

There are large fields still to be occupied. There are others in which the spread of education, or the melting of prejudice, or the extension of missions will each year bring fresh calls to advance, to which your Committee will, if able, gladly respond. They have already during the year taken steps considerably to extend their liabilities in India, and China, and Persia, and Japan. They have added two new Agencies—one for North Africa and one for Malaysia—to their list. They still ask for an Agent for Siberia. They are arranging for work in Cuba, and elsewhere. A colporteur has again entered Turkestan. Onward steps like these will have made themselves felt a year hence more than at present. Meantime your Committee ask attention to the work already being done. For they believe that the more the breadth and the depth of it are known, the more hearty will be the support given to it in money and in prayer, and the less will it lose through ignorance and misconception. Besides all that it does at home, and through others, your Society has a missionary host of its own. It spreads about 300 colporteurs over Europe, and sends 200 more to other parts of the world. The sales of Scriptures by these men are more than 600,000 copies a year. Other societies have their own work for Christ, and they do it widely and well. But most of them, wherever their sphere, generously own that they could do it neither so widely, nor so well, without your help. That help is daily sought at home in Christian efforts of endless variety. And it precedes, or it attends, or it follows, the missionary abroad.

The history of an enterprise so vast must perforce be chequered. There will be clouds as well as sunshine. But the feeling which the year leaves paramount in the minds of your Committee is that they have abundant cause once more humbly to thank God and to take courage.

It is but a fragment of this world-wide work which can be mentioned in this Abstract; a little of the light, a little of a shade; a few of the workers, and a few of the lands wherein they work.

France.—France changes fast. Fifty years ago the French Government called the New Testament 'the first and most salutary of books,' and paid your Committee £400 for £20,000 copies for elementary schools. Now the Bible is proscribed in all schools.

On the other hand, the new law of colportage has removed vexatious restrictions. The men can sell their books in the streets of Paris, whence they were formerly chased like dogs by the police, and a policeman is an active promoter of the circulation of Bibles. An authorisation is no longer required. The colporteur has only to declare his will to colport, and the *maire* is bound to give him a written acknowledgment of his declaration. One *maire*, who four times refused such an acknowledgment, was summoned, and was not only ordered by the Court to affix his signature forthwith, but also to pay 20 francs as costs to the colporteur. He had argued in his defence that he had only been obeying the priest. This was accepted, and they shook hands cordially on parting.

Two colporteurs who were employed twenty years ago have lately returned to the work. They say that formerly every one fled at their approach, as if they were infected with the plague. Now people want to *know* what the colporteurs believe, and whether they are Christians.