

read by the fire during the long, frost-bound winter, and may become far more precious to its owner than anything else he has brought from the city of his heart.

From Central Asia the transition is natural to the great countries of the East—to Persia, to India and Burma, to China, to Japan, to Malaysia, to Australia and New Zealand.

From PERSIA Mr. Hodgson's report is necessarily brief. Arriving in Baghdad in April of last year, and, passing on to Isfahan, he found Dr. Bruce at Julfa absorbed with his translation of the Persian Bible, and the colporteurs steadily pursuing their work. The remaining months were largely given to journeys of enquiry and inspection. The people often struck the travellers as depressed and listless, and many of the towns in the once brilliant home of Hafiz and Firdusi seemed tumbling into melancholy ruin. In Baghdad, of which there is a glimpse as of an oriental picture, the case is different, and Jews, Turks, Arabs, Muslims and Christians, Kurds from the mountains, Turcomans, Afghans and Indians, jostle each other in the bazaar. It is pleasant to know that in this busy centre the circulation of Scriptures has doubled that of the previous year. New Depôts have been arranged in the important towns of Sultanabad and Kermanshah, and Mr. Hodgson has established himself in Bushire. Persia is thus more completely occupied, and every year, it is hoped, will record progress.

From INDIA the reports are still unhappily incomplete, and of the six auxiliary centres, Lahore, Bangalore, Madras, Bombay, Allahabad and Calcutta, the returns of the two latter have not, at the date of this survey, arrived. The brief account from the Punjab Auxiliary, centred at Lahore, records continuous progress both in Panjabi-Gurmukhi and in Persian character; a circulation sustained at the high figure of over 47,000 copies, and the general estimate that "though the work is gradual, vernacular Scriptures are being offered to the whole country, and are now finding their way to every part of the province." Bangalore is the centre of the Kanarese-speaking people; here, also, the revision of the Bible is going forward; a total of over 15,000 copies, the highest yet reached, has been attained, and it is believed that distribution of the Scriptures far and wide, as this has certainly been effected, is exerting undoubted influence. The Bombay report tells a similar tale: "fair and steady progress." Local subscriptions and Scriptures circulated (60,876) have increased. The revision of the Marathi and Gujarati Scriptures is progressing. A new Depôt has been opened at Nagpur. "An earnest desire to possess and study the Bible is increasingly manifest." The report from Madras is even more copious and more pronounced in its record of progress. "In all directions there is clear and unmistakable evidence that the seeds of truth and righteousness have taken root in the soil." The circulation, over 177,000, has exceeded that of last year by nearly 50,000 copies. The Depôt system has been extended, and colportage has entered on new fields. The work among native women, to whom the Scriptures are read, is increasingly useful. The distribution of Scriptures and of religious books among university students has had "far-reaching results, which the Committees of the Bible and Tract Societies can hardly estimate." The very revival of Hinduism and its organized activity have awakened interest everywhere in the Word of God. "The foundations of Hinduism are being undermined by its own followers." Sentences like these are of deep significance. They are vivid with a sense of some great approaching change, and happily also with the conviction that it is to be such a change as, after a long season of dark weather, comes in with the sunshine and soft breath of spring. It is a change which, had they but seen it, would have filled the hearts of the early missionaries—of Ziegenbalg, Swartz and Plutschö—with rapture, and made the devout spirit of William Carey leap for joy. It is beginning to crowd the mission stations, and perplexing the missionaries by the demands of multitudes who wish to know more of Christ. It is altering old customs, overthrowing ancient beliefs, awakening unaccustomed thought and hope. What is all this?—for that a new age