

sington; Mrs. Snell, Bournemouth; Mrs. Steel, Cambridge; Mrs. Taylor, Thornbury; Mrs. Taylor, Tunbridge Wells; Mrs. Joseph Tritton, Upper Norwood; Miss Walker, Chester; Mrs. Whittard, Brixton.

Such are the statistics, and, nearer home, some of the personal details of the year. Let us now turn to the facts of life and work which these statistics may be said to summarise, and to that immense and many-peopled landscape to which they refer.

Closest to the eye—with their network of railways, their overcrowded cities, their stretches of field and forest—lie the countries of EUROPE. As in a panorama, the eye passes along a line of view which, touching the mountain-heights of Norway and crossing southwards the lakes of Sweden, and the meadows and canals of Holland, and the plains and hills and rivers of the Fatherland, rests at last, beyond Geneva, on the snowy brows of Mont Blanc. And the student of Church history will remember that just under such a line lie the continental countries in which the Reformation chiefly made its home. In this rapid sketch these may be grouped together, and the more suitably because, with some minor differences, the position of them all as regards Bible work is practically the same. And what is that position? It is that all of them have become or are becoming centres of independent Scripture supply—that from all of them the Bible Society has withdrawn, or is contemplating withdrawal, excepting only and always in the way of cordial sympathy and assistance, as it ceases to be necessary for the supply of the wants of the people, and free to turn corresponding energy and outlay to foreign and non-Christian lands. In NORWAY there are six centres of Bible work, the colporteurs as they visit the homes of its devout peasantry are everywhere welcomed, and new additions are being issued from the Christiania presses. From SWEDEN the latest accounts are of steady advance. From HOLLAND the report of the present year is practically the last; and though as he forecasts the closing of the Society's Agency, there is the sorrow of farewell on Mr. Grelinger's pages, it is with a sense of accomplishment, not of failure, that he speaks of the "vigorous life of the Netherlands Society," of the extension of colportage, of the establishment of new Depôts, of the issue of fresh editions. In GERMANY eight Bible Associations supply the wants of her people, and allow the British Society in its colportage operations to devote principal attention to the large Roman Catholic population and those whose vernacular is not German. In this comparatively restricted sphere the circulation by colportage (over 62,000) was in 1891 the highest average on record,—“the colporteurs accomplished more per man, were more free and happy in their work, and realized a higher commission than in any previous year, and though slightly lower than those of 1890, it is significant that the total circulation by all the Bible Societies—German, British, and American—rose to so large a figure as that of over 639,000.\* SWITZERLAND has at work more than ten native Bible Associations, and the Society's supplies to them and for other purposes advanced from the 39,000 of 1891 to 57,000 of the latest returns. All this—in the case of each of these countries—is surely a record of signal accomplishment. It is the completion, along the whole line, of a chain of fortresses against which the forces of materialistic thought may beat in vain; or to change the metaphor for one more pleasant, it is the building of storehouses of living bread, where in an age which is unsatisfied because unspiritual, the people may eat and hunger no more.

In the great Latin and Catholic countries, FRANCE is naturally conspicuous. She is herself the mother, only too prolific, of a literary progeny which—gay, sensuous, and earthly, like the world it delights—spreads its seductive influence far and near. Even in rural districts like Auvergne and Picardy, distant as they are from cities, we hear the peasants ask for the latest novel of Zola or Gaboriau,

\* Total circulation of all the Societies in Germany, 639,692 (previous year, 644,482); total circulation for the year through the Agency of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, including Switzerland, 315,615 (previous year, 300,762). Colportage sales in Germany were 62,542 (previous year 54,203).