

no year in which less of outward hostility has been manifested to your work, nor one in which that work carried a brighter promise of success and usefulness. The matter of deepest regret is, that in a territory so immense, with a population numbered by hundreds of millions, a more widely ramified agency cannot be established for the diffusion of the Scriptures. Your Committee have done what they could. Never ceasing to realize their responsibility, they have given every assurance to your Agent, Mr. Wylie, of their readiness to bear the cost of any enlarged system of operation he may find to be practicable. The field, however, is large, and the labourers comparatively few, and till the native converts become more numerous, the work must be prosecuted under many limitations and disadvantages.

The Committee attach an increased importance to the circulation of the Scriptures, now that the principle of sale is very generally acted upon. So long as the copies could be obtained without charge, the Chinese, judging Christians by their own selfish standard, entertained but a low and degrading conception of the value of the book, and had not the same inducement to read it as when deliberately purchased. Now that the Bible must be paid for, it may be fairly presumed that they only are likely to buy it who will make themselves acquainted with its contents. No difficulty is experienced in effecting sales when new districts are explored, and, in the course of time, the same practice will probably be adopted at all the centres of missionary work in China.

Mr. Wylie has rendered very important and laborious service during the year. His journeys have been various, and extended to parts of the country far beyond the present range of missionary operations, and where the face of the foreigner had never been previously seen. The particulars which will be furnished of Mr. Wylie's movements cannot fail to inspire much interest and much hope.

It will be remembered that your Agent has the assistance of two Europeans, who act as Colporteurs, and to whose Christian character and efficiency the highest testimony is given. There are also several converted natives employed in the same capacity, and acting under the immediate direction of Mr. Wylie. By this staff of labourers, 63,564 copies of the Scriptures were disposed of during the year, being more by 15,370 than were circulated in the previous year. The actual sales have been much greater than these figures indicate, as the returns of one of the European colporteurs have not been made up, in consequence of his distant travels, since the early part of August, and these must include several thousand additional volumes. The Committee view this growth with special satisfaction, and they feel assured that Mr. Wylie has not omitted any means likely to have a favourable influence on the circulation of the Scriptures.

#### FUNDS.

The Committee have next to glance at the state of the Society's finances, and they do so with no ordinary satisfaction. In almost every item of income, which tends to illustrate the deep interest felt in your work, and the wide range of sympathy it commands, there is an increase of receipts, and the total amount which has been paid into your treasury during the year is larger than at any former period. The Receipts from ordinary sources have reached the sum of

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