

FRANCE AND THE ARMY.

One of the most interesting aspects of your work in France relates to the military, and every year it is assuming larger proportions. During the past year, 7,790 copies found purchasers amongst officers and privates to whom the colporteurs had gained access. The copies thus acquired are very widely dispersed, and become the means of creating a desire for the Scriptures in advance of the visit of the colporteurs. M. de Pressense says:—

"One fact which is very frequently communicated to me, when the colporteurs are furnishing reports of their work from house to house, will naturally form an excellent introduction to what I have still to say relative to the work among the military. This fact is as follows: that in numbers of houses both in our towns and villages, the moment a colporteur makes his appearance with the Scriptures in his hands, in one place an aged father or an aged mother, or some uncle or aunt, in another place perhaps a brother or a sister or a cousin, at once produces a New Testament, received as a present from a son, a brother or a cousin, occupying perhaps the post of quarter-master, sergeant, or corporal, or private soldier in one regiment or another, and the exhibition of the volume is usually accompanied by the words, 'You may be sure that we read this good Book, as we have been recommended to do by our friend, to whom, as he tells us, the reading of it has done so much good.'"

The complete Bibles are usually purchased by officers, of whom many evince a real interest in the Book, and in the disinterested labours of the Colporteurs. The men in the ranks, whose means are very limited, are obliged to content themselves with a New Testament. The operations in the great military camps are of special value, and are thus described:—

The colporteur who visits the camp of S—, writes as follows:—The Lord has granted me much encouragement during February, and more particularly among officers. While in one of the *cafés* which are frequented by the officers, the other day, as soon as I had laid out my books on one of the tables, the lieutenant-colonel of the regiment came up to me, and taking a chair, sat down opposite to me, and in a very friendly tone asked me a number of questions. In the first place, he asked me what Society it was that employed me? What was its real object in seeking to distribute the Scriptures? How the Society obtained the funds necessary to meet its expenses? All this was asked in a tone of kindly interest, and after each of my replies he exclaimed, "Bravo! bravo! This is indeed true Christianity, or, I should say these gentlemen must really be excellent Christians." While we were thus conversing, the lieutenant-colonel carefully examined all the volumes which I had placed upon the table, and bought a German Bible of Luther, for the purpose, as he said, of comparing it with one of Ostervald's translation, which he had purchased of me some time previously. He asked me to get him a pair of scissors to cut out the two title pages which contained the name of Luther, in order that he might take the volume home and use it without the risk of scandalizing his family, all the members of which are Roman Catholics. While taking out the title-page of the New Testament, I reminded him that he was also taking away the list of the books, with the number of the chapters, but to this he replied that he did not require any such list, for that he knew by heart nearly the whole of the Bible in French. The other officers who were in the room, appeared to take much interest in the proceedings of their lieutenant-colonel, and on his leaving, several of them came up to me for the purpose of thoroughly examining my copies, and of asking a host of questions of me. One captain, who had not heard what I had been stating about the Bible Society, remarked, "It is doubtless the Holy Father who gives you a good allowance on the sales which you effect for him." "Sir," was my reply, "*the Pope does not trouble himself about distributing the Scriptures, but it does trouble him very much to see them distributed by the Bible Societies,*" and on this I furnished some details respecting the Society