

EXTRACTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

SYRIA AND PALESTINE.

SYRIA.—In spite of the inveterate jealousy of rival denominations and the tyranny exercised by Jewish Rabbis, and Romish and Greek ecclesiastics, the labours of Christian men and women in disseminating the Holy Scriptures, preaching the Gospel, and establishing schools and colleges for both sexes, have produced a powerful effect. So widely has education been spread, that the Jesuits, finding they can no longer maintain their ground by simply denouncing all Protestant books, have felt constrained to prepare what they represent to be a more correct Arabic version of the Bible. The issues from the depôts at Beyrout and Damascus have been 1,130, and the circulation by Risq Butros, the Lebanon colporteur, has been 144, making a total of 1,274, or 252 above the figures of 1875.

Of the small depôt opened recently at Bethlehem, the Rev. S. Müller gives an interesting account.

"The depôt is a meeting-place for conversation and reading on Divine things. Priests, both Greek and Armenian, come to read and to buy; but the Romish clergy are our decided foes, and our Bible depôt is the greatest thorn in their side. Turkish soldiers occasionally step in to read or hear the Word of God, and during last month a Yusbashi (captain) came frequently and read the Scriptures, and seemed much impressed. The people in general are exceedingly submissive to their clergy, and have little desire to judge for themselves. It is hard to induce the natives to buy the Scriptures; still the young are beginning to do so, and amongst the rest a young Greek woman, whose husband is a Roman Catholic. Monks, teachers, common people and pilgrims of all confessions, though rarely of the Romish Church, come to read or hear, and occasionally to purchase. The heads of the Roman Catholic monastery warn their people against the Bible depôt; still it is visited the more, and the Word of God is read and listened to."

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In the North a brighter scene presents itself. Notwithstanding the unsettled state of the country, prejudices are breaking down, the confidence in old superstitions begins to fail, and the Scriptures are more in demand. Thus at Tiberias the colporteur Anton sold 24 copies where formerly he could not have disposed of as many gratis.

"He appears during the past year to have had more conversation than usual with the Jews of Safed and Tiberias, and reports they were much struck with his exposition of Isaiah vii. 14, foretelling the miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus, and expressed a wish to have a missionary to reside among them. One of their Rabbis too, said, 'The Protestants have great advantage over us, for they allow every poor Jew at all times and under all circumstances to read the Bible; whereas I cannot touch our sacred books unless after certain purifications.'"

EGYPT.

Your worthy depository at Alexandria, Mr. Kirby, says that the past year has not been one of famine of the Word of God. Though commercial depression has obliged all classes to economize, and has thrown out of employment governesses, artisans, and domestic servants, yet the sales of Scriptures have increased by 481 volumes upon the issues of 1875.

When Dr. Thompson was in Egypt last year, he was pleased to observe how deeply the various missions seemed to have struck root. The erection of mission premises at each of the stations betokened not only present prosperity but faith in the permanence of the work, and a fixed purpose