

in this letter, but illustrates the indebtedness of well nigh every other American foreign mission to this same noble agency. The letter is dated January 2, 1890, at Beirut, Syria, and was read at the meeting of the Board of Managers, March 6th, and at that very session the Board made grants of books and funds amounting to \$72,880, including appropriations to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, for Bible work in the Lodian Mission; to the American Board, for its Austria Mission; to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for its Sweden Mission; to the Bible Society of France; to the Russian Bible Society, and to the Society's agencies in Mexico, Cuba, and the Levant.

The issues from the Bible House during the month of February were 109,179 volumes; issues since April 1st, 1889, 922,493 volumes.

The Syria letter reads as follows:

"Our obligations to your Society are great and constant. It is the arsenal whence we draw the weapons for our spiritual conflict with the hosts of error and superstition on these old battle-fields, memorable in the world's history. You give each warrior for Christ a sword which will not fail him in direst combat. With it we fear not to meet Moslem or nominal Christian armed with weapons forged in Mecca or Rome. Nay, more, you send us winged messengers, which we can let fly over walls which we cannot scale and capture citadels which we cannot enter.

"We have to thank you for the varied forms in which the Arabic Bible is printed, adapted to all circumstances and wants, and for the exactness of its conformity to the original and the purity of its style, so attractive to the Arab taste. When I came to Syria we had only a translation made from the Vulgate, unfaithful to the original and full of grammatical errors. Now we have one to which we can refer when we wish to test the correctness of the revised English version.

"I am writing this in a house separated by a narrow street from the building in which Dr. Eli Smith lived, who labored so long and so successfully in your service, commencing the immortal work of giving to the Arabic-speaking races, in their own tongue, the pure word of God. Dr. Van Dyck, whom God has honored by permitting him to carry forward and complete this work, now stands at the threshold of the fiftieth year of his arrival in this land. His numerous friends here, of all sects, propose to celebrate this jubilee, which occurs on the

second of April next, and to offer some appropriate testimonial to him in view of his eminent services to literature and science. The Sultan has signified his regard by presenting one of his highest decorations to honor the occasion. Doubtless Dr. Van Dyck looks with more complacency upon the work done by him for the American Bible Society than upon all his other labors, and certainly it is this work which the King of kings will most honor.

"We have to thank the Society for the interesting and profitable messenger which comes to us from them each month, in the shape of the Society's *Record*.

"We thank the Society that for so many years they gave us the frequent companionship and profitable fellowship of their representative in the *Levant*, the loved and lamented Dr. I. G. Bliss, to help us forward in our work.

"We can but wish that in some way the bonds which unite the Bible Society and the Syria Mission were closer and more perceptible. We recall with pleasure the visit of Dr. Gilman, and esteemed it most conducive to this end; but such visits ought to be repeated at least once in a decade, or they fail of due influence.

"Surely the Society should be congratulated, as well as thanked, for the magnificent work they are permitted to do in this land of the Bible—in giving to it this past year alone more than twelve million pages of the Arabic Scriptures—that thus they may re-sow these 'holy fields' with the pure seed of the word, where for centuries has flourished Satan's crop of tares unchecked and disastrous.

"We might tell you much to cheer you in your labor of love: how the colporteur who visits the khans on the highways of travel, returning, has told us of groups of wayfarers listening nightly to the reading of the Scriptures, who then carry in their memories to their homes treasures more precious than those laden upon their beasts of burden.

"We might tell you of a Bedawee youth who learned of Christ in a school in this city, and visited lately his tribe in the desert east of Homs, spending some time with them and delighting the people of his tribe by reading to them the stories of the Old Testament and the poetry of the Psalms. Oh! how reluctantly they parted with him, returning to further pursue his studies.

"We might tell you how we hear of homes in this city of Beirut whose inmates dare not admit a missionary within their doors, nor even acknowledge his salutation before others when they meet him in the street, where the Bible is read, yea, prized and believed in as the only truth: but this will suffice.

"Ye who stretch your hands so far, and so full of blessings to your fellow men, cease not also to stretch your hands upward to God in supplication that he may open more widely the doors for the entrance of the gospel into homes