

less wealth of the country have been so lavishly displayed, have carried home with them that which may be a source of spiritual light and life to many generations.

BIBLE DISTRIBUTION IN THE HAURAN, SYRIA.

The Rev. Dr. Thomson, the Society's agent at Constantinople, has, in a recent communication, enclosed an account of a colporteur tour made in the Hauran, by the Rev. William Wright, of the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Damascus, accompanied by a colporteur in the pay of the Bible Society. The Hauran is an extensive plain east of the Jordan, and inhabited chiefly by a migratory population. May the blessing of God rest on all such efforts! Mr. Wright says:

"In my colporteur tour to the Hauran, I was accompanied by a friend, and I took with me, as colporteur, a member of our church in Rasheija. Our tour lasted thirteen days, but during the last six days our movements and operations were greatly hindered by a threatened insurrection, owing to an attempt of the Government to impose a new tax which the people resisted. We had, finally, to change our route and abandon certain districts altogether. We sold, however, during the eleven days, (for we did not sell on Sundays,) 13 Bibles, 17 Testaments, 6 Psalm Books, and 12 Portions of Scripture.

"We gave nothing away, being convinced that the Arabs set little value on what costs them nothing; but whenever I saw an anxious desire on the part of any one to possess a copy of the Scriptures, and felt sure that he could not pay the price, I paid the difference myself. It must be remembered that this is the first genuine attempt that has been made in the Hauran to sell books. In almost every place we came to we were told that persons like us had come before us, who were anxious to get people to take their books without paying for them, and wherever the late disastrous attempts at establishing schools had been made, we could scarcely sell anything.

"And let me say, with respect to the abortive attempts of some amateurs to establish schools in the Hauran, that it is a vain and cruel thing to send either teachers or colporteurs into the Hauran alone and unprotected, and that we need not expect success or credit in any work in which we are not prepared to share the danger. I would, moreover, implore every one who has any influence in the matter, to discourage the promiscuous giving away of books. It gets the honest colporteur looked upon as a swindler, gets the books despised, and destroys the principle of *self-help* in the natives, by teaching them to expect us to do for them what they can do for themselves. To me it does not seem quite honest, to give a rich man in this country a book for nothing, which has been paid for in England by the money of a poor man. And I am convinced that, when a man wants a book, even in the Hauran, he will buy it; but it must be very provoking when a man has paid us his money for one of our books, to be offered the same book for nothing a few days afterwards. In several places when I had urged a man to buy a Bible for his family, he would hurry off and bring me out a beautiful gilt Bible, which some had obliged him to take. When a man buys a book here he will value it and read it, but our books should be as cheap as possible in the Hauran.

"We made our tour without guide or guard, as I had become acquainted with most of the villages and their sheikhs on a previous visit. Our mode of procedure was this:—When approaching a village I galloped on before, and generally shouted something to draw the people out of their houses. When the colporteur arrived and let down his box of books, I said to the people (salutation over), 'this man has books for sale at from five to twenty-five paras.' 'What kind of books?' 'God's books.' Then taking a handful of them, I walked through the town in a straight line, asking for antiquities, like other travellers, and offering my books for sale, till I got a crowd round