

of nearly 600 pages, with maps of the leading countries where the Society's operations are carried on. The extent of these operations is simply astonishing; and the energy with which they are pushed is deserving of the warmest commendation. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is the increasing demand for the Holy Scriptures. Last year's issues of this single society amounted to nearly 10,000 copies a day for the working days of the year; and since its formation it has supplied 93,953,000 copies. The translation, printing, or distribution of the whole or part of the Bible has been aided in no fewer than 250 languages or dialects. The Bible is now sold in 345 different versions. Four-fifths of this number have been prepared since 1804,—the birth year of the Society. It will be remembered that our own Church has aided the Society, and the Society has aided the Church, in giving the Word of God in its completeness to the people of Aneityum in the New Hebrides—and portions of Scripture to the people of Erromanga, Aniwa and Fate. It has in like manner aided many other mission enterprises. The missionary societies of the Church of England requiring the Scriptures in fifty different languages receive their supplies from the Bible Society. Other societies in England require at least fifty versions more, and these they get from the same source. Missions, where the Bible has not been placed in the hands of the people, have lacked permanence. On the other hand, where the converts have been taught to read and study the Scriptures the fiercest persecutions have been bravely endured, and truth has triumphed, rising gloriously even from the martyr's pile. It was a remarkable Providence which, when modern missions extended far and wide, placed it within the power of missionaries to place in the hands of their converts the Word of Life. The British and Foreign Bible Society is nobly seconded in its efforts by other societies. The American Society has issued some forty millions of copies. The Scottish National Society issues nearly half a million copies annually. Continental societies have aggregated over seventeen million copies. Private publishers in Great Britain and the United States issue hundreds of thousands of copies annually. The wide world is open to the Bible, except where Mohammedanism reigns unchecked, and except also where the Roman Catholic faith is stringently enforced. Heathenism itself is more tolerant than these false faiths; but the power of both is declining while the influence of the Word of Truth is extending to the remotest corners of Christendom, and to the inner recesses of heathendom. The world's population is estimated at fourteen hundred

millions. When shall these multitudes be provided with copies of the Word of God and be able to read it? It is estimated that two hundred and ten million copies have already been circulated. This number is large; but it leaves more than a thousand million unsupplied; it is estimated that only about ten million copies have gone into circulation among heathens, Jews and Mahomedans, who include a vast majority of the human race; and such is their condition in relation to the Book of books. It is no doubt true that the Bible has been translated into the great leading languages of the heathen world, and this is a step of the highest importance; but thus far the work has been little more than an effective pioneering and preparing, for the mighty campaign between truth and error. Among the millions of Africa there are probably scores of languages still unmastered by the missionary. There are great islands of the Indian Archipelago, there are groups in the Pacific, where the first word of Biblical instruction has not yet been imparted. Still the noble work is advancing as it never advanced before. The colporteur is traversing the lonely steppes of Turkestan, the wilds of Siberia, the populous plains of China, the spice-groves of Malaysia. Three hundred colporteurs are employed in various European countries, and two hundred are engaged in heathen lands, circulating the Bible, the Bible alone. There are sections of our highly favoured Dominion where the Bible is still a forbidden book. Infidel France categorically excludes the book from all her schools. Strange that, in antipathy to the Bible, or fear of it, extremes meet—strange that the policy of atheism should coincide with the policy of superstition, so far as the Bible is concerned. But there are in the Dominion Protestant families without a Bible in their homes. This should not be so. While we look at the vineyards beyond, our own vineyard should be well kept.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives but borrows none

The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise;
They rise but never set."

Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to love, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born
That read to doubt, or read to scorn. Scott.