

labours of the colporteurs. The work of these devoted men seems indeed to grow year by year in its value as well as its compass, and it is increasingly accumulating those evidences of the growth of a new Christian life among the people which in every land, but especially among the vast populations of China, has a limitless interest and significance. During the months of 1894 there have been ceaselessly moving from place to place, not indeed in all the provinces—empires as not a few of them are in population—but in most of the more important ones, 180 colporteurs, six of them Europeans, all the rest natives of their vast, almost voiceless, inscrutable land. One meets them on river boats, among the mountain villages, in the unlighted, unfreshened alleys of their labyrinthine cities. How patiently enduring many of these men are, how genuinely devout, we must read the journals to know. And though the Chinaman of the West seems too often hopelessly alien from his European or American brother, incidents such as we meet in their journals reveal the same human heart. Assuredly some of his words, as always his needs, may well reach the hearts and consciences of Christians at home. 'Why is this news about God and Jesus brought to us only now?' said a fellow-traveller to one of the colporteurs; 'has it never been known before?' And though they often seem stolid, the missionaries who superintend the Bible-men know how impressionable and how receptive many of the rude people are. 'Again and again,' writes Mr. Joseland, whose district is near Amony, 'the men are asked to read from and explain the books; again and again they are asked to make a longer stay and to teach the truth systematically; and when they leave they are nearly always importuned to return as soon and as often as they can.' Another Missionary Superintendent compares their work to that of the pioneer in the prairie or untravelled forest; they are clearing away the undergrowth of centuries; they are opening up roads along which the settlers of a new time may travel, and bridging the rivers he may cross. Those who are most fully acquainted with China anticipate the best results from the war; but instead of forecasting the unknown it is safer to read with gratitude the pages of the accomplished past, and to wait for the turning of the leaf in a volume so full of surprises.

One of the men who was sent to look up old purchasers has been the means of leading a number to the Saviour. The Rev. W. Hunter writes that some twenty men were baptised by himself, and that a district comprising several villages seemed to promise to become Christian 'owing to the bookselling, earnest preaching, and above all, the consistent life of the colporteur.'

Here we may take the opportunity of quoting the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Ross to our colporteurs. He writes:—

'If the real spiritual results are elsewhere what they are in Manchuria, the Bible Society has reason for gratitude for being instrumental in doing so much to extend the Kingdom. In some cases, the native colporteurs have been the means of starting new stations by bringing in converts where no other evangelist had ever been. In others, they have added members to already existing stations; and in many more they have strengthened the bands and increased the faith