

A young lad who came to this city, a stranger, with a few dollars (two or three) not knowing any one, soon found companions, who having taken him to a questionable house where he had liquor and lay all night on a bench, woke in

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the morning minus his money, applied at the Refuge, where he remained till his father was communicated with in the States, who forwarded \$10 to send him home; the Hon. Judge Jackson paid his expenses in the Home. It is plain to see that lad's future in Halifax had there been no Refuge.

In conversing with a young woman who was leading a life of sin, and who came from a certain part of Nova Scotia about 4 years ago, she told me that when she came to this city she was an entire stranger: did not know who to ask for; it was at night, but that a person she never knew before took her to a house where she was told she could remain till she got a place, but a short time convinced her that her new companion's life was different from anything she had ever known; she fell an easy prey and her name is well known to-day to the police force. Do not let one breathe a word of condemnation because she did not leave that house when she found it was bad; remember she was human and a poor weak girl.

It is not jumping at hasty conclusions to say that the number of vagrants sent to Rockhead Prison during the past three years have been much smaller than that of any like period for many years. Seldom is one sent for a less period than twelve months, which means [that the city has to pay about \$60 for food and clothing alone for that man, whereas by giving shelter and food at the proper time that amount is saved (which is the lowest view) and the person saved from a prison life.

Third—A check on imposition. Numerous ladies and gentlemen have sent persons to the Refuge with a note who have applied to them for the wherewith to pay for their supper and bed, and invariably at night such applications have been made, but seldom do they come to the Refuge. Why? because they they are imposters, it is money they want, not shelter—and drink, not food. Were they real deserving cases they would be glad to avail themselves of supper, bed and breakfast.

No one need be imposed upon in this city. If those pretending to be strangers and without money, refuse, or do not use an order for the Refuge, there is something wrong; but money should not be given to any one who makes application as a stranger.

The following as taken from the Register shows the religious persuasion of those sheltered:

Dr.

Actual cost of food (2760 meals*).....	\$248.40
3 years' rent (one-half).....	300.00
3 " fuel \$40, gas \$42.....	82.00
8 Bedsteads at \$2.....	16.00
Beds and bedding.....	60.00
Bath, \$11, fitting up do., soil and water pipe, \$25.00.....	36.00
Two years' cleaning.....	29.50
Taxes (about half).....	20.00
Sign, \$4.50, dishes, \$3.00.....	7.50
Stove and pipe.....	15.00
	<hr/>
	\$814.40

*Including 80 dinners.

It will be observed by the foregoing that no charge is made for salaries or hired labor, and only one-half of the rent, fuel and light. The furnishing of the Refuge at the outset has been all paid for. Should the balance deficit be made good during the present year it will enable me to relieve those who have been laboring for three years *without remuneration*, by hired labor.

SEAMEN'S BETHEL AND READING ROOM.

Since October 1877, there has been service held for seamen in the same building as the Refuge, the two largest rooms having been set apart for Bethel and Reading Room. For the half-year ended 31st December, 1878, the aggregate number at the service was 3000; since that date the attendance has been much larger, and still continues to increase. Several times the room has proved too small, so that some had to go away, and others to remain in the hall. The attention given was all that could be desired, and the fruit encouraging. Very many have thanked God for such a meeting place, and letters have been received from seamen after leaving this port with expressions of gratitude for blessings received while worshipping God in the Bethel. Need I say that if there was no place of worship for seamen in this city, as was the case prior to October 1877, ninety per cent. would never enter a church door, notwithstanding the invitations given from every congregation. Our Nova Scotia sea-

men when they leave home, come only with their working clothes, as many of them do not expect to spend a Sabbath day here, although they are often detained on account of the wind.

The meetings held in the Bethel during the week are three in number. Sabbath and Tuesday evenings the gospel is preached, Thursday evening Temperance address; at the latter meeting often a number take the pledge. There is in the Bethel as an aid to the praise a very fine organ, the last gift of the late Edward Birney, presided over by Mr. R. G. Halls, on Sabbath evening, and Miss Grierson, on Thursday evening.

The following are a few extracts from letters received, and incidents in the work.

One of the crew of a Barque, writes for himself and others on board—"We all thank you very much for the kindness to us in answering our letter. I hope you won't forget me in your prayers,"—this is from a poor sinner. Another from the same vessel,—"I got the book all right (Sinner's Friend) and I thank you very much for it. It fits a poor sinner like me... Dear Sir, I hope God will prosper your house and bring many a poor sinner to repentance through Jesus our Lord and Saviour, and that he will give you a long time to live and hold his hand over you wherever you go."

Another from the crew of a schooner, writes—"Dear Sir, It is with pleasure I write these lines to you, bringing to memory the happy hours I spent in your happy home. I shall never forget the kindness I received; it was not like what a stranger gives to a stranger, but as a father and mother give to their son, and I am most heartily thankful."

Captain of Schooner H—after listening to an address from the words, "He that denieth me, &c., remained behind in great distress of mind, the Holy Ghost had revealed to him his sins. He saw clearly he had been denying Christ before men, and he decided to go and confess him that night on board. I called next day, did not see the captain; saw mate who testified "he never knew the captain to speak and act as he did last evening; he believed him to be a changed man."

* The writer of the above is now a sincere Christian man.

READING ROOM.

The Reading Room has been very much used this year, and enjoyed by the men, as through the kindness of many friends the tables are well filled with good reading, secular and religious, illustrated and daily papers, books, magazines &c.. also games.

Every vessel going to sea receives a bundle of reading matter; nothing is wasted, —what is old reading to one is new to others. (Since Oct. last 224 bundles have been given.)

APPEAL.

What is most wanted now is a New Bethel, Reading Room, and Refuge, in a more central part of the city, (Water Street.) The great mass of men are north of the Ordinance, and every Sabbath day there are hundreds of seamen who never hear Gods' word preached, the place now used being too far south, and too small. The conviction must be forced upon the mind of every right thinking man in our midst, of the claim those men have upon every merchant in this city and Province, and public generally. If it is necessary to look after and make provision for the body, how much more the souls of them who for most part of the year have to battle with the waves, and are cut off from all means of grace! Years have rolled away since Halifax became a seaport for British seamen, and thousands of men who have passed into eternity, never had offered to them after their voyage a home they might call their own, where the hours that have been spent in dissipation might have been spent in a Recreation Room, where they would have been benefited, if not spiritually, at least morally and intellectually. Have the years to come to be like those that have passed? Montreal, the United States, and nearly every seaport in England and Scotland have their Bethels and Reading Rooms. In Montreal every inducement is offered to the seamen.

The following is an extract from the Report of the Montreal Sailor's Institute for 1876, which also shows that \$1292.50 was subscribed in one year, although the Rooms were only open from 8th May to 1st November, (6 months).

"The total expense of maintaining the Institute for the year 1876, has been \$1,077.44, of which \$450 was for rent,

\$400 for salaries, about \$125 for light and fuel, \$22.12 for taxes and Insurance, and \$80.32 for other expenditures, as shewn in the account current. This amount has been all paid by the subscriptions received, as well as \$200, to settle indebtedness to the former Treasurer."

Yet in this port, where there is shipping all the year round, with boarding houses filled, no effort has been made to show to the seamen that as a City or Province we have been considering their welfare and comfort, by opening up a home for them till recently and that, by the exertions of two congregations who pay the salary of the missionary to do the Lord's work on a non-sectarian basis. Now that the time has come for a larger and more central place, if this work has to be done for the Lord, an opportunity will be given to all who desire to promote Gods' glory among seamen by subscribing towards the "Bethel Fund."

I am confident that the seamen themselves will not be behind in subscribing what they can for this "Home,"—also, that the Christian public have only to be convinced of its great need, to respond.

The speedy reply to this humble appeal will be sufficient proof of the desire of the merchants and public generally to benefit morally and spiritually the thousands of men (British and Foreign) who in the course of a year come to Halifax, and to make them feel after toiling on the deep, and passing through dangers that there is a comfortable Home in Halifax, that it is not behind in that respect, any of the seaport towns in the world.

Being fully convinced that it is God's will that this appeal should be made, there does not exist the shadow of a doubt as to the response from those to whom He has given of this world's goods—only do not let any be found thinking of their rich neighbors as if they only should give. The question is, "How much owest *thou* unto my Lord?" In childlike trust on the promises of Him who saith, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear," is this sent forth, praying that while it is being read, the heart may be inclined to give, for the salvation of seamen.

I would take this opportunity of thanking all who have in any way aided the work, by supplying reading, helping at the meetings, visiting vessels, and inviting to the Bethel; also Duncan McGregor, Esq., for a Rubber Stamp, worth \$2.50. I would also add "still there is room" for more workers; constant employment, reward sure.

WANTED.

Two "fishers of men," young men, who will not be afraid of the ungodly laugh.

One lady or gentleman who will give one hour to the Lord on Tuesday night to preside at the organ.

Reading of all kinds, books, magazines, papers, periodicals, tracts, and if in any home there are surplus games, they will gladly be received.

And last, but by no means least, we want a new "Halifax Seamen's Bethel Reading Room and Refuge." W. S. Stirling, Esq., Union Bank, has kindly consented to receive subscriptions for this special fund. Who'll be the first to spend, be spent, or both, in this work for the Master? It was among His first works, to visit the vessels, and from that class to choose his followers.—See Matt. iv., 18-22.

Captains (or any of the crew,) of vessels, who are desirous of seeing a regularly established Bethel in Halifax, may aid in the work by taking subscriptions from the crew, enclosing it to W. S. Stirling, Esq., Union Bank, Halifax, with the name of the vessel, and it will be acknowledged.

Humbly submitted.

JAS. S. POTTER,

Supt. Halifax Seamen's Bethel & Night Refuge.

Halifax, N. S., 1st May, 1879.