

TWENTY-EIGHTH
ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT.

THOUGH a tide of worldliness and haste to be rich has been rolling over the land, diverting many minds from the interests of the soul and eternity, God has continued a good degree of fidelity among the laborers, supporters, and friends of this institution, and the results of the year call for gratitude and praise to Him. The Colporteur force has been sustained, and considerable advances have been made upon our more neglected territory; the gratuitous distributions to the destitute have been increased, and \$20,000 remitted in cash to foreign and pagan lands; a debt for printing paper, which at the close of the autumn had swollen to about \$60,000, has been almost removed; the Society's periodicals now bear to nearly half a million families monthly their messages of love; the great soul-humbling, God-exalting truths of salvation, solely through the merits of the crucified Redeemer and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, have been faithfully proclaimed from the pulpit and at the fireside to hundreds of thousands; and the presence of the Spirit, prayerfully sought, has evidently owned the varied and accumulated labors of the Society in bringing multitudes to bow to Him who reigns "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The providences of God during the year remind us to work while the day lasts in anticipation of the coming of our Lord. Five Vice-presidents, one member of the Committee, one of the Auditors, and the Society's Depository have rested from their labors.

The Hon. DUNCAN CAMERON of North Carolina, and the Rev. PHILIP MILLEDOLER, D. D., were two of the three only remaining original Vice-presidents, and were firm friends of the Society. Mr. Cameron died in

The Committee close the review of Colportage for the year by presenting the report of Mr. JONATHAN CROSS, Superintendent of Colportage in *Virginia and North Carolina*, as a more full and minute illustration of the practical working of the system throughout the country.

The termination of another year of arduous labor, says Mr. Cross, renders it my duty, as superintendent of colportage over an area of almost 120,000 square miles in Virginia and North Carolina, to give an account of my stewardship. In no way can this be done so accurately, as by copious extracts from the annual reports of the sixty-three agents and colporteurs who have been engaged in the Society's service in Virginia alone, during the whole or part of the last year; nine of whom were students, employed during their vacations.

Our labors have been much confined to the poorest classes in the various fields; and owing to this fact, our sales have been smaller than usual. Hundreds of the inmates of log-cabins and fishermen's huts received their first religious visit, and many of them, according to their own statements, their first religious book, through our agency. That the poor have been cared for, our heavy grants show very satisfactorily. Hundreds of neglected children, also, have been attracted to new sabbath-schools, to learn about the Saviour, and get their first religious books. Many a poor pious widow, and many a drunkard's wife, have had their souls refreshed by the comforting pages of the *Saints' Rest and Pilgrim's Progress*, presented to them by the colporteur, while tears expressed their gratitude for the gift, and their prayerful thanks arose to heaven for the patrons of the institution that sent it.

Apart from our extensive efforts to supply the spiritual wants of the extremely indigent, we have not been idle in other respects. The worldling, the sabbath-breaker, the profane swearer, the drunkard, and the scoffer, each, as far as found, received a message from God. The shanties of the Irish on our public works were nearly all visited, and many of them received books thankfully.

In the month of July, we secured the services of a German minister for the growing German population of the city of Richmond, which, until that time, had been destitute of any evangelical guide. His labors among them as a colporteur, have resulted in the formation of a respectable congregation, partly Roman-catholic, and in the purchase of a site for a church, which will soon be erected. His prospects are very encouraging.

During the year, I have travelled much, and visited several new points, and as regards the estimation in which colportage is held by the

public, I can safely assert that at no period during the eight years I have spent in the service of the American Tract Society, have our efforts been so highly appreciated and so liberally sustained, although our extended scheme of operations is still far in advance of our receipts from the friends of this benevolent enterprise. A more cordial welcome was never given to the collecting agents of the Society, from minds that devise liberal things, nor were the earnest self-denying labors of our brethren ever before so manifestly successful in the application of the truths they carry to the homes of the destitute. To all who have aided us in carrying on our work, we tender thanks in the name of our Master. We take sincere pleasure in giving testimony to the liberal contributions poured into our treasury, by the people of Richmond in particular, and in return for them, and for all, we quote the united sentiment of the colporteurs: "Could the patrons of the Society have gone with us, and witnessed the joy manifested by the poor when we gave them books, they would realize the delightful truth contained in the promise, 'He that watereth, shall be watered also himself.'"

It must be borne in mind that the *entire* number of visits to families in Virginia, by our colporteurs, far exceeds the number here reported. The report shows but *one* visit to each family, whereas very many were visited twice or more. To sum up the whole statistics, we report 31,372 families visited in *Virginia*, 17,802 of whom were conversed or prayed with; the sales amount to \$9,782 47, and the grants to \$2,746 53; 2,679 families were destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and 1,198 had no Bible. Five hundred and forty-eight were supplied with the Bible. According to their own statement, 2,892 families attend no place of worship, and over large portions of our state, the people have preaching but once a month; in many places, not so frequently as that; and in other sections, there is no evangelical preaching whatever. The number of meetings held or addressed has been 1,924.

The destitution in *North Carolina* far exceeds this. Six colporteurs labored in that state either the whole year or portions of it. They visited 5,091 families; prayed with 3,164 families; found 2,249 of them destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and 766 without the Bible; 621 families were supplied with the Scriptures; 939 families attend no place of worship, and very many have none to attend. If any portion of our country demands the aid of colportage, it is this. The grants of books must unavoidably be large, and the donations thus far received in that state, are very small. The Rev. S. Pearce, our general agent for the state, is travelling over it at present. How far he may succeed in collecting funds to carry on the work, time will tell.

We hope, before the present year closes, to have at least 25 colporteurs at work there.

I subjoin numerous extracts from colporteur reports now before me. Were *all* the interesting facts communicated by our colporteurs placed together, they would make a volume; while many of our efficient laborers have failed to report any facts connected with their work, lest they should be suspected of seeking public applause. These facts sufficiently show the necessity of colportage and its adaptation to the wants of our country. It supplies in a measure the lack of ministerial service, which is truly alarming: it gives active employment to many Christian laborers who might otherwise be immersed in worldly pursuits; and it affords an admirable field of exertion for many ministers who, for various reasons, have no regular pulpit labors. I am utterly unable to see any way by which this immense thinly settled field can be prepared for establishing the stated means of grace, other than the oft-repeated visits of these family preachers, who go to the firesides of the people, adapt their instructions to the varied condition of the families visited, give them books, and gather their children into the sabbath-school.

The entire amount of labor performed during the year is equal to twenty-eight years' work for one man. And now we enter on a new year of labor, with forty-eight colporteurs at work in Virginia, and seven in North Carolina, and the prospect of a large increase this spring.

EXTRACTS FROM COLPORTEUR REPORTS—VIRGINIA.

Mr. A. H. P., assistant agent, reports, "I have travelled nearly five thousand miles; and have explored twenty-three counties, in which I visited and conversed or prayed with over eight hundred families. Some of these counties lie on the extreme eastern border, and some of them on the south-western boundary of the state. I have visited no county in which a faithful colporteur could not do good. Some of the eastern counties present fields of labor peculiarly adapted to colportage, especially our oyster and fishing districts. The fishermen are generally poor, living in little cabins built of pine poles, in the pine forests along creeks and rivers. This is a numerous, destitute population. Another is a remnant of the Pamunky and Natapeneah tribes of Indians, in Prince William county. A pious, intelligent person informs me that they number between two and three hundred souls. Their dwellings are wretched. They subsist by fishing, making a kind of earthen ware, and pilfering. Some of them can read and write, and nearly all are willing to receive religious instruction. Among these people a colporteur could do much

to honor the Redcemer. I have collected this year, \$1,835 43; received in subscriptions, \$300; sold \$203 26 worth of books, and granted \$33 51.

“Though not a regular colporteur, I have labored a little in that way, and those short seasons were very precious and refreshing. I spent two days in a poor, destitute community, last autumn. Visited a widow who, in the space of a few months, had buried her husband and daughter; and now she was beside the death-bed of another daughter. On my entrance, she exclaimed, ‘Mr. P., I am so glad to see you;’ and turning to her afflicted child, she said, ‘Daughter, here is Mr. P.; come to pray for you.’ Nearly two years ago, I visited this family, but under very different circumstances. *Then* they would scarcely listen to God’s word; they attended no church, and did not seem even to respect religion; but when affliction came, it brought with it recollections of that visit, and reading and conversation and prayer. Three of the family made profession of faith. One of them was now dead, and another struggling in life’s last agony when I saw her, but she was triumphantly happy in a Saviour’s love. I visited a dying man who had through life silenced his conscience by rejecting divine revelation, and so bitter was his hostility to religious subjects, that no one ventured to introduce them in his presence. But now his refuges of lies were swept away, and as he listened to that word by which he was so soon to be judged, and heard of a Saviour’s love, his sunken eyes were moistened by tears. I gave him ‘Come to Jesus,’ and gave ‘Nelson’s Cause and Cure of Infidelity’ to his sons, who were sceptical. In the cabin of a poor aged woman, who was unconverted, I read and prayed, and pointed her to Jesus. ‘Oh,’ said she, ‘if Christians had visited me as you have done, I think I should have been a Christian long ago.’ But few of these people ever enter the sanctuary. How are they to have Christ preached to them, unless it be done through books, and tracts, and conversation? May the Lord of the harvest send forth more laborers.”

W. M. T. writes, “I am pleased with the people, and with my work, and I indulge the hope that much good will result from colportage. The people are very scantily supplied with religious reading, and prize our books most highly. On revisiting those who purchased books of me, I frequently find that they have not only read the books, but committed to memory large portions of them. I left Pike’s Persuasives to Early Piety with one whose cheeks were bathed in tears as I arose from prayer; and I was recently told that he has since connected himself with the church. Some children who had but just learnt to lisp the

Saviour's name, came to me, after buying some little books, with a penny, offering to furnish poor children with books. Were all mothers to follow the example set by those whose children, thus early in life, were taught to give of their little means to supply the destitute with good books, how soon might the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

"An old gentleman who at the eleventh hour had, by reading Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, been led to connect himself with God's people, called his children to his dying bed to give them his last counsel: but he could think of nothing so valuable to give them as the book that had led him to Christ; so he presented a copy of the *Saints' Rest* to each one, begging them to receive its contents as the last words of their dying father."

Mr. R. J. P. states that a short time ago he met with a lady who was deeply concerned for her soul: "I furnished her with James' *Anxious Inquirer*. She since told me that it was a valuable guide to heaven, and expressed gratitude to the Society for sending me there. An aged lady, to whom brother M. gave the *Dairyman's Daughter*, some two years since, was brought to Christ through its instrumentality. She sent it out among her neighbors, and it was read and reread until worn out. Not long since, this lady's daughter asked me for a copy of it; and she too has professed conversion through its perusal."

From I. W. W. we have the following interesting incidents:

"Visited some boarding-houses noted for their bad character. Conversed with the inmates, and distributed tracts, and such books as the *Dairyman's Daughter*, *Baxter's Call*, and *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. Some sailors who were present purchased books, and a woman of lost reputation purchased a Bible and two choice religious books."

Aug. 3. "A pious old lady, who has often treated me with much kindness, prizes Flavel on *Keeping the Heart* so highly, that she scarcely allows a day to pass without reading a portion of it. Met a man who asked me if I had *Baxter's Call*. He said he had read a borrowed one nearly through, but had returned it. He hoped to become a Christian, and was determined to use the means. In the evening, conversed and prayed with a dying woman who lived far from any minister.

"Saw a young man who a month before was distilling, but being convinced, probably by *Baxter's Call* and a *Temperance tract*, now declares that he will never again kindle the fires of a still, while his

senses remain. He said Baxter's Call had recommended the Saints' Rest, and he wanted it. He purchased it and the Temperance Manual. Gave 'The Moral Man Tried' to a modern Pharisee. Some anxious souls obtained, either by grant or purchase, James' Anxious Inquirer, or Come to Jesus. A young German, now pious, told me he had, on first arriving in this country, met with a Pilgrim's Progress in his own language, and sat up half the night to finish reading it. A lady told me that she prized the Pilgrim's Progress above all books but the Bible, and she believed a copy she loaned to Mrs. R. was the means of her conversion. I met a man who prized Baxter's Call so highly that he wished to get it by heart. A Roman-catholic accepted 'Come to Jesus,' and requested me to pray for her. I knelt in prayer with another Roman-catholic woman, during which exercise, and the expounding of the last chapter in Revelation, she appeared to feel much. I gave her the 'Anxious Inquirer.' I gave 'Come to Jesus' to another, and afterwards learned it was read without prejudice. As I was riding up a lonely valley, I came in sight of what appeared to be a deserted house, but on approaching the door I saw some small children within. You might see out through the roof, the broken windows, and the mud walls. An old spelling-book contained every printed leaf that was in the house. Yet this family, and several of their neighbors, never hear preaching from one year's end to another. I visited a valley enclosed by mountains, where there is no preaching, where some have not heard the gospel since the Rev. Mr. L., a former colporteur, was there, some years since; and others have not heard more than two or three sermons in as many years."

Mr. J. M. writes, "I found many of your publications among all grades of society in my field of labor, but an entire destitution of sabbath-schools. There is but one—that I established—in the county. My most agreeable visits were those made to families previously supplied with your publications. Three sisters professed conversion, who were brought to repentance through reading 'Religion and Eternal Life.' Their brother was also converted by means of 'Baxter's Call,' and 'Considerations for Young Men.'"

Mr. G. S., laboring in the city of P., reports, "I have sold and given away one thousand six hundred volumes, and distributed nearly twelve thousand pages of tracts. During September and October last, between one and two hundred persons joined the various churches in this city. How far my labors with the books and tracts aided in this work of con-

version, I have no means of ascertaining; eternity alone will reveal it. In view of the vast amount of reading needed in our community, the tract operations are highly commended. By a donation from several gentlemen, I have been enabled to establish a circulating library of one hundred and twenty volumes. Two young gentlemen of this city circulate eighty copies of the Messenger, and by a donation I am enabled to distribute among the poor children at one of our schools, three hundred and ten copies of The Child's Paper. The heartfelt expressions of approbation from many who have read the books I have circulated, have often refreshed me."

"This is the hill country of Virginia," writes the Rev. W. M. G., "and our mountains are increasing in population. I have travelled this year about one thousand eight hundred miles, mostly on horseback, and the greater part over high and rugged mountains, stopping here and there with our mountaineers, who are kind and hospitable; they welcome us to such as they have, and give attention to all we say on the subject of religion. We often felt when leaving their cabins, that it was good to be there. I have visited about five hundred families, conversed and prayed with the greater part of them, and held one hundred and twenty-six public meetings. A number of persons profess to have found peace in believing.

"My grants have been large, principally made to the poor, as most of the year was spent among them. Visited many families that seldom hear preaching. These are not reported as neglecters of church, as they are too remote from preaching-places to attend; yet I saw a woman that walked twelve miles one day to hear two sermons. Sabbath-schools continue to increase. The Family Testament with Notes is just the thing for our county, and it is in demand. A minister, among whose people I had sold ten, tells me to send them twenty more. By request of her pastor, I called to see one who has recently joined the church. She was first awakened by reading the 'Anxious Inquirer.' I was selling books to another lady, whose sister said to her, 'You must buy 'Abbott's Mother at Home' also, Mrs. — says she believes it was the means of saving her family.'"

"My second visits to families," writes A. P., "have been highly pleasing and satisfactory. The first inquiry almost is about the books left formerly. A general commotion then takes place, each one bringing his own little book, neatly covered by a careful mother; but better than this is the palpable truth, that those little books are making impressions on these

youthful minds which never can be effaced. They often repeat the contents of their books, in their own way. I saw a little girl of six years, last week, who six months ago was learning the alphabet. She now can read our books for children. Her father says her rapid progress is owing to a picture-book I gave her on a former visit. The plan of leaving something at every house, has proved to be a good one. A man hailed me one day and inquired if I was the book-man who had visited his house a year since. I recognized in him one who had then refused to look at my books, but now he wished to have some of them. He asked if I had 'any of the little books without covers, like those left with his wife.' As I had no tracts, and but few books, I promised to call on him again. I did so, found he had lost his wife since my first visit, and that the little books had greatly comforted her during her illness. The husband spoke of being unhappy about his spiritual state, and requested me to select books for him and his daughters. He bought a Family Testament, Bunyan's Pilgrim, Saints' Rest, Baxter on Conversion, etc. And this was a rigid Dunkard family, that twelve months previous would have no book but the New Testament, and considered it a Christian duty to oppose the circulation of other books. This singular idea is now entertained but by few. Perhaps nothing has tended more to remove it than the circulation of books for the young. It is no uncommon occurrence for little boys and girls of eight and ten years to instruct their ignorant parents, who listen with all the earnestness of children. I have seen a father, mother, and five sons and daughters that could not read, listening to the story of Samuel, in 'Precept upon Precept.' The mother observed, 'Why, that sounds 'zactly like the Bible; we must have that book.' It was bought. The reformation begins *at home*. Some little boy or girl gets interested in reading our books, the interest extends throughout the family, thence to the entire neighborhood; a school-house is soon erected; a prayer-meeting is organized, followed by the sabbath-school; some missionary spirit hears all this, and follows it by holding forth the word of life to them. A church is formed. The mustard-seed has sprung up; it has become a great tree. Such is the practical result of colportage in this county.

"But the colporteur is not blessed in his prescribed field only. Many with whom he meets move far away, and become active coworkers in the cause, who are not, and may never be known to the Society. A pious blacksmith, while residing in S. county some two years ago, became acquainted with a colporteur, of whom he purchased many of your publications. He is devoted to the cause—takes the Messenger—has established a sabbath-school, and says he will try to have 'The Child's Paper'

read by every scholar in it. The Lord has sent this man just into that corner of R. county where he is most needed. He is known as 'the pious blacksmith,' and indeed he never fails, as opportunity offers, to use the 'fire and hammer' of God's word.

"Visited a young man who has been suffering under acute disease for five years. He gave the secret of his happiness. He had once been an infidel, but through the kindness of Rev. Mr. B. and others, he had your standard publications placed in his hands, and they were the means of his conversion. A little girl of fourteen said she would like to have some books, but she had no money to buy them with. I gave her three children's tracts. She was awakened by reading them, and at a prayer-meeting which she soon after attended, she professed to have found peace in Christ by means of those precious little tracts."

"In one family with which I prayed," writes Rev. A. B., "was a little girl who said she had never before heard a prayer. Two aged persons were brought to Christ through your agent's humble efforts; one of whom has united with the church, and the other can give a reason for her hope. About fifty persons have united with the churches in my field of labor, during the year. Eight sabbath-schools have been supplied with books, and three new ones organized. Your books are read everywhere. I have been constantly advancing, and therefore know but little of the result of my year's work, yet that little is enough to assure you of the success of our enterprise."

"There are three churches in this county," writes the Rev. L. H., "but many neighborhoods have no regular preaching, and very few books. I was told in one neighborhood, of children in it ten and twelve years of age, that had never heard a sermon. At my public meetings the Lord owned and blessed his word in many instances. The Temperance cause is advancing, and there is increased interest in sabbath-schools. I think I shall succeed in establishing three or four this spring."

J. M. A. writes, "I have been visiting the northern part of P— county, where no colporteur had hitherto been, and find great destitution. Some families have Bibles, and some have none; and there are no other religious books among them. I have travelled through woods and over hills, finding people living in huts everywhere, some of whom can read, and some cannot, but all were pleased to see me. I had not thought there was so much destitution in this county. The people show much anxiety to have books. Some opposition is made by those who have

Antinomian prejudices, but it is giving way. Some who would not at first look at your books, now purchase them. Thus I am encouraged to continue my work."

The Rev. D. C. P., who has been employed in our work for a number of years, says, "I feel grateful to the Giver of all good, that he has prospered me on my way. I have reason to believe that the circulation of your excellent publications has done, and will long continue to do good in this county. Among the results of my work, I find great numbers of children, and many colored persons, exceedingly anxious to have books; in some instances they literally begged for them, saying, 'I have no money; if I had any, I would lay it all out for books.' In reply to my inquiry, 'Do you think the Society's books are doing good in your neighborhood?' the people invariably answer, 'Yes; the children are more desirous to learn, schools have started up, and a greater desire is expressed to have preaching regularly.' This field should soon be revisited by your colporteurs. All that is yet done is but a mere beginning. Met with a colporteur of another benevolent institution a few days since. In reply to my remark that every two colporteurs opened the way for a third, he said, 'I believe it is so. The demand for books seems to increase continually. There is work for all.' With all that has been done by colportage, the mass of our population is not fully supplied. The Society's books are received without suspicion or prejudice, and the people are pleased with them."

From Rev. J. W. O., we have the following sketch of his labors and success: "I have preached in all the churches, addressed all the sabbath-schools, and very often preached to the children alone, with marked effect. Have found some sabbath-schools, and supplied several with the Youth's Library. The very large amount of books circulated will doubtless be one of the greatest blessings ever conferred on this people. Our books are read with profit and delight, and increased interest is shown in the cause of Christ. During the past year 121 persons have been hopefully converted at meetings I held, besides a great many at meetings held by the stationed ministry of the county. During the past month I have rejoiced in the conversion of Dr. W——, a distinguished physician of this county, who was an infidel. I supplied him with several books, among the rest, Gregory's Evidences. The more he read, the more was he convinced of the truth. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon him. His little child died. I took advantage of the circumstance, and paid him a friendly visit. He was melted to tears, sought the Lord

with his whole heart, and found peace in believing, and has joined the church. In this large county, where the people have but little preaching, how great is the importance of supplying them with such reading as improves the heart and mind, so that the Sabbath may be a 'delight.' This I have endeavored to secure, as your humble agent, and the blessing of the Lord has followed, and is abundantly manifest. Families who had not a religious book except the Bible, now have neat little libraries; even the poorest have some, so that our excellent books are scattered all over the county."

Mr. W. B. G. writes, "My grants are large, but I think if you had been with me among the mountains, in those smoky huts, and seen the destitution of their inmates, you would have done as I did. I gave an old man the first book he ever owned. His wife read it, and embraced religion shortly afterwards. I furnished a young man with 'Dodridge's Rise and Progress,' to which he attributed his conversion, through grace. Gave an unbeliever 'James' Anxious Inquirer,' after some conversation. He has since united with God's people. Visited the cabin of a man who had never owned a Bible. His family had grown up in ignorance of the principles of religion. I supplied them with a Bible, and some books and tracts. Some of them have since made a public profession of religion, and the children are attending school. On some parts of my field there is preaching but once a month."

The Rev. M. B. reports, "During the year, I have held meetings where about one hundred and fifty persons professed faith in Christ. At one of them eighty professed conversion. Gave 'James' Anxious Inquirer' to three young ladies at one of these meetings, and it appeared to lead them understandingly to Christ. Several persons date their awakening to 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'Baxter's Call,' and the 'Anxious Inquirer.' Many portions of my field have no preaching, no prayer-meeting, no sabbath-school, in short, no means of grace but the Bible, a religious book or two, and some tracts. A great many cannot read. There are over four hundred whites above 20 years of age who cannot read, in these two counties, F— and N—. I have preached where no minister had ever before been. One lady travelled eighteen miles to hear a sermon, and adults attended who had never before seen a minister. To the patrons of the Society I would say, Your benevolence is widely spread *now*; but if you were here to see for yourselves, it would receive a new impulse. Much is already done, but still more must yet be done, or thousands will perish."

G. W. T., agent, writes, "Two months ago an active member of the church asked me what had become of I. E. W., who had long been a colporteur in K—— county. When informed that brother W. was laid aside by ill health, he remarked, 'I shall always feel towards that brother as I cannot towards others. He was the means of causing me to take part in public prayer, and if brother C. and I are instruments in God's hands of doing good, we owe it to his agency.'

"Two or three years since, a colporteur in Western Virginia was cautioned not to call at a certain house, on account of the desperate character of the man who occupied it; but contrary to his kind host's expostulations, he made it his first stopping-place the next day. While conversing with the family and showing the books, the good woman of the house saw her husband approaching, and fearing lest her guest might be insulted, begged him to leave; but before he had time to do so, the man entered, and pouring out a volley of curses, ordered him to go instantly, or he would kick him out. The colporteur instead of complying, stood still, and looking firmly, but mildly, at the angry man, said, 'God has forgiven *me*, a poor, hell-deserving sinner, and he *can* forgive, he is *willing* to forgive *you*. I am going to leave you, but before I depart, I will pray for you;' and falling on his knees, he prayed God to bless the man, not to cut him off in his sins, but to change his heart and fit him for the kingdom of heaven. The man was subdued, bought some books, and the colporteur, instead of being turned out of doors, was thanked for calling and doing his duty."

"Many families in this county," writes C. R. R., "have few, if any books. I think there are only two antission churches in the county, and their numbers do not seem to increase. From ministers and members of all other denominations, I received encouragement to continue my work. A young man dates his conversion to reading one of your books. In the city of A——, I find much to do. It is estimated that hundreds of persons here habitually neglect the means of grace. Have visited the outskirts of the city, and find much destitution and extreme poverty among the people. Had thought of forming additional sabbath-schools for these poor people, but their want of decent attire has induced me to resort to calling just a few families together from time to time, without any formal arrangement. I will pursue this plan with Romanists, among whom I am encouraged to labor. Many of the good people of this city are truly ready for every good work. I have been encouraged by the interest many of them take in the poor and destitute. The ladies who distribute tracts, and the colporteurs that have preceded me here, have

opened the way for successful tract operations and colportage. It is pleasant to follow the footsteps of faithful colporteurs, and listen to the kind, grateful expressions made in reference to them."

"In the year just closed," says S. H., "I have visited 1,043 families, having averaged in sales, about one volume to each; have granted to the poor and destitute \$89 26 of books and tracts, and have aided their sabbath-schools; and while I am cheered by the testimony of Christians in reference to the good accomplished by your invaluable publications, yet, as I look over the field, covering an area of 3,460 square miles, with a population of between twenty-five and thirty thousand, with only four regularly employed ministers, and these preaching at intervals of three or four weeks at any given point, I am more than ever impressed with the adaptedness of colportage to the wants of such a community. Thirty-two families only, are reported as neglecting public preaching. This by no means gives the true state of the case. They are those who, living near churches, do not attend. The most liberal estimate that can be made is, that but one-fourth of the families visited attend on the public means of grace, and that but once in three weeks. The result is, that very little vital godliness is to be found. With very few exceptions, family religion is unknown, and sabbath-schools are, if not novelties, but mere experiments. It is evident that if the colporteur does not carry the truth to these remote abodes, generations will perish for lack of knowledge before the population will be sufficiently large to support preachers in every community. Visited a Mormon family that thought the tract cause a mere speculation. Spent some time in conversation, and sold 'The Bible Not of Man,' and 'Universalism Not of God,' and some other books and tracts. Passing afterwards, the man stopped me to express his delight in the books.

"I know just as much about the missionaries as I want to know," said an old man, a member of an antimissionary church, to me as I mentioned the subject of the 'Night of Toil,' about which he had asked me: yet I gave him the book, and in a short time he got more missionary books, and subscribed for the American Messenger. I gave 'Baxter's Call' to a man who was much intoxicated at the time, and advised him to read it carefully, when he got sober enough to understand it. 'Y-e-s,' said he, 'I'll take it home to-night, and to-morrow morning I'll burn it.' No, you are not to burn it; you must read it, and then give it to your wife, said I; and when she shall have finished reading it, you must go over it again. I saw him not long ago, and inquired how he liked his book. 'Not very well.' Why, what is your objection to it?

'Oh, nothing in particular, only he requires a man to do more than he can come up to.' The ministry on my field favor the tract cause, and thus open the way for sales."

LABORS AMONG ANTINOMIANS.—"My labors," writes Mr. —, "have been chiefly confined to — county. A large majority of its population are opposed to all internal improvements, and there is not at this day a mile of turnpike-road, or a public work of any kind in the county. Education and all benevolent institutions have hitherto met with decided and effectual opposition. Parson — has been preaching here over forty years, and wields as great an influence as any man in the county. I availed myself of every opportunity of being with him. I cannot help regarding him as an exceedingly kind, hospitable man, of strong natural powers of mind; but it is difficult to reconcile these qualities with his opposition to all benevolent societies, especially the Bible Society; particularly so, as the four hundred and thirty-four persons whom I supplied with their first Bibles were known to him, many of them being his own descendants; one of them a minister of his favorite denomination. Nine-tenths of the people in this county are directly or indirectly under the influence of this church, and so great is their ignorance or prejudice, that they cannot understand why the Tract Society distributes books among them. They say our Bibles are altered; that the truth is not in them. I visited one old man who was so violent I thought he would turn me out of his house. After showing him the constitution of the Society, and talking some time, he admitted it might do some good.

"I gave the 'Guide to Young Disciples' to Parson —. He said afterwards, that he had read more in it than he had read for years in any book except the Bible. He thought it was a good book, and would do no harm. It is pleasing to know that the same opinion of other books has been given by many members of that church. They are not only read with interest, but loaned by special request to others whom I could not persuade to take a book.

"A young man at a country store selected several of my books, but before paying me, his employer returned, and said he would not read one of those books for a hundred dollars. I explained the object of the Society, and asked permission to give his little daughter the Scripture Facts. The next time I saw him, he purchased 'Flavel's Christ Knocking at the Door,' saying he meant to read it carefully, and then lend it to his neighbors. I furnished the prisons of F—, P—, and F— counties with books gratuitously. The prisoners expressed gratitude for them, and were affected to tears. It has been my custom to leave some select books

at all the schools I visited, to be awarded to the scholars for good behavior; and as far as I could, I supplied the ministers of this county, hoping to reach the people through them.

"The opposition to the Sunday-school established at C—— was so great, that I proposed to a large congregation assembled there, to burn all the books I had granted to the sabbath-school, if their ministers, two of whom were present, could prove that the books taught any such doctrines as they said they did, that is, 'That man by good works alone could inherit the kingdom of heaven;' and I added, that if they could prove that the school was a scheme of 'idolatry,' as they said it was, I would burn the books and renounce the Society for ever; but if they failed to do so, I meant to bring on a fresh supply in the spring, and invite the whole country to come. Gave 'Baxter's Reformed Pastor' to Rev. Mr. ——, which he read with interest. He has been preaching twenty years among these Antinomians. He is a man of genius, and a natural orator. He now rebukes the opposition of his church. Every effort has been made to expel him from it, but he has carried most of his congregation with him. Thus you see our books are improving ministers and people. In rendering this account, I have confined myself to mere facts."

"Could I but state," writes the Rev. A. I. W., "all the particulars connected with my year's labor just as they occurred, many hearts would be gladdened among those who have aided in sending the good news of salvation to many a log-cabin in these lonely hollows, whose inhabitants might otherwise have died in ignorance of it. God has favored this region highly during the last six months. Within that time over three hundred persons have united with the various branches of the church.

"It is difficult to ascertain the amount of good accomplished by tract effort. The Society is gradually doing much in behalf of sabbath-schools. One church of twenty or thirty years' growth recently organized its first sabbath-school. By request, I was present. There were gray-headed men and women there, who had been members of the church for years, yet had never before seen a sabbath-school. This school owes its existence to the circulation of your books and The Child's Paper.

"Through the distribution of temperance tracts, one place that a year ago was notorious for the intemperate habits of its people, is so much changed, that a Division of 'The Sons of Temperance' was chartered recently, and since that time from fifteen to twenty persons have united with the church. In this settlement, not more than two sermons had been preached in ten years, although two or three ministers lived within

a few miles of it. One said to me that he thought he was doing well when he got safely through it, in his travelling excursions.

"Passing through a thinly settled region, a friend advised me not to call at a certain house, which he said was difficult to find, and if found, its owner would insult me. Nothing intimidated by the prospect, I hunted it up; was not very kindly received, but after conversation and prayer, and granting books, the poor man was so much interested that he begged me to tell him where I was to preach next; and though my appointment was eleven miles from his house, I found him there. He is now a changed man."

Rev. A. P. writes, "The greatest part of the year has been spent in the most remote and destitute portions of this county. There is much desecration of the Sabbath. Many people seem to think it right to cut their firewood on that as on other days. Visited 1,453 families; conversed and prayed with 587, and have seen some fruits of my labors. Held 109 meetings, at which about 100 hopeful conversions took place. About 400 persons have been added to the churches of this field during the year. Your books have been auxiliary to this work of grace, particularly 'Baxter's Call' and 'James' Anxious Inquirer.'"

Rev. R. B. writes, "About 200 persons on my field have been changed from nature to grace, very many churches have been built up and strengthened, and two or three Divisions of 'The Sons of Temperance' have been founded here during the past year. About twenty sabbath-schools were in operation last summer. A brother loaned 'Baxter's Call' to a young Roman-catholic. It was the instrument, through grace, of his conversion. The brother asked him if he had read it. 'Yes,' said he, 'and it is the greatest *call* I ever had.' He is now a member of a Protestant church, and bids fair to make a highly useful man."

NORTH CAROLINA.

EXTRACTS FROM COLPORTEUR REPORTS.—Mr. J. N. A. writes, "On my recent field, the world has taken a powerful hold on the minds of the people generally; even the Sabbath is sacrificed in honor of it. The spirit of religion is very low. Family instruction and government according to Bible principles, are much neglected. In a district containing 104 families, there are but three family altars, and on two of these, none but the Sabbath oblation is presented. In the same district there are nine places where liquor is kept for sale; and three families, who are so poor that they cannot buy a barrel of whiskey at once, get some in a jug, and ape the retailer by pouring it out into a gill cup

for their pliant and perishing neighbors. Of these 104 families, 35 were destitute of an entire copy of the Scriptures, and more than sixty destitute of all religious books except the Bible. Here we get on very slowly. We have to go into these dark places and *kindle up a little brush-light with the pictures in The Child's Paper and Almanacs*; and when the interest is sufficiently raised, read a little, talk some, and show 'Tales about the Heathen;' read what it says about the pictures, and ask,

"Why are we not all heathen? Can't you read? Do you love God? If you don't, you are a sinner, and when you die, you will have to go into the bad place, among those heathen. Now, God sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for sinners, and if we love God, and ask him to make us good, he will give us a good heart; and then we shall try to read, and love to pray and go to church; and not hunt and fish, and visit, and burn plant-beds on the Sabbath-day; for that's the way the heathen do. Oh, 'tis a dreadful thing to be a heathen, and live in sin, and die with wicked hearts, and go to the bad place, and be shut up in that place where our children, that we thought so much of in the world, will come and haunt us, and add to our torment, and pile up around us like the limbs of a tree, and burn, and burn on, and on, and on! Oh, dreadful thought! and no one but Christ can save us from going there: then let us come and ask God, for Christ's sake, to forgive our sins and give us new hearts. Now let us get down on our knees and pray to God to forgive our sins. Let us pray. . . . Well, now I'm going away, and may never be back here; but do try and pray, and love God, and *mind, God is always here.*'

"After a week spent in this way, you have no church to go to on the Sabbath, where you can be refreshed by the preaching of the gospel, where the deep-fetched sigh, and the heart's amen, serve to deepen the conviction that God is in the place. But how shall we spend the Sabbath? We recollect that this is the day set apart for prayer. We wait for the appointed hour. We explain the plan, the object, and the end, to the parents, and ask them to bring their family in and join in the concert of prayer for the conversion of sinners—the salvation of the world. Some of these are precious seasons. Sometimes a vital spark of grace, that has lain dormant for months or years, is thus made to glow afresh. Here we have seen the confusion and anguish of the parents, when the conscience was awakened to a discovery of its neglect, and when the astonished children would cluster close to their mother, as though there was danger, and as if conscious of something wrong, but were unable to tell what it was.

"During the quarter, we have changed our course as regards the

observance of prayer-meetings. An appointment for meeting frequently puts the family to inconvenience ; the house is small, the family large, no seats, no candles, no knowledge of what will be needed or used. To this is added a doubt on the minds of some, and a suspicion in those of others. So we have adopted a different plan. In the after-part of the day, we tell the families we see, that we intend to stay at such a house, say uncle John's, over night, and if you will come over, and bring the children, I will show you all the books I have, and read to you : these are long nights, and you can see all the books, and get home in time to get plenty of sleep. Thus, about dark we will have from five to fifteen come in—no extra preparations—*the neighbors just come in to see*. Then we set out a box of books—put in a big piece of light-wood, (pitch-pine)—give each one a book or tract, and the children an Almanac to look at or read, and be ready to change them about to gratify their curiosity ; and when they have done looking, give them some tracts, and then propose to the head of the family, as so many of his neighbors are present, to have prayers before we part. *Thus we can have a prayer-meeting every night.*

“ I think I hear you say, ‘ You have given up all effort in behalf of the Messenger, and The Child's Paper.’ There is much truth in this—chiefly from the uncertainty of getting the papers regularly, and the difficulty in making up a club for The Child's Paper, in a country where intelligence, money, and post-offices, are all scarce. On an average, but one in twenty of the families I visited during the past three months, take a periodical of any kind, political or religious.

“ The evening was cold and blustering as we descended the high ridge that lay between two large creeks, to visit nine families living on a small plot of white flinty land, producing a stunted growth of crooked timber. The first house was very open ; the cracks were not chinked between the round pine poles ; the door was shut ; we called, but no one answered. The second house was low and uncomfortable, with a family of nine persons—very poor. Here was no book, and but one person could read. The third, a poor house, where a widow with eight children lived in great destitution. In the fourth, a lazy man with a small family made a bare subsistence by his wife's stripping and stemming tobacco. These four are samples of the nine families—ignorant and depraved.

“ After seeing the whole township, we went back to the first house. The mother, who was absent on our first visit, had returned to her palsied husband and deranged daughter. We went in. Poverty dwelt there. The prospect for time was bad, while the preparation for eternity was not yet begun. There was no Bible, no book nor tract of any kind. Poverty

and affliction had rendered the host almost indifferent to any but present enjoyments, or rather, present sufferings. While we sat and talked and read, and chose out a few tracts and a Bible for the family, some one began to chop wood close to the house. On coming out, we saw a young woman that we had not met in any of the families around, who was cutting wood to make a fire for the afflicted family. This was the poor widow's daughter. She was on her way home, and called to help get wood for the long cold night. What an orphan girl was that; what a gem in such a society! She could read, and we readily hired her to read for the poor crippled man and his family, and the town. We gave her a Bible, 'Isabel,' 'Come to Jesus,' a half package of tracts, and a 'Messenger,' and left her with a hope that the Father of the fatherless would guide her through the dangers to which she is exposed in this world to that home above not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

"On going round a large field just cleared, we saw a man throw down his maul and run towards us. As we passed along, he bent his course as if determined to meet us. We stopped; he inquired, while yet at a distance, if I was the '*book-man*.' Yes. 'Well, I want to get one of them books like Mary Ward got; for when I saw how they done, it put my soul on fire, and I have been praying ever since that the Lord would bring you this way again. I am a servant of Jesus Christ, and try to preach his gospel sometimes, and I think that book will be a great help to me. I am a poor fellow, but try to do good, and I hope some day to get to heaven.' By this time I had the book and a few tracts ready for him as a grant. He received them with much apparent gratitude, and giving my hand a most hearty shake, he started back on the run to his maul which he swung for the support of his family. He is a poor, pious, exemplary minister.

"To-day we visited an aged infirm widow. She brought out her whole stock of religious reading—St. Paul's epistles. She has four children, and once owned an entire Bible; but as her children married off, she had given each one a portion of it, and the part she showed me was all she had retained for herself.

"During the year, we have had many discouragements to pass through, such as a want of education among the common people, the lack of such early religious instruction as comes through the influence of a pious mother, indifference about religious reading, the want of an elevated educated ministry, and lastly, the absence of the spirit of religion, and instead of it, heresies and divisions, intemperance and profanity.

"During the year, we have conversed with the mother of four children, who did not know who made her; have seen a father lying drunk

in the road, and a mother drunk in her cabin, and we have heard children cry for bread while their parents indulged in intemperance; but on the other hand, we have seen the man that ordered us out of his house because we gave his wife a Bible, clothed and in his right mind, at the house of prayer.

“In passing through a part of our field traversed last May and June, we observe a marked difference in the aspect of many families: where we could then only *give* a tract or little book, we can now sell. One man bought five books; I met him a few days ago, and he invited me to his house, saying he wanted more books; he had loaned those formerly bought until they were almost worn out. I went to his house in the evening. The next day was snowy, so he sent word to his neighbors to come and get books. They did so. This was Saturday. On Sabbath we had a prayer-meeting. Visited sixteen families, thirteen of them without the word of life. Hired two young women to read the Bible to three of them who could not read for themselves. Here, in a district four miles wide and sixteen long, are seventy occasional drunkards. A Division of ‘The Sons of Temperance’ are rowing up stream, and making good headway. In this place we spent a Sabbath in sight of a church on the one side, and a store on the other, and during the service a company of men and boys *pitched quoits for liquor*. Not more than half of those families can read, and but few have religious books.

“Visited a town of poor and depraved families, found them very ignorant, five of the six unable to read, and but five books of any kind. There was no road for a wagon, so I took my basket and went from house to house on foot, through the woods. Hired a little boy and girl to show me the way. These children had never heard that God made the world, yet they profaned his holy name in their common conversation. I found the place was almost wholly given to vice and intemperance. In the morning went to a mill where six fathers of families were at work. Three of them were church-members, but they had no Bibles, and thought it was wrong to make books to sell. Reached Mr. —’s about dusk on Saturday evening. He was absent. His family were kind, but irreligious; at eight o’clock we asked his wife and four daughters to join us in evening prayers. We had a good time. In the morning the family again joined in prayer. Towards evening the host returned with a company of noisy men and more than a dozen dogs for a fox-chase in the morning. One of the company asked me if I had any objections to the sport. I told him *I* had nothing to say, but *God* said, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day;’ and nothing could be gained by violating it. ‘Then, sir,’ said Mr. S., ‘you had better preach us a sermon this even-

ing.' I told him that if he would bring his family in, and put the dogs out, I would. He did so. I tried to paraphrase the third chapter of John's gospel. After this they got \$4 50 worth of books, and I prayed and retired."

Rev. W. I. M. C. writes, "The field I traversed the past year is in general an interesting one, promising much for the future. The people are kind and hospitable. In most neighborhoods there are churches, and preaching about once a month. I travel in a buggy where the roads are good, on horseback where only paths occur, and on foot where the people live in villages or in swampy places and fields. I try to visit all—from the governor to the poorest negro. Also attend public gatherings, and aid in holding public meetings. In every family I try to impress their minds that I came for their good. Half an hour is about the average time I spend at a house. As my statistics show, I have visited 1,246 families; found nearly one-fourth destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and nearly one-ninth without it; and over one-sixth habitually neglecting evangelical preaching. These facts show the great need of well-filled saddle-bags, and of fireside preaching. I found ten families within 300 yards of a bookstore in the capital of the state, without the Bible, and also found a magistrate who had grown children, but owned no Bible: he had a small Testament. While supplying his family with books, I talked and prayed; all were deeply affected. In less than a week the older children were hopefully converted. I have sold nearly 3,000 volumes, containing almost 800,000 pages, in value \$667 24; granted about 800 volumes containing 150,000 pages, in value \$100 82; also, have sold and granted about 100 Bibles.

"The excellent governor of our state, and many public-spirited men say, 'This work is exactly adapted to the wants of our country,' and have expressed a desire to have every county supplied with a colporteur.

"Three young ladies attribute their awakening and conversion to 'Baxter's Call,' 'Come to Jesus,' and 'Sherman's Guide.' During September and October, I attended several camp and protracted meetings, at which over 200 persons professed conversion. The benefits of personal labor and the distribution of publications were so manifest, that the preachers would not permit me to leave till the meetings closed. In December I visited families of high standing in R——, and I met with the greatest kindness. They spoke cheerfully of the work. I visited many of the worst classes of society there also, and although they at first derided me and my cause, some of them have since found peace in believing. During January, I labored almost entirely among the poor and

wretched in this county. One day I conversed and prayed with sixty-three persons over ten years of age. But twelve of them knew that Christ is the Saviour of sinners. At one house, when I requested them to join me in prayer, they fell flat on their faces. I visited another day fifteen families—in all, 70 persons, and only fifteen of them had any correct knowledge of the God of the Bible. A boy of twelve said with great earnestness, 'God never came to our house, sir, to give us food and clothes, for mother and father have always provided for us.' I asked his sister who was her Creator: she could not tell. 'Why, daughter,' said her mother, 'can't you tell the man who made you?' 'No, mother, I never heard you talk of such,' was the reply of a girl of sixteen! I instructed them some, and then showing them how to kneel, I offered the first prayer they had ever heard. A man about to engage in the liquor traffic, read 'The Temperance Manual,' and the result was that he changed his intention. When his wife heard it, she exclaimed, 'Thank God, my husband and sons are safe! my prayers are this night answered.'

"I called at a grog-shop kept by a widow, and after reading to her some passages from the Bible, inquired, 'Do you enjoy religion, madam?' 'I don't know, sir.' I mentioned some evidences of regeneration, and gave some reasons why many were in the dark. Asked her if she carefully examined herself, and made sure that she was doing right in the sight of God. 'I reckon not, sir.' Do you pray God to show you whether it is right to sell liquor? 'I never did, sir.' I then requested her to kneel with me and pray about this matter; so she knelt down at one side of the rum-barrel, and I at the other, where I prayed with much liberty. After we arose she said, 'Well, *I intend to quit this business now that folks have got to praying over it.* I think it is wrong.'

"Recently I came to a house; the children ran off, and the old man started as I drew near him. Do not be alarmed, said I; I have come to talk with you and your family about your souls. Now let us all go into the house and spend a short time profitably, as it is our first and may be our last meeting. The cabin was about sixteen by eighteen feet, serving as a dwelling for twelve persons, kitchen, smoke-house, dog-kennel, and pigsty. After greeting each one kindly and explaining my work, I again addressed the children. I said to a boy of fourteen, 'Well, my boy, do you know who made you?' 'I reckon daddy did,' he replied. Asked his grown sister if there was a Bible there. 'Don't know, sir.' 'Did you ever see one?' 'I don't remember whether I ever saw *him* or not.' I talked of the goodness and mercy of God in sending Jesus Christ to die for sinners. The father looked amazed: 'Why, you don't say that Jesus Christ is dead, sir?' Long ago, said I. 'Well, I never

heard of it.' The Bible says, 'He had power to take up his life, and to lay it down.' Get your Bible, and I will read you about it. 'I have no Bible, and none of my family can read.' I read from my own; he said he had never heard the Bible read before. I prayed with these poor people—the first prayer the children ever heard. There is a church within three miles of this family.

"Roman-catholics receive me kindly. They even come to my lodgings to get tracts. I have just learned that 'Alleine's Alarm' has been the means of converting an excellent lady with whom I left it recently. Five grog-shops have been broken up, and seven men who were ruining themselves by drinking, have abandoned the use of liquor. Several men have commenced family prayer, and at least twenty-two souls have been hopefully converted on my field through the tract agency this year. To God be all the glory."

“THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,” LONDON.

The fifty-third anniversary of this parent Tract Society was held in Exeter Hall on the 7th of May last. The total receipts for the year amounted to £68,126 11s. 4d., nearly \$300,000, of which nearly \$40,000 were donations. The total circulation of the year amounted to 22,546,747 copies, of which 3,757,675 were grants, value about \$20,000, including tracts on Romanism, Infidelity, and Mormonism, and 760 libraries for Sunday and other schools and destitute districts. New publications, 174. They have also issued a new weekly periodical, entitled "The Leisure Hour," which has a wide circulation.

The Rev. H. V. D. JOHNS, of the Protestant Episcopal church, Baltimore, an esteemed director of this Society, was welcomed as a delegate, and delivered an able address on the claims of God on the London and American Societies, and all affiliated institutions, to "make known the only way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Delegates, including one of the Society's Secretaries who was about to visit Europe, have been commissioned to attend the London anniversary to be held the present month.

The London Society's Auxiliaries at MONTREAL and TORONTO cooperate cordially and actively both with the London and American Societies.