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THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON LITERATURE.

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In a sermon lately delivered before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, from the text—Ez. xlvii. 9—"And everything shall live whither the river cometh," Dr. Taylor very justly and forcibly argued from the effect of the Bible on English literature, that missionary translators of the Scriptures were doing a great work for the literature in foreign tongues which men are to read centuries hence. We make room for an extract, exhibiting some of the incidental results of the work which the Bible Societies are doing.

"But look, in the third place, at the department of literature, and you will see how, when the river of the Gospel has flowed into a nation, it has quickened that also into richer growth. Take here the stores which have been garnered up in our own mother tongue, and when you come to look into the subject you will be surprised to discover how much the word of God has had to do with the character and quality of English literature. Up till the time when John Wickliffe sent his "poor priests" up and down England with his version of portions of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, there could not be said to be any English literature, and there was hardly any English language. Just at the very time Wickliffe was engaged in his great work, now precisely five hundred years ago, Geoffrey Chaucer was writing those "Canterbury Tales" which have charmed so many generations of readers and which bear on them certain indications that their author had come under the widening and ennobling influence of the truths which the parson of Lutterworth proclaimed. Nor was this in itself unlikely, for both of these men were protegés of him whom we know in another connection as "Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster." In any case these two between them laid the foundation of our language and literature; but as from the nature of the case the Bible went into more homes and hearts than Chaucer reached, we must attribute to Wickliffe the principal share in that literary revival which the succeeding centuries witnessed in the mother country. Nay, it is somewhat remarkable that just