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TO THE SECRETARIES OF THE BRANCHES.

We have been told lately by one of the Society's Agents that the saving effected last year in the agency has given much satisfaction, and that some Branches at least will show their satisfaction in the very proper way of increasing their contributions towards the grand object of the Society, the spread of God's Holy Word throughout the world. We were very glad to hear this : in the first place, because it is pleasant to think that our zealous friends throughout the country are satisfied that the money they contribute to this blessed work is carefully expended ; and secondly, because we think it will encourage the Directors. Some may think it strange that they should need any encouragement. In a letter received from the country about a year ago, we remember the expression, " We who do the work," implying that the Directors in Toronto only spend the money. Far be it from us to think lightly of the work of those officers of Branches, who realize the importance and fulfil the duties of their posts, or of the often self-sacrificing labours of our good friends the collectors. But such men as the writer of the above letter should remember that our Directors are for the most part very busy men, upon whose hours there are many and pressing demands, and that therefore the time given to the Society by them all, but especially by those on the Agency and Colportage Committee, is the best kind of contribution, and no small guarantee that they will be careful to spend its money only in such ways as they have reason to believe will advance the great object for which it exists. In the account of the Board meeting held last night it will be seen that a committee was appointed to inquire if any economy can be effected

in printing. Whether they succeed in curtailing this item of expense or not, it is certain that the Secretaries of the Branches, or at any rate many of them, can do most in effecting a real economy in this matter. Economy has been well defined, we think by Ruskin, as "not the mere saving of money; but the best use of the means at our disposal." Now the principal item in the printer's bill is for the RECORDER, which is issued for the purpose of keeping the friends of the Society, especially the Officers of the Branches, the members of the committees, and their collectors informed of what is being done in this great work, about which it is most important that they should not be ignorant. Therefore if the increased expenditure of even several hundred dollars would help materially to secure this end, it would be more true economy than cutting down the item, if such curtailment should hinder the spread of Bible Society news. But we do not apprehend that any increased outlay will be found necessary; on the contrary we hope the committee will be able to reduce the item in some degree at least. As we have just said, we believe that the Secretaries of the Branches can effect the best economy in this matter. It is not for us to pronounce whether the matter supplied in the RECORDER is well selected or not. We can only say that we do our best to have it so, and although not rash enough to promise to follow the advice of every one of our friends, we will gladly receive and carefully consider any suggestions as to its better management. We have been encouraged, however, by being told by an Agent who knows the Society's field very widely, that when it is distributed it is read. But if it contain the most thrilling matter that our Post Office authorities are privileged to convey to Her Majesty's subjects, it can hardly do much to quicken or support zeal, to awaken thankfulness, or inspire prayers, if its numbers lie uncirculated, perhaps even in the waste paper baskets of some of the Secretaries. We hope this is not the destination of the RECORDER in many places; but we are sorry to know that in some places it is not distributed. We do not write thus because we are disappointed that our editorial flowers waste their sweetness upon the desert air. Our readers are aware that the RECORDER was always intended to be filled almost entirely with clippings, and therefore our work does not rank with that of a gardener, but is merely to cull bouquets, or rather to gather substantial food that will support the zeal of our people in Bible Society work. But we do feel that when the Society goes to the expense of having these extracts printed, we should all do as much as we can to make this outlay useful. Even where there is no such negligence as above referred to, probably more could be done than at present to get the RECORDER read, by seeing that it is distributed promptly, by speaking to others about the news contained in it, and by getting them to read it.

We do not ask for more orders for extra copies, although we have no objection to sending them where they are useful. We would rather decrease than increase the number of copies that have to be printed, unless they are more widely circulated and read. With most periodicals the greater number of copies issued, whether read or not, produces a greater amount of income

for their proprietors ; but it is not so with the RECORDER. The price paid for extra copies barely pays for these extra copies themselves, and too often it is merely so much deducted from the free contributions of the Branch ; so that, unless they are really made useful, the Society is a positive loser.

We are glad to know that some of the Secretaries do promptly and faithfully distribute the numbers sent to them ; but perhaps even these might do something to have each copy read by several persons, so that, without increasing the quantity printed, the number of readers would be multiplied many fold.

Another way in which the officers of Branches, especially the Secretaries, can effectually economize for the Society, is by giving prompt attention to the notices sent by the Agents, and whenever possible, making arrangements for a good meeting on the evening named. It is impossible for the Agents to arrange their tours so as to suit exactly the convenience of every Branch, however much they may wish it. For the Agent to change the date of his visit generally involves inconvenience to some other Branches, and frequently increased expense to himself and to the Society ; whereas the officers of the Branch could often, by a little exertion and judicious use of influence, get some other meeting postponed without any loss to the cause advocated at such postponed meeting.

In one of the Agent's Reports presented to the Board last night, there was one of these cases. The Agent found, when he arrived at the village, that nothing had been done, and that he might just as well have stopped at home. The officers seemed to think it was quite sufficient to assure the Agent that it was owing to inadvertence and not from any want of good-will. As this place is of importance, and as, notwithstanding the listlessness of the officers, there may be many good people in the place who are interested in the spread of God's word, the Board decided that the Agent should pay a second visit ; but the officers should remember that this involves six and perhaps twelve dollars extra expense to the Society. If this were the only case it would be a small matter to write about ; but every month one or two, sometimes several, such cases are reported, so that in the aggregate they cost the Society not a few dollars, to say nothing of the fact that officers who are so listless in this matter are not likely to be very earnest in setting their collectors to work. We confess to feeling some degree of irritation when these cases come before us, but we do not wish to write in a scolding spirit, and we hope that our fellow-labourers will pardon us if we have appeared to do so.

But, bearing in mind the true meaning of economy, and remembering that the agents are sent out for the purpose of awakening the people to an interest in this great work, which God has given our nation to do, we are anxious that the Officers of the Branches should see that in this matter, and in that of the RECORDER, the most important economy can be best effected by them. If they will bring a larger number of people under the influence of the Agents at the meetings, and will get more readers for each copy of the RECORDER,

they will effect far more good than can be done by any mere curtailment of expenses. Nevertheless, they may rely upon it, that the Directors will always be anxious to retrench where they see they can do so consistently with the true interests of the cause intrusted to them.

On another page will be seen a notice taken from a New York paper of what the American and Pennsylvania Bible Societies have done at the Centennial Exhibition. We regret that they could not see their way to do something in the gratuitous distribution of gospels in foreign languages. At the Paris Exhibition, in 1867, two and a quarter millions of French Gospels and eighteen thousand Spanish Gospels were given, and five thousand Spanish Bibles and Testaments sold, and large numbers in other languages. But we trust that although much has not been done in the way of distribution, that the exhibit made of the Societies' work will excite an interest in the minds of many, and lead them to support it with their prayers and contributions.

With a view to thus awakening increased interest in this great work of translating the Scriptures into every tongue and sending them to all nations, one of our own Society's colporteurs, Mr. Moodie, was sent last month to the the Agricultural Shows at Woodbridge, Markham and Aurora, with a glass case, containing twenty-five Bibles in as many different languages, and specimens of the different styles of English Bibles sold by the Society. The idea was suggested by the Rev. Dr. Hodgkin, of Woodbridge, who gave a great deal of time and trouble in carrying it out and making it a success. Mrs. Hodgkin kindly made a neat and pretty banner with the Society's name on it. This was handsomely mounted, and attracted attention to the stand, which had nearly all the time three or four or more persons inspecting it. To each of these was given a slip with a brief account of the history, the object, and the operations of the Society. The Woodbridge newspaper, in its description of the Fair, said, "One of the most interesting objects at the Exhibition was the Bible Department, which, distinct from its religious character, even in an intellectual and literary point of view, was a very gratifying part of the Show." The officers of the three Branches cordially approved of the plan, and Dr. Crowle, of Markham, and Mr. Pearson, of Aurora, kindly secured good positions for the case and otherwise did all in their power to assist the colporteur. During the five days at the three places Mr. Moodie sold 68 copies, which is considerably above the average of a colporteur's sales. This was a very important and gratifying part of the success of the scheme, although it was not the prime object of the experiment, which was, as we have said, to widen and deepen the interest felt in this blessed work, which God seems to have committed in a special manner to our race. That it has brought the operations of the Society in a practical way before the eyes of many, who were before either wholly or partially ignorant of them, there is no room to doubt, and therefore we hope the idea will be more fully carried out next year.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. William Strain, who has been in the service of the Society at intervals since 1857. He had not been in strong health for some years, and therefore at times found the honourable but arduous work of a colporteur too much for his strength, and was in this way laid aside all last winter. But in reporting his work for September, he spoke of his health with more than usual cheerfulness; it was therefore with some surprise that we received the sad news in a letter from his brother, Mr. Joseph Strain, in whose house he died on the 14th of Oct. after a few days' sickness. We trust he is now rejoicing with many precious souls who found the Saviour through the Bibles distributed by himself and his fellow colporteurs.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 15TH NOVEMBER, 1876.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, October 10th, at 7.30 P.M. The Hon. William McMaster in the Chair. Besides the usual routine business, a report from the committee on district meetings was read and adopted, appointing meetings to be held in the Chesnut Street Mission Church, the East Presbyterian Church (since changed to the Parliament Street Methodist Church), the West Presbyterian Church, and the College Street Baptist Church. A letter was read from James Court, Esq., Treasurer of the French Canadian Missionary Society, requesting that the grant voted in September be made in money instead of in Scriptures. The Board decided to adhere to its original resolution.

The Directors met again last evening at the usual hour. The Hon. W. McMaster in the Chair. After the ordinary business, reports were submitted from the following Agents:—the Revs. W. W. Ross, J. A. F. McBain, H. Cocks, Dr. Beaumont, J. B. Duncan, and R. Torrance.

Letters were read from the Revs. J. Gemley and J. B. Duncan recommending certain changes in the plan of agency, but the Board was not willing to enter upon the consideration of any changes so soon after the adoption of the present plan.

It was moved by John K. Macdonald, Esq., and seconded by Alex. Christie, Esq., that the President, Treasurer, Secretaries, and Messrs. Brown, Christie, and Macdonald be a committee to examine what economy can be effected in printing and postage expenses, with power to ask, if necessary, for tenders. Carried.

Extracts from the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society :—

SPAIN.

Now that Spain seems to be again closing itself against the operations of the Society, it is with deep interest we read in the Parent Society's Report of what was done in that dark country during the past year. We give the following extracts, trusting that they will lead our readers to pray earnestly to God to water the good seed already sown among that benighted nation, with an abundant out-pouring of his Holy Spirit.

The way in which God opened an entrance for His own Word into this country was so marvellous, that no Christian heart could fail to beat quicker with joyful expectation at the prospect of the good things which He had prepared for its people; and no difficulties or reverses, no storms which sweep over Church or State, must now be allowed to weaken the faith or damp the ardour of those who have good will towards them in Zion. The banner of Truth which has been unfurled in their midst must be kept waving in the breeze, and no effort must be spared to give light to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to assert the supremacy of Christ over Antichrist, and of the Revelation of God over the superstition of man. Mr. Corfield, the Society's Agent, feels more than ever that the light of God's Truth can alone dispel the darkness which has so long brooded over this unhappy country, and in that conviction he is content to labour in his high vocation, looking to God for guidance, and leaving the results in His hands. And he does this all the more cheerfully since, notwithstanding the hindrances which he has had to encounter through the disturbed state of the country, the excited condition of men's minds, and the heavy taxation which the war has entailed, he is able to report a considerable advance in the sales effected. These have amounted to the goodly number of 5,518 Bibles, 8,028 Testaments, and 40,999 Portions, being a total of 54,545 copies, as against 50,704 in the previous year. In addition to this, 2,748 have been distributed as free gifts, and 3,000 have been forwarded to London, making the total issues from the Depot at Madrid 60,293. Fourteen colporteurs have been employed on an average during the whole year who have succeeded in putting into circulation 35,679 copies, consisting of 3,344 Bibles, 5,071 Testaments, and 27,264 Portions. Such a record of work during a period of great trial must be considered most encouraging, and be suggestive of gratitude and praise to the Giver of all good, the more so as the increase in the circulation has extended not only to the smaller Portions, but to Bibles and Testaments. Of the extent of the blessing conferred by such an instrumentality as your Society employs, it is impossible to form any adequate conception, but occasionally evidence crops up which shews that God is working surely, if in secret, and that the good seed has lost none of its vitality. To this effect is a letter lately received from the Rev. J. Viliesid, of Xerez, who in sending a contribution to the Bible Society from his congregation, chiefly composed of vineyard labourers, illustrates the blessedness of the work in which it is engaged by the following anecdote :—

Often and often we remember your Society at our prayer meetings, and ask God to bless its work. The cheap Bible is a great boon to this country, which so long has been sunk in superstition and spiritual darkness. Some people doubt the advisableness of circulating the Scriptures among every class of people, and especially without notes. They say it is all very well to do so in Protestant countries, where every one knows what the book is about, and has it explained either at family worship, school, or Bible class, but what is the use of doing it in places where the majority of the people never heard of it, and have no one to explain it to them? To such objectors I would say what Philip said to Nathaniel "Come and see." The great truth, that the Bible is its own interpreter, is being daily confirmed by the facts we meet with in towns and villages, where no preacher's voice has yet been heard. Here is a remarkable case that came under my notice :—A few months ago a

field labourer from A——called on me; he announced himself as a brother in Jesus. After the usual salutations he told me he had just come to Xeres on foot, as work had been offered him on a farm for a few weeks, and hearing there was a Protestant Church and pastor in the town, called upon me to make the acquaintance of a brother in the faith. We at once entered into a religious conversation, and he surprised me with the clear views he had on the all important question of man's salvation. I asked him to tell me under whose ministry he had sat. "Ministry," said he, "you are the first minister I have ever seen. I have never entered a Protestant Church in my life." "How is it you know these doctrines which are so contrary to what you have learnt from childhood and see practised daily in your village?" "I abandoned the errors of the Church of Rome, because I cannot find anything of what she teaches in God's Word. I saw that unless I was born again and regenerated, I could not be saved, and so I made it a matter of prayer, and now I know I am regenerated, I am in the light. Jesus promised His Spirit to those that asked Him, so I asked Him to enlighten me while reading His precious book, and I find my way very clear." "How did you get a Bible?" I asked. He told me that several years ago, a colporteur went to his village, and he bought a Testament from him, a small gilt London edition, and made it his special study and constant companion from that very day; he always carried it in his pocket. He showed me the book, and I can truly say a more thumbed one I have never seen; the pages were as brown as his sunburnt face. He told me that since he has become acquainted with the Truth, he has collected a small congregation to whom he reads it, and with whom he meets for prayer, one day in the house of one, and another day in that of another; that when he is labouring in the fields, the time that is allowed him in the middle of the day for a siesta, he employs in collecting around him his comrades, and reading to them out of his dear companion. He is a living concordance to the New Testament, for he can turn to any passage you may mention at once. I have no doubt he will be a blessing to his fellow-villagers.

To-day I have met with a similar case, in a carpenter from S——L.

These are a few instances out of many that will in time come to light. Let us therefore labour for the spreading of God's Word, and leave it to Him to bless it, for he will do so.

BARCELONA.—This district has continued in a very disturbed state during the whole year, rendering it quite impossible for the colporteur to penetrate into the interior of Catalonia, where the forces of Don Carlos were entrenched. There is, however, a great deal of active Christian work carried on in the city of Barcelona, which is the second in Spain, and, in commercial enterprise, excels the capital. The colporteur has taken advantage of this to push his sales, and has extended his journeys along the Mediterranean coast to Tarragona. He is an enterprising man, and has had considerable experience, among the records of which the following anecdote has a place:—

Some five years ago (during the first republican troubles) he, with another colporteur, paid a visit to a town some hours distant from Barcelona. On entering the place, they met with a man who was not indisposed to listen to their appeal to buy a book, becoming afterwards quite friendly in offering them his house and services, where they met with pleasant success. It seems that some three weeks previous to this interview, the man in question (a red hot republican) had nearly forfeited his life, he having been captured by the Government forces, with two others, who were to be shot for rebellion. The three men were actually brought out for execution, and his two companions were really shot, but his own life was spared, at the last moment, by the commanding officer, on the plea of his large family. Some of our colporteurs, meeting with this individual, became instrumental in showing him his past danger, and invited him, all the more earnestly, to be reconciled to God. He was much impressed and edified, and to-day this very man is a leading individual in the town, and has filled the office of alcalde. His house is always

open for the visits of our colporteurs, and, ever since the period named, he has been a member of one of the evangelical churches in Barcelona, where his children are regularly baptised.

BURGOS AND OVIEDO.—Three colporteurs are employed in this district, which is situated to the north-west. It was here that the authorities resorted to the extreme measure of imprisoning a man found guilty of the crime of offering to his fellow-countrymen the Word of God. The indignity of the punishment, however, was more than compensated by the testimony which the colporteur was able to bear, both in the prison and elsewhere, to the love of Christ for sinners, and to the power of Divine Truth to sustain and comfort the soul in the hour of affliction. One of the three colporteurs above mentioned thus records his experience :—

On the 26th Jan., I reached Orense, after a tiring journey in snow, rain and cold, but God takes care of His people. I began my mission at once in the capital, and in a short time sold thirty-one Bibles, besides some Portions of the Scriptures. I also went to the surrounding districts, where I met with complete nests of priests and students, who prevented the people from buying, with determined opposition. In one of these towns (Alvarez) I was detained by the Civil Guard, at the instigation of the priests, but God brought to nought their designs, and I was allowed to depart. In this place (Carabalino), from whence I am now writing you, I have met with extraordinary success, having sold twenty-five Bibles besides Testaments and Portions. God has given to us his rich blessing. Pray much that the seed sown may win souls to Christ. I must confess to you that I suffer very much, but I rejoice much, as well. After selling all the Bibles I had with me, five gentlemen of the place called at my lodgings to buy each a Bible, and gave me their names. Seeing their earnestness, I set off to draw a supply from my stock at a distance. Obtaining a horse, I started in the direction I wanted, which took me two days, with rain and wind, before I returned, when these good people purchased of me seven copies of my large Bible, which they were delighted to possess.

Another, writing from the same district, thus describes his feelings and his work :

Day after day I get much contentment to see how the Word of God is received. God blesses us, and I meet with many now who stand up in defence of the Gospel ; they are not Christians in the truest sense, but their minds are really awakened. In a house where I sold a Bible, I was invited to see a poor sick woman, to whom I was readily introduced by an anxious son. I asked her if she believed in God, to which she assented, and to which I added my own gratification, for I wished to lead her to His own Word, out of which I read some portions ; she appeared interested, as well as others who were present. The son then said, "What think you, mother, of the words read by this man ? are they not different to anything else we have ever heard ? The Book says, God gives His grace gratuitously, and you have had to pay to the priest more than 2,000 reales since the death of my father, which money was ours and not the priest's. I see clearly, from what the man has read, that nobody can do any direct good for our souls, but we ourselves must seek the light through God Himself, which He never sells to anybody." The old lady was not altogether unmoved, and she bought of me a Gospel to give to a little girl who was present.

Mr. Corfield, who has spent a part of the summer in England, has now returned to his Agency ; and his first letter reports

A REVIVAL OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

" Things look very gloomy here. Last week I noticed in the public prints that the Governor of Mahon had prohibited the publication in his district of any notices connected with Protestant worship, schools, &c. The Liberal

papers here denounced this as unfair, and quite contrary to the spirit of Article 11. of the constitution, defending us as well as they were able. The Ministerial papers, however, say that it comes within the spirit of the Article, and that the Government (in the person of the Governor) have acted constitutionally.

"To-day the Governor of this Province has issued an order to have removed from every Protestant chapel any outside sign giving notice of the worship within, which embraces sundry buildings where evangelical services have long been held. Not content with this, the same Commissioner from the Governor has requested us to remove our street signs, which we are this moment covering over with a coat of black paint. Our Bibles, exposed in the shop windows, I do not remove, as nothing to that effect was notified. We hardly see what next will transpire. Only last week, our colporteur in Cadiz was brought up before the Civil Authorities, by the denouncement of three priests, for selling our books in the public market. After hearing the case, our colporteur was eventually dismissed, and leave was given him to go on as usual.

"This is very annoying, but we wait patiently the issue of events; should our worst fears be realized, we shall still wait patiently upon Him who can overrule every event for the extension of His kingdom."

Since the above was written, the Madrid authorities have sent round by night further to obliterate the signs of the Depot, and have ordered the removal of all copies of the Scriptures from the window. The Committee have unanimously resolved to bring the whole subject, through their noble President, under the attention of Lord Derby, with a view to an effectual check being placed on the intolerance of the Spanish Government.

PORTUGAL.

The winter, which in this country is usually so mild that labour in the fields and orchards is never interrupted, has during the past year been so severe as to kill much cattle, and be the cause of great distress among the peasant population. The warm sun of their genial climate is a necessary adjunct to their scanty clothing, and the exchange of this for frost and snow has found them so unprepared to sustain the rigour of a cold and adverse season, that many of them have endured privations of no ordinary kind, and their means have barely sufficed for the support of life. In the Algarve, famine has been so imminent as to call for the help of government, which has sent supplies of food and seed so as to insure at least a partial crop during the coming harvest. Under these circumstances the colporteurs have necessarily met with much discouragement, and the question has often been put to them, "How can you expect us to purchase books when we have not money enough even to buy bread?" Nor have they themselves been altogether free from the suffering they have seen around them. Exposure to cold, and the rough fare which has been their portion, have told upon the constitution of several, and laid them up for a longer or shorter period. Notwithstanding, however, all these drawbacks, the circulation of the past year has been maintained nearly at the same level as that of 1874. The sales by colportage have amounted to 806 Bibles, 2,438 New Testaments, and 1,461 Portions, whilst from the Depot, 69 Bibles, 228 Testaments, and 74 Portions have been distributed, giving a total of 5,076 volumes. The result of the gradual diffusion of the Word of God in a country which had long been kept in darkness may not be inmediately apparent, but your Agent is of opinion that a great work is progressing in Portugal, which, if maintained, will go far towards undermining the foundations of Popery and superstition. Schools are springing up in various quarters, in which the Scriptures are taught in their simplicity by God-fearing men, and public worship on the Lord's day and during the

week is attracting many who hitherto have been strangers to its blessing. This result has been attributed by the Patriarch of Lisbon to the action of your Society, which he accuses of spending thousands a year in corrupting the people. One of the papers accused of being in league with the Bible Society does not hesitate openly to denounce the profligacy of the Great Apostacy, and then adds, "The morality which we preach is less latitudinarian than that of the Catholics, with their indulgences and penances, but it is certainly more evangelical and harmonizes strictly with that inculcated in the Book sold by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which, as our readers know, contains the teachings of our Saviour. Under the influence of its Christian teaching, great and powerful nations such as England and Prussia advance and flourish, whilst those which, like Portugal and Spain, denounce the Book as false, remain far behind in the development of all civilization. The difference is not in the Book, which is the same in every land, but in the retention or renunciation of Romish priestcraft."

A colporteur named Manoel Vieira, is described as full of hope, in consequence of the impression which he finds prevailing among the people that image worship is a delusion, and that freedom of worship must be maintained. The facility of locomotion which railways afford is a great means of enlightening many, as their interchange of thought and feeling with others at a distance from home renders them more independent of their priests. Vieira is the colporteur who not long since was arrested and imprisoned in Braga, so that Mr. Tugman had to appeal to the authorities at Lisbon in his behalf. The administrator, when questioned on the subject, stated that he had been merely invited to the guard-house lest he should get into trouble, and that when it was discovered that he was a respectable man, exercising a lawful calling, he was allowed to go free. This was not exactly a true version of the occurrence, but Mr. Tugman having done what he thought was necessary for the protection of his colporteur, was unwilling to press the matter further against those who had been the means of his illegal detention. Colporteur Figueiredo, relates an incident which occurred to him, which shews that notwithstanding prejudices which have been the growth of ages, there is a secret longing in many hearts for acquaintance with the Word of God, and that the force of conscience at times overcomes all hindrances:—

"A lady and a little boy were coming out one morning early to go to the shore for their bath, and I accosted her, offering a Bible. She asked me what the book was. I told her it was the Bible, would she look at it! "Ah! the Bible; wait till I call Senhor Padre; he must see what it is." (It turned out that Senhor Padre was her domestic chaplain.) She is the Baroness V——. "Padre," she said, "look at this book." He took it, and after looking over it for a short time, said, "Ah, your Excellency, it is one of those false Bibles they are selling so many of now. It is so cheap that it must be spurious." They returned me my book and went their way, but there was nothing unkindly in their refusal, so after having strolled about I followed the Senhora on her return from the bath, and asked if she would not buy the good book for her son to read out of; and after a little hesitation she bought it, and giving it to the lad said, 'You must not show it to the Padre.'

"On the following day I met the Padre, and asked him why he said the book was bad. 'Surely you,' I said, 'do not not deny God's sacred Word. Examine it for yourself, and I am sure you will not think so.' 'What makes you sell this book so cheap? Don't you know our people are prohibited from reading the Bible for themselves? Here, take the money, it is very cheap;' and, Figueiredo says in conclusion, he took the Book as if he had been buying contraband goods, and said, 'Say nothing,' meaning by this that I was not to let out that he had bought the book he had condemned."

Mr. Tugman in closing his report, thus reviews the field of his operations:—

"On taking a final glance over the foregoing, and from what I have observed and know, it is very clear to me that the desire to read the Scriptures and to arrive at the Truth as it is revealed in the Bible, has not diminished

in Portugal ; many elements are at work that will in the future contribute materially to the increased circulation of the Scriptures in this country. And not the least may be said to be the clergy themselves, who by their intolerance and their wilful opposition to the reading of the Bible, tend to awaken an interest in the Book, and lead the people to read for themselves. It is markedly so with Lisbon, where many schools and meeting-places in which the Bible is read, taught and explained, have sprung up, although they are conducted very quietly and unostentatiously. How slow the growth of grace and conviction to the masses may be, we had best leave to Him who does all things well in His own good time. But when the time shall arrive, and the glorious change take place from darkness to light, from restrained to free and open worship of God, purified from idolatrous superstition and fanaticism, the British and Foreign Bible Society will be found to have no small share, under God's guidance and blessing, in bringing about so glorious a consummation."

SYRIA AND PALESTINE.

SYRIA.—The circulation of the Scriptures in this important province has consisted of 1,022 copies, of which 280 have been sold by the colporteur Risq Butros, 587 from the depots at Beyrout and Damascus, and the remainder by friends. This is less by 355 than last year, but the severity of the winter, and the prevalence of cholera, have had their influence in arresting the progress of sales ; besides which "the goodly mountain of Lebanon" is still one of the strongholds of Popery. The Maronites are held in the most abject bondage, and their priests do not hesitate to have recourse to violence to maintain their usurped dominion. Still there is hope that the true light is beginning to shine, and is penetrating some of the fastnesses of popish darkness. With reference to this, Dr. Thomson observes :—

At the very time of writing these sentences, your agent cheerfully complied with a request from Rev. Dr. Jessop, of the American Mission, at Beyrout, for a grant of 40 Arabic Bibles and 10 copies of the Four Gospels, to meet the new-born thirst for the Word of God that had sprung up among some two or three hundred of the inhabitants of Wady Shehroor, who had declared themselves Protestants. As Dr. Jessop does not give any account of how this movement originated, I am led to infer that it was by the operation of ordinary evangelistic efforts, though, very probably, some accident, as we are not to call such things, may have precipitated matters, and brought the people to a decision. It is earnestly to be hoped that this may be but the beginning of a thirst for the Word of God that shall spread over every hill and valley of Lebanon, and not only awake the people to stand for truth and liberty, but bring them to the Son, who alone can make them "free indeed."

PALESTINE.—The Scriptures circulated in this district during the year have reached a total of 1,136 copies, of which 825 have been sold from the depots of Jerusalem and Nazareth, and the rest by colportage and other agencies. The Rev. F. A. Klei still continues his kind services by superintending the depot at Jerusalem, whilst Dr. Vartan, of the Edinburgh Medical Mission, tenders his good offices for the same purpose at Nazareth. Colportage is, however, very difficult, and the fact that only about three or four per cent. of the population can read is a sufficient reason for this, if no other existed. That your Agent is nevertheless not daunted by such difficulties, but has faith in the promises of God concerning this interesting country, is evident from the following observations :—

Though the people of Israel supply but a small fraction of the present inhabitants of the Holy Land, the Providence of God has linked inseparably together His People, His Land, and His Book, so that they form together a threefold cord of evidence, which unbelief indeed may reject, but which no device of the enemy can destroy. The cities have been wasted, without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land has been utterly desolate

And the Lord has removed men far away, and there has been and still is, a great forsaking in the midst of the land. "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."

Such were the visible and tangible limits of the Divine rejection of both people and land, which was to run parallel with the infinitely more terrible withdrawal from the people of his enlightening and converting Spirit. Let us hope and trust that, as the land seems now to be rising from that lowest depth of desolation, so the people too are emerging from the long and dreary night of unbelief and ignorance, which many seem almost to regard as their normal condition, instead of being merely the "small moment" during which the Lord forsook them. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

EGYPT.

The change from Palestine to Egypt is a very striking one. It is from an empty to a populous land, from one barren and waste to one fertile and highly cultivated, from one sunk in ignorance to one where education is encouraged by the government and is making gratifying progress, from one where commerce is almost unknown to one whose commerce extends to nearly every country in Europe, from one of political weakness and tyranny to one where a large amount of liberty and even-handed justice is enjoyed. True it is that reformation has still an ample field for the development of its resources, yet it cannot be denied that the progress made within the last thirty years possesses a wonderful interest, and is full of hopeful encouragement.

OSIOUT.—The accounts furnished by the Rev. Dr. Hogg of missionary operations at this station, leave no room to doubt that a deep interest in Divine Truth exists among the population both Christian and Moslem within a wide circumference round this centre.

His report is chiefly occupied with an incident that produced a great sensation at Osioot, though it occurred during his absence. This was the visit of Sheikh Rufa'el, agent of the Sherreef of Mecca. He was then residing at Minieh, and had brought a reference Bible and many controversial books, including a translation of a summary of "Horne's Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," on the one hand, and the *Izhar-el-Hakk*, a reply published at Constantinople to the *Mizun-el-Hakk* written by Dr. Pfander. He was manifestly of a sceptical turn of mind, appreciating far more difficulties, real or imaginary, than those great palpable evidences of the truth of the sacred history, which carry conviction to every honest inquirer. In short, he was a mere Deist, with a mind full of negations, believing neither the Old nor the New Testament, nor the Koran, though a professing Moslem, and finding no rest for the sole of his foot—no truth upon which he could rely for comfort. Impelled by this uneasiness, he paid a visit of five days to Osioot, which he spent in discussions with Copts and Protestants. He proved the Coptic and other churches to have corrupted Christianity by the traditions of the fathers, and to have quite lost sight of its true character and teaching; and displayed at the same time such an acquaintance with the Bible, from which he quoted numerous passages by heart, as quite put to the blush the Coptic priests and officials. The latter could not answer a word, and were in many cases ignorant of the existence of the passages quoted. They pleaded in excuse that they were so busied with their duties that they had no time for study; but he retorted that they had more than he, for he was factor for 6,000 acres, and was responsible for every account connected with them. Then, changing sides, he adduced the objections to the Bible contained in the *Izhar-el-Hakk*, as for example, that the Old Testament had been lost till found by Hilkiah; that a sure proof of corruption was the fact that it ascribed wicked actions to

prophets and holy men ; that of 72 different Gospels, the Council of Constantinople had rejected all but four ; and that while rejecting many Epistles as spurious, they had retained some still against which there were suspicions.

Upon this, one of the native Protestants thought it time to carry the war into the enemy's camp, and propounded several serious objections to the Koran. But this was touching him on a sore point : he begged to be excused from answering ; said he never had any controversy with Protestants, as he acknowledged theirs to be the best form of Christianity ; and, with a triple oath, declared the evangelical faith to be that contained in the Bible. He was then asked, " Don't you then admit the Bible to be a Divine revelation, and its message to be the only guide to salvation." but here it was plain that his studies, while giving him no mean conceptions, such as the natural heart can attain to, of Divine Truth, had utterly failed to produce the conviction that satisfies the intellect, far less the faith that saves the soul. Testimony was then adduced from the Koran as to the sinfulness of Abraham and David, as also its account of the fall, with the striking homage it there pays to the Lord Jesus, declaring that all *womb-born are touched by satan, Jesus alone excepted, and that while all sinners are subject to Satan, Christ is pure and free.*

Much more was adduced on this subject, till at last the Sheikh said, " Don't discuss with me from the Koran, but only from the Bible ;" and when this was objected to as unfair by his opponent and others, he begged that they might have no further discussion ; promising, however, that he would attack the errors of every bigoted Copt and black-turbaned Kummus he met with. Before he left, he said he had come to the conclusion that the prophets were fallible in act, but infallible in their teaching ; and was informed that this was the view held also by Christians. One cannot but feel a deep interest in such a man, and pray and hope that he may be brought to the truth as it is in Jesus.

WORK AMONG THE SERVIAN WOUNDED.

The following interesting news from the seat of war is taken from the October number of the *Bible Society Reporter* :—

The following extracts from the correspondence of Mr Millard will show the steps that have been taken by him, as the Society's Agent for Servia, to carry out the instructions of the Committee, and render active aid to the sufferers.

TO FOLLOW THE ARMY IMPRACTICABLE.

" As the eye of the Christian and the philanthropist is now resting with pity on the barbarous war that is raging between Turkey and Servia, the friends of the Bible Society will probably be asking whether this Society is able to do anything at the seat of war. The nations may not yet be ready for the golden state, when ' they shall not learn war any more,' but something may perhaps be done to soften its horrors and alleviate its sufferings. Not forgetful of this, I from the beginning gave our agents the necessary instructions. To follow the Servian army soon proved impracticable, the commanders-in-chief peremptorily denying access to any strangers. We had therefore to await the necessary and awful consequences of war, and the wounded and the sick soon made their appearance. The Government, as a rule, kindly gave us access to these, and, to meet special demands, our colporteur Lichtenberger was authorized to sell New Testaments at a very greatly reduced rate, and to distribute gospels and other Scripture Portions gratuitously to such as were able to read."

WORK IN THE HOSPITALS AT BELGRADE AND PAZUA.

" In Belgrade, the capital of Servia, the Academy was converted into a hospital, and permission was granted to go from room to room. The first

poor fellow, both of whose hands had been badly injured, gave us considerable encouragement in this new and sad work by the delight with which he accepted a copy of the Gospels. On this occasion 42 portions were freely distributed, and 7 New Testaments sold. A young Hungarian, whose leg had been hit by a ball, purchased a Testament with evident delight, and afterwards asked us to get him a Hebrew Bible, telling us that he was a Jew. At the Military Hospital the Director refused admittance; but at the Asylum, which has also been turned into a hospital, one of the attendants went from ward to ward with our colporteur, recommending our books in the following words: 'This man has been sent by the English Bible Society, which offers, to everyone that can read, a copy of the Gospels gratis, and those that wish to have a larger book can have one for a very small sum. These books are very cheap; and moreover, my friends, I tell you these books are the best in the world.' Twelve Portions were distributed and two Testaments sold. Some, however, could not be prevailed upon to accept a copy, not even as a present.

"Arriving at Pazua, it was too late that day to go into all the rooms; but one of the wounded, having heard of the colporteur's arrival, asked the nurse to go out and get a copy at once. One of the wards was filled with mortally wounded soldiers, but none of them could read. However, the nurse requested the colporteur to leave a copy, offering her services to read to them.

"Returning to Belgrade, another visit was paid to the Academy, where the numbers had meanwhile increased. This time the colporteur was not allowed to enter the rooms, on the plea that it would be too fatiguing to the patients. But the offer was freely made to distribute copies, and 60 Portions were asked and left for the purpose."

LETTER FROM THE COLPORTEUR.

'In his last letter our valuable and intelligent colporteur writes:—

'I have just received your letter of the 4th inst. announcing the arrival of Dr. Laseron, but he has not yet called on me. Meanwhile I hold myself prepared, in obedience to your instructions, to supply him with copies of the Scriptures as required by him. I am very glad that England is going to do something for our poor sick and wounded ones. I frequently visit them, and my heart is moved to witness the outward and inward wretchedness of their state. I often go home very sad, thinking of what I might do to help them. But, of course, I can do but little; but at least I am permitted, in daily petitions, to bring these suffering ones before the throne of grace.'

"You see we are on the spot, and doing what we can. It is a sad and mournful work, and what we see and hear fills our hearts with a fresh desire that the time may soon come, promised in the Scriptures, when 'violence shall no more be heard in the land, nor wasting and destruction within our borders.'"

A day or two after this Dr. Laseron called at the Vienna depôt; and acting upon the wish of the Committee, Mr. Millard supplied him with 8,000 or 9,000 Servian Portions. The next communication from the latter is dated the 23rd August.

NO WASTE.

"I have already given you some account of what we are attempting among the sick and the wounded in Servia. I believe our well-tried and faithful colporteur, Lichtenberger, has done all that could at the time be done, in freely offering Scripture Portions to all such as were able to read and willing to accept them. He certainly is too sober and conscientious to allow of any waste by scattering books recklessly; and it goes to one's heart to see the wild ways in which some people fling copies away, probably just to be able to say that so many tens of thousands are gone. *Gone indeed, but not where they ought to go.* However, though the work thereby suffers generally, I only mention this in a passing way. The Bible Society needs not have recourse to such small means to court the favour of the public."

YET NO STINT.

"While instructing Lichtenberger to do things judiciously, every encouragement has been given him to be liberal, and he has been told to err on the side of generosity rather than otherwise.

"It is also probable that, as the effects of the sad war extend, and when English surgeons and nurses open doors now closed, his dissemination will largely increase; and you are aware that I am also supplying Dr. Laseron's friends.

"Personal supervision may perhaps, however, increase the Society's usefulness. I regret that I cannot consistently go myself for the present. God has given me another sick-bed to watch. For the last fortnight my wife has been very far from well; and she is still confined to her bed. Until I see what turn things will take, I cannot with propriety leave her. But I have asked Mr. Victor to go down the river without delay; and he knows Servia well. If necessary and practicable, I will follow him shortly."

On the Turkish side, the difficulties are almost insuperable. Dr. Thomson says:—

"The disturbed state of the country is such that the Society's most devoted and trusty men are quite unable to travel in the provinces adjoining the seat of war. Generally speaking, the depression of trade and the poverty of the people are such that scarce anyone will think of buying books: they need bread.

"I have thought much and consulted with my friends as to whether the Society can offer any aid now, such as it has often given to contending armies; but there seems nothing that we can do. The Turks make it, to a large extent, a holy war; and hence the attempt to circulate the Bible, or any part of it, among the troops cannot be thought of for a moment. Of course, we have no access from Turkey to Servia, Montenegro, or the Herzegovina; but even if we had, our colporteurs, if they attempted going among the enemy, would be shot as spies on their return. The only thing that seems possible is a judicious distribution, perhaps at Belgrade and Ragusa, though even that might cause the Turkish Government to regard us with suspicion, and circumscribe our liberty. As to providing with Scriptures the poor villagers, who have lost their all, I heartily thank the Committee for the permission they have given me to meet such cases; but I must make minute inquiries before I take any steps, and certainly, without the sanction of the Government, such a proceeding would at present be dangerous.

"But what can be done I hope to do, and may find it desirable to visit personally the districts around Philippopolis and Tatar Bazardjik."

THE BIBLE IN SERVIA.

"The more we labour, the more the labour seems to increase. I roughly estimate the wounded to be not under thirty or forty thousand. The hospitals we have thus far visited are crammed, and the slightly disabled men are not included in the above number, for these are in their own homes and come for medical advice to the nearest station.

"We were greatly encouraged at Aranđewac. A large hospital has been arranged in the localities of the neighbouring watering place of Kiselaroda, under the personal superintendence of Princess Caitowska. Our request to be permitted to distribute our Scriptures among the patients met with a very warm response. The Princess told us it had been her wish to have a supply of Servian Scriptures from our Odessa depot, but she had met with only a single copy there, so we came like very angels. By her request another lady, a baroness, whose name I did not catch, went with us from bed to bed, and after we had gone our round, she begged us to leave with her a further supply for later arrivals. From the conversation I had with these ladies I feel convinced that nothing but the love of Christ has brought them hither.

"The day before I last left Belgrade I succeeded in seeing the very busy and active Dr. Laseron. I met him in the storeroom of his hospital, through

which he was just showing some Servian gentlemen. When I entered, they were standing before a pile of New Testaments and Gospel portions which the Doctor had received from Vienna, and my heart leapt within me when I heard him say, in his own energetic way, "We want to bring the people life, and life is Christ!" He told the gentlemen with what pleasure the people read the New Testament, and he informed me afterwards that he had sent a man down to the frontiers to disseminate the Scriptures among the soldiers, and several thousand copies had thus been circulated.

"I am sure," says Mr. Victor, one of our agents, "our work is not in vain here, and that in the midst of all the bustle of war the Lord is doing his own work of peace in many a soul. It is a mercy not to be slightly named that so many are willing to listen to the message of mercy, and to lift up the eye to Him whose blessed name I have been permitted to whisper into the ear of many mortally wounded."

THE BIBLE IN THE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION.

The "Book of books," has had a prominent place in the Exhibition, as was eminently proper, for it has done more than all other books together to create the civilization and awake the inventive faculties which have made such an Exhibition possible.

Near the south-eastern corner of the Main Building may be found the exhibit of the American Book-trade Association, beautifully arranged in a tasteful, two-storied structure (of which we may speak again), 117 feet in length by 34 in depth. In the centre of this structure, having the best position and in an artistically beautiful case, is one of the most interesting exhibits in the whole Exhibition—the exhibit of God's holy word. As we approach, we read the following sentences in large gilt letters: "American Bible Society, instituted 1816." "The Bible in 200 languages." The cases are the exhibit of the American Bible Society, but it has associated with its own the publications of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which it represents in this country. The case is made of ash, in hard finish, and shows the books in all its four sides. It contains the Scriptures in nearly all the languages in which the word of God has been circulated since the work of publishing and distributing the Bible began. One entire compartment is devoted to specimen copies of the American Society's own issues in various styles of binding.

In contrast with this, another part of the case contains a valuable collection of printed Bibles, illustrating the work of four preceding centuries. In this last compartment we may single out of the many for special mention the "four century" Bible, printed in Venice in 1476, exactly four centuries ago; a Douay Bible of 1610; "John Milton's Bible," a small old volume, said to have belonged to the poet, a "fac-simile of the first Scriptures printed in the English language by Tyndale, 1525," in heavy black letter; a "King James' Bible" of 1611; the "Matthews Bible of John Rogers," 1549; and a copy of "The first English Bible printed in America." There are also several other early American Bibles. Then there are copies of the Bible in raised letters for the blind. One shelf is filled with a series of bilingual volumes, three shelves are devoted to the languages of Europe, one to those of Africa, three to those of Asia, one of the latter being filled with specimens of the versions prepared and printed in the dialects of China. The Scriptures in the languages peculiar to the Islands of the Pacific fill one shelf, and on another is a series of translations made for the American aborigines. Men with eyes in their heads and hearts in their bosoms cannot fail, as they examine these impressive exhibits, to appreciate as they never did before, the extent and heavenly benevolence of the work in which this noble Society is engaged.

Away from the Main Building, a little to the southward of the Horticultural Hall and nearer still to "The Dairy," is a neat pavilion, bearing upon its front a large sign on which one may read, "Bibles in one hundred Languages." It is the pavilion of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, auxiliary to the American Bible Society, and was erected by special contributions from a

few friends of the Bible. Its sign attracts to the place not only the lovers of the Bible, but many who seldom read its pages. The Centennial Commission has made for it the exceptional concession of requiring no commission or other fees for the sale of Bibles. The polite attendant in charge informed us that not only is the Bible found here in one hundred languages, but in one hundred and twenty, and that including translations into various dialects of the same language, the actual number of versions is one hundred and sixty-four. Of the Bible entire and parts of Bibles there have been sold in the pavilion about 8,000 copies. All sales are made at the bare cost of production. Next to the English, the largest number of copies sold have been in the French, Swedish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Latin tongues. Here is also to be found the new Centennial edition of the Bible in neat 16mo, in various styles, at seventy-five cents and upward, an excellent memento of a visit to the Exposition for the visitor to carry home. The American Bible Society has also issued a neat pamphlet, giving sample texts in 164 languages with information as to the Society's work, for gratuitous distribution. Or these, about 10,000 copies have been distributed in this pavilion. It possesses great interest, as affording opportunity for a comparison of the aspects of so many printed languages.

The Bible exhibit was admirably conceived and its carrying out is worthy of all praise. In the midst of this great gathering from near and from far, the blessed word of God is brought within reach of all, and every man from whatever quarter of the world he may come, has it in his own power to read in his own tongue of the wonderful works of God.—*Correspondence N. Y. Observer.*

Philadelphia, Sept. 18th. 1876.

THE BIBLE AT THE EXHIBITION AT KIYOTA, JAPAN.

The Exhibition at *Kiyota* closed during the last days of June. Our Bible stand effected all that could have been expected of it, though there may not be anything very striking to report. Several of the students in the American Board's Mission School took turns in attending to it, and did good service by drawing attention and answering questions. It is estimated that over 600 persons showed—of course in different degrees and from different motives—an interest in the stand; and one individual became so interested that he followed the matter up, and finally invited Mr. Davis to expound the new faith in his own house. Who can tell which shall prosper this or that!—*Am. B. S. Record.*

ABOU SELIM, OUR BLIND SYRIAN BIBLE READER.

“When the cholera broke out, in 1875, and people were dispersed from Beyrout, I asked the Lord to show me where to go. Then I was guided to go to Zachleh. Here I found a great many people who had fled from the disease who had very little religious knowledge, their trust being in the priests and the decrees of the Church. So I told them about the true way of salvation, and they listened readily, saying that from their clergy they never heard such things.

“Seeing that the Romanists put so much faith in St. Peter, I dwelt chiefly on his epistles, calling them *his keys*, of which they speak so much, and I showed them their true hindrances to salvation, saying that with their wine-cups always in their hands, their daggers or swords always ready, and their time always occupied in playing cards, how could they expect to have heaven opened to them? I visited much, also, among the women in their houses, and finding them incessantly calling on the Virgin in all their troubles, I tried especially to attract their thoughts to the sympathy and love of

CHRIST Himself, and on one occasion a sick woman, who had long been calling on the Virgin was persuaded by the story of the healing of Peter's wife's mother to seek help of the Lord Jesus. She shortly after recovered.

"There is a book-shop in the heart of the town, kept by a very good man. I used to go there every day, and as a great many people come there, I had many opportunities of speech. One day the judge came by, and was much interested in watching the blind reading. He said, 'I want to ask you a question, Can any man be saved, whatever his religion, if he be righteous and serve God?' I said, 'I cannot answer this question of myself, but St. Peter said, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him," but he does not stop there; he goes on to speak of "the Word preaching peace by Jesus Christ," so that we know that of whatever creed or nation a man may be, his safety depends on his believing in Jesus Christ.' Then the judge began to tell me of the trouble he had in his vocation. I read to him about Moses when the burden of the people was heavy upon him, and I showed him the different passages which speak of the duty of right and just judgment, and he began to grasp my hands and thank me with much emotion for the faithfulness of my words.

"I was speaking one day about the redemption of Christ when a man said, 'So you mean to say that all the thousands of people who have worshipped and honoured these images and pictures all these years are all wrong?' I answered, 'The words of Christ are our measure, "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." If you set up other rules and measurement you know your own business, but our rule and measure is the Bible.' The people greatly enjoyed this, and told the first speaker to read the Gospels and act according to his conscience.

"One day when I was talking, some of the people whispered to me that there were many rich men listening to me. One of these asked me, 'Why does God give to some much riches and to others poverty? Explain this yourself, and not from the Bible.' So I said, 'A father was once asked by his children to give them some apples. He bought some, and gave them to his eldest son to divide. The son divided one, and shut up the rest in a box. The children complained to their father, and when the box was opened the apples were rotten. Thus the Lord commits riches to one and another that they may do good to the poor, but if they keep all to themselves their riches will corrupt them, and the end will be that their talents will be taken away from them.'

"After remaining for two months at Zachleh, I went to Bekfayah for the last month. It is a large village, half Maronite and half Greek. At first they did not know that I was a Protestant, and when they found it out my landlord was very angry, and said that, had he known it, he would not have let the house to me. But his wife soothed him. In the Greek quarter I had several meetings, and they were very ready to listen and told how much they should like a school for their girls. The sheikh of this part came to me often, he told me that the Pasha had given orders for a road to be made there, and thus a way will be opened to the Gospel, and it will not be so difficult for the Frangies to come and teach the people.

"Every day I had my house full of people who visited me, and we had many meetings. I sold some Bibles to the mothers of children who are in the Protestant schools. At Zachleh, as there is a Bible shop, I had no opportunity of selling books."—*Missing Link Mag.*

THE BIBLE IN TURKISH HAREEMS.

"OH THAT ISHMAEL MIGHT LIVE BEFORE THEE." (Gen. xvii.)

Communicated by Mrs. Henry Smith.

The deepening interest in Turkey and the Eastern Question, culminating as it does in the Times of Refreshing, when Jerusalem shall be no longer

"trodden down of the Gentiles," makes me prayerfully urgent that every effort should be made, and no time be lost, to bring the promises and hopes of the Gospel before the Mohammedans of Syria. Many persons consider that their doom is fixed; that as the Mohammedans, like their great progenitor, Ishmael, have lived and conquered by the sword, they will also perish by the sword; but I have far more trust that the Sword of the Spirit, wielded by the hand of Faith and Love, will subdue them to the Saviour.

I have been so long intimately connected with Syria, and only recently returned for a very brief stay in England, that I feel that I can speak with some degree of confidence as to the hope that such efforts are likely to be availing, by the blessing of God; and I do believe it will be accomplished by the weak things of the world, and the things that are despised, even by the agency of women, and among the Moslem women by our Harem visitors and Bible-women, by our girls and infants' schools, and our Mothers' Meetings.

Our Mohammedan girls' school at Beyrout, numbering above 200—some of the very highest aristocracy of the land—is doing much to elevate the women and create among them a desire to hear and understand the Word of God. It is as yet a sealed book to them; but in many instances their thirst to receive the good tidings makes me intensely anxious to give them freely of the Water of Life. Let us at once resolve, by the Grace of God, to strengthen the hands of those faithful women who are labouring among them. In our British Syrian Schools we have an agency already to carry out and enlarge such a Mission. Let us not say *to-morrow* we will come over and help them, for ours may be but a brief working day before the Bridegroom comes, and the door is shut. We certainly need more schools for the Mohammedans, chiefly in Damascus, that great city of the False Prophet.

If it is given in love for the Master and with the prayer of faith, we know that even the widow's mite will accomplish more than the splendid donation without its blessing; but we need more than the *mite*, we need the offerings of the rich out of their abundance, whose basket and store are filled to overflowing.

But I will add no more and let the story of the Moslem Ladies "haply feeling after God," though as yet to them "the *unknown God*," speak for itself. They will surely find Him, for He is nigh unto all that call upon Him.

Gladly will I take charge of any fresh offerings, and, if the Lord will personally carry out the blessed designs which Christian hearts may be moved to make for these deeply interesting women. "Ask the English ladies to give us a school for our daughters."

MOSLEM LADIES THIRSTING FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

Report from a Harem Visitor.

We have had several visits from Moslem ladies bringing their daughters to see our school. On their arrival we were as usual reading the Scriptures before prayers, they very reverently repeated almost every word, and then said, "Indeed you are happy. God is much pleased with you in that you know how to read and pray. How much we should like to learn to pray, and to send our daughters to your schools, but it is too far from us, and they cannot come alone. Do ask the English ladies to give us a school in our own quarters, and many girls will come."

I will now tell you about our visits to the Mohammedan houses, and you will see how they are beginning to thirst for the Water of Life. I called on some ladies and found them gone to visit a bride, so their servant took me there. I found many with the bride. They received me with pleasure. After a little I asked them if they would like to hear me read to them. They all answered, "Please do; we will be very thankful, and why do you ask us; is there anybody who does not like to hear the Word of God?" So I took my small Testament from my pocket, and showed it to the bride, who handled it very reverently, kissed it, and put it on her head in token of honour to the

Word of God. She then returned it to me and asked me to read it. I opened it and read to them Matthew xiv., and then began to explain it. They all sat very quietly, and were very much interested, especially when they heard about the miracle of the five barley loaves and the two small fishes. I told them how Christ is almighty, and can do all things, and how He has given us an example for He prayed and gave thanks to teach us to do likewise, and when I went on to read how HE walked on the sea, and how Peter wanted to do the same, but being faithless began to sink and cried out, "Lord save me or I perish," all the ladies repeated together these words, "Lord save us or we perish," and when they heard that all who touched the hem of His garment were made whole, they all said, "Lord heal us from our diseases."

I told them that Christ is everywhere, and will hear all that call upon Him, and will save them from their sins, because He shed His blood for all men, and that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. So then I asked them if they had ever heard of the sufferings and death of Christ. They all answered, "Never, let us hear it." I said, "I am very sorry it is becoming late, and the sun is set, and it is not safe for a woman to be out alone." They begged me very much to stop a little longer. "We are not yet satisfied with your reading;" and the bride's sister-in-law said, "My heart burns to know how to read." So I promised to visit them again, or else I would send the Bible-woman to teach them.

I visited another Moslem house. There were nine women in the house, and after asking them many questions about their health and their children, I found out that every two wives belonged to one man, and one of them sorrowfully said, "It is very sad and difficult to have to live together in one house. Yesterday I had a great quarrel with her; indeed, I am astonished why a man likes to marry two, three, and four wives. Are not all women the same?" Another lady said, "It is better for a man to marry two wives, because if he is angry with one he will be at peace with the other." Another replied, "The Christian ways are better, because every woman has her own husband, and no one else a partner with her; but as to us Moslem women, one day the house belongs to us and to our children, and in a few days after we see we have a partner with us. It is very difficult indeed."

I then told them, "You must each be good and obedient to your husband, and pray to God to keep him from marrying the second wife." And one answered, "God will not hear me, for I am a sinful woman." And I said, "God will hear all our prayers. He knows every word before we speak it. You must love your husband and pray for him." She said, "Do you think it is because we do not love them that they marry again? I assure you we worship them; and if we should burn our ten fingers for them as they burn the candle, they still will marry again, because it is made right and lawful by the law so to do. A man may marry four wives, and as many more as he can buy with his money."

Then I asked, "Shall I read to you?" And they all said—

Read; we will be thankful to you."

So I read the 19th of St. Luke, about Zacchæus, who was very anxious to see Christ. How he went up into the sycamore tree, and Jesus, as He was the Son of God, and knew all things, looked up, and said, "Come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house." I said every one who is anxious and loves to see Christ and to know Him, He will surely come and reveal Himself to Her, for He knows the thoughts of every heart, and He loves us so much that He shed His precious blood for every one that believes on Him, and they all said,

"We do love your Jesus, but why don't you love our prophet Mohammed?" I said, "Because our Holy Book does not teach us to love him." They were much pleased with the reading, and begged me not to make it my last visit, but to come very often to read to them.

Again I visited another Moslem house, where I found five ladies sitting very quietly doing many kinds of pretty work. I asked, "Would they like

me to read a little?" They said, "Please do;" and they threw down the work and called to all their slaves and told one of them, "Go and wake my sister-in-law," because, she said, "she should be very angry if she wakes and hears that we have heard the words of the Testament without her." So then I read to them the 15th of St. Luke, and they were very much interested indeed. And when they heard that the elder brother was angry, and would not come in, they all were astonished, but two of them smote upon their faces and said, "How very singular that even brothers should be jealous of each other?" I said, "We learn from this story that God loves us and has pity on us; and He is quite ready and willing to forgive us all our sins and misdeeds if we really repent and humble ourselves before Him as this son did; "I am not worthy to be called thy son." And all the ladies looked up and said, "O God give us true repentance, and make us to be acceptable in Thy sight!" I said, "God will accept us for His dear Son's sake, for He shed His blood for all who believe on Him; and every one who believes on Him 'shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'" It was a very pleasing time we spent with them, and very difficult indeed to get away, for they said, "You came and gave us the taste of the good words of the Testament, and now you are going away. We are not yet satisfied with your reading."

After we left them, it seems that their relations and friends came to see them, and they told them, "There came to us two women, and one of them had a very pretty gilded book. She read to us out of it, and told us very sweet stories out of that book. O! you would have liked to hear the reading. They were very good and kind to us, and explained what we did not understand. They read to us the story of the lost sheep, and the lost pieces of money, and about the prodigal son; and they told us that God loves all who come to Him through His Son with true repentance." So these ladies again were very much interested, and anxious to see us and hear the reading of the Book; and they said, "Surely we will go ourselves and search out those women."

At last, on inquiry, they found the Blind School, and knocked at the door, and the blind teacher's wife came and opened the door, and was astonished to see four very respectable Moslem ladies, who asked—

"Are you the woman that went to our friend's house, you and another woman who read to them from a nice gilded book? They told us you read them such sweet stories." And the blind teacher's wife said—

"Yes; we are the persons." The Moslem ladies answered, "Why then did you pass us over; why did you not come to us; why did you not tell us the same stories you told our friends, about the one sheep that was lost?" And she answered—

"The next time we go out we will come and see you."

They said, "Please do; and bring your friend, and tell her to bring the book. Please promise you will come to us, and please write down our names, and the name of our house."

But I am sorry to say we could not visit these ladies that week. They were earnestly expecting us, and not seeing us, as we had promised, they came again on the following Sunday, and all their desire was to come into the English schools while we were at prayers, that they might hear the Testament. They found us coming out from the service, and we went with them into the school and stayed an hour there and read, and then they begged us to go with them to their house, and we went altogether, and they were many women assembled, and they asked to hear the words of the Testament. Surely God has opened the doors of their hearts, and made them inclined to hear His Word. Oh, they are truly very thirsty, and long to hear the Word. So you see how, by God's Providence, even the Moslems are willing to hear the Gospel of Christ. Truly the harvest is great; but the labourers are *very, very* few. May God provide more labourers for this harvest, because it is all ripe for the sickle, and the time is short. We hope and pray that we may soon have the pleasure of beholding your precious face here again. There are

so many labourers in England, but here in Syria we are so few. May God be with you and accompany you in all your undertakings, prospering the work of your hands, and may His blessing rest upon you always, and keep you from all dangers. *Amen.—Missing Link Mag.*

The following lines have been sent to us by Mr. Rothwell, one of the Society's zealous and tried working colporteurs.

THE FARMER AND THE COLPORTEUR.

1. " You're welcome, toilworn traveller ;
 Sit down and rest a while ;
 The roads are bad and you have passed
 O'er many a weary mile.
 Sit down and rest a while, and take
 That burden off your back ;
 You've goodly wares, no doubt for sale ;
 That seems a heavy pack."

2. " Yes, I've got wares to sell, my friend,
 And you shall see my store ;
 One jewel in that pack outshines
 The boasted Koh-i-noor.
 Golconda's diamonds, Oman's pearls,
 The gold of famed Peru,
 All pale before the priceless gems
 That I can bring to view."

3. " There lived a King, in times long past,
 In far-off eastern lands.
 He heaped up gold in sums untold
 And silver like the sands.
 No earthly King, before or since,
 Such wealth his own could call ;
 But I've the jewel in that pack
 He prized the most of all."

4. " The times are dangerous, good man,
 We've those within our land,
 To rob you of this magic wealth,
 Would hear a willing hand.
 The times are dangerous, I say,
 No arms I see you bear ;
 In speaking of these precious gems
 I pray take better care."

5. " Your caution's all in vain, kind sir,
 I've got these wares to sell,
 And how can I find customers
 Unless their worth I tell ?
 So as from house to house I pass,
 You hear my constant cry :
 Ho friends ! Behold my priceless pearls,
 Sell all things else and buy."

6. " But I'm a soldier too, my friend,
All ready armed for fight ;
I bear a trusty, well-tryed sword
All sharp, and keen, and bright.
A noble Roman bore it once
Thro' many a well-fought fray.
That's eighteen hundred years ago,
It's just as good to-day."
7. " I own, I'm quite surprised, good man,
You must possess some charm ;
To wield that sword of which you speak,
Requires a nervous arm ;
But you are getting old and grey,
Your sands of life run low,
Some mystery lies beneath your speech,
I pray you let me know."
8. " Sir, I'm a Bible Colporteur,
My Burden—God's own Word,—
What better weapon could I wield—
The Spirit's trenchant sword ?
My Captain is the Lord of Hosts,
Resistless in His might,
What cause have I for fear whilst He
Is foremost in the fight ?"
9. Then Hallelujah ! Sing the praise
Of our redeeming Lord,
Hosanna to the Prince of Peace,
Who saves us by His Word.
Spread wide the Word ! Raise high the song !
Till heaven's broad arches ring
With universal hymns of praise
To Christ, our Lord and King.

HE LOVED HIS MOTHER'S BIBLE.

The following incident is sent for publication in the *Record*, by a gentleman who heard it narrated at a children's meeting in the city not long ago :

Some years ago a small boy came into the office of a steamboat company in Albany N. Y., and seeing a gentleman busy writing, he took off his hat and approached him, waiting to be spoken to. "What do you want, boy?" soon said the gentleman. "I'm a poor boy, sir, and have walked much of the way from Canandaigua on my way to New York, to my aunt's ; my money is nearly all gone, and I have come to see if you won't please to send me in one of your steamers." "Have you run away?" "No, sir, my mother is dead, and I promised her I would go to my aunt in New York, sir, and I am going if I have to walk there." "What is in that bundle under your arm, that you hold so close?" "It is something I value much, sir, and I would sooner walk to New York, sir, and back again, sir, than part with it." "Let me see it." "You will give it to me again, sir, if I let you take it?" After unrolling it from a dirty cloth it proved to be a small Bible, which his dying mother had given him, with her blessing, on his promise to read it and go to his aunt. "Have you read it much?" "Yes, sir ; when tired and

hungry, I have often sat down by the roadside and read my mother's Bible, and it seemed to feed and rest me." "I will give you enough for it to pay your passage." "I cannot sell it sir, indeed I cannot, even if I have to walk to New York."

The kind gentlemen gave him a line to the captain to take the boy free to New York, and when there, to place him in the care of a policeman to find his aunt, and also to see that he went to a good school, and to follow him up to higher schools, and he would pay all his bills for schooling, books, etc. A short time since, at a great Sabbath School convention out West, one of the best addresses was made by that boy (now a man) who loved his Bible so.—*N. Y. Bible Society Record.*

RECEIPTS AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE, TORONTO, FROM
AUXILIARY AND BRANCH SOCIETIES, FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER
TO 31ST OCTOBER, 1876.

SEPTEMBER.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundry.
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Beachville Branch		4 75	4 75	
Tiverton do		30 00	30 00	
OCTOBER.				
Selkirk Branch	9 00			
Brighton do		13 67		
Harrington Branch	76			
South Cayuga do		47 50		(1) 2 50
Brussels (Mrs. E. Hayden)		5 00		
Kinlough Branch		2 65		
South Monaghan Branch	2 16			
Merritton do	7 90			
Woodbridge and Pinegrove Branch	13 00			
Port Hope do	89 20			
Napanee do	11 64	29 77		

(1) On Recorder account.

Special Notice to Treasurers of Branches.

The Bible Society year closes on the 31st day of March, but it is important that Branches should remit their funds as soon as they become available, and thus enable the Society to make early remittances to England.

PRICE OF THE "RECORDER."

From six copies upwards of the *Bible Society Recorder* are furnished gratuitously to each of the Branches. Extra numbers are furnished at the following rate per annum:—Single copies, 20 cents; ten copies to one address, \$1.50; over ten and under 50 copies, \$13 per hundred; any quantity over 50 copies, \$12 per hundred; in each case including postage.