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TORONTO, JANUARY, 1891.

#### TO THE OFFICERS OF BRANCHES.

The fiscal year of this Society terminates on the 31st March. Treasurers and Depositories of Branch Societies are earnestly requested to forward in good time to Mr. John Young, Depository, Bible House, Toronto, all funds in their hands, whether from *contributions* or *sales*, so as to be included in the revenue for this year.

The reports of Branches, subscription lists, etc., and any information concerning the decease of life members and directors, any change of officers or residence, or any other matter of importance, should also be forwarded to the Secretaries, so that the necessary corrections may be made, and that our Annual Report may be as complete as possible.

#### THE BIBLE SOCIETY AND ITS WORK.

SIR CHARLES AITCHISON'S SPEECH AT OXFORD.

In the work of a Society like this we stand at once upon the common ground of all Protestant Christendom. The Word of God in the vulgar tongue, in the language spoken and understood by the people, is our common heritage—a heritage very precious to Englishmen. Whatever be the differences which separate us into Churches and denominations, however varied our interpretations of particular passages of Holy Scripture, the Bible is yet the one broad foundation of the faith of all of us, the one common standard by which we try every creed and every Christian work, whether it be of God

or whether it be of man. And therefore all Christians can unite, and do indeed rejoice to unite, in spreading the pure Word of God, "without note and without comment," as the greatest missionary power in all the world.

What, indeed, could all our Churches do without it? What can a missionary do without the open Bible in the common tongue of the people to whom he is sent? A workman without his tools, a fisherman without his net, a soldier without his arms, is not more helpless than he. Therefore it is that the moment a missionary sets foot in a heathen country he proceeds at once to prepare to translate the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Even if he should never live to make a single convert the good he does is not interred with his bones. It survives for future generations; sometimes it even survives the race for whom it was undertaken. The first Bible ever printed in America was John Eliot's Mohican translation. The book remains, but the race is extinct, and Fennimore Cooper has written their elegy. In 1836 the tribe was represented by one hut, with four inmates of mixed blood.

What Jerome did through the Latin Vulgate, what Ulfilas did in the fourth century for the Goths of the Danube, that Christian missionaries and the Bible Society are doing every day for the peoples and nations and languages of the earth, not only making accessible to them God's message of mercy, but in some cases even giving them an alphabet, fixing their language by a written character, and laying the foundation of a literature.

A year ago a heroic band of missionaries went forth to West Africa. What are they doing at the present moment? Read the journal of the Soudan and Upper Niger Mission in this month's number of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, and you will find that the chief energies of all are concentrated on Scripture translations into Igbera and Hausa, and Nupé. And so it has ever been.

So it was with Robert Morrison, the first Englishman who mastered Chinese and gave the Protestant Bible to China; and the Conference that met this year at Shanghai—the same which has just sent home an appeal for a thousand missionaries for China—has unanimously resolved to reduce the multiplicity of versions in various dialects made since Morrison's time to one unified version, which, it is estimated, will bring the Scriptures within the immediate range of about two hundred millions of people.

So it was also with the first Protestant missionaries in India—with Ziegenbalg and Schultze, who, more than a century and a half ago, translated the Bible into Tamil and Hindustani, the first Protestant translations of the Bible made in any of the Indian languages.

So it was with Carey and his illustrious colleagues, who, in the first quarter of the present century, translated the Bible or parts of it into thirty-four of the languages of India. Before his death, William Carey had made seven translations of the entire Bible, and twenty-one translations of the New Testament into the languages of India. One of the most interesting sights in the Calcutta Exhibition of 1883 was Carey's translations lent from the College Library, at Serampore, and exhibited side by side with the revised versions, to which, in most instances, they gave birth.

And now the British and Foreign Bible Society, since its formation in 1804, has spent upwards of ten millions sterling in translating printing, and circulating the Scriptures. It has issued more than 123,000,000 of Bibles, Testaments, and Portions of Scripture from its depots, in more than 290 languages and dialects, many of which have been reduced to writing for the first time. In India alone the editions of the Scriptures, in whole or in part, which have been printed or published by the Society, exceed 9,250,000 in thirty-nine different languages, of which about 300,000 are copies of the entire Bible in eleven languages, about 700,000 are copies of the New Testament in seventeen different languages, and the remaining 8,250,000 are Portions of the Old and New Testaments.

What a magnificent work this is, even when regarded from the secular standpoint of literature and science! How stupendous, how sublime to the Christian when he reflects that each copy of these books contains the living Word of God, with all its limitless possibilities for the salvation of men! No nobler work could be done by any body of Christian men than that which is being done by the British and Foreign Bible Society in India. It is carried on in that country, as you are aware, by six auxiliaries; three in Upper India—at Calcutta, Allahabad, and Lahore; and three in Southern India—at Madras, Bombay, and Bangalore. The Bibles are sold at central depôts at these places, and are also distributed over the country through branch depositories, through missionary institutions, and by colporteurs.

No part of the work, perhaps, is of more importance or has deeper interest than that done by the Bible women. Five years ago the Bible Society offered annual grants to other Societies working in the East, in order to secure the more widespread diffusion of the Scriptures among Eastern women; and of these grants more than twenty Societies working in India have availed themselves. The importance of this work can hardly be over-rated. During last year the 314 Bible women, of whom 209 are employed in India, read the Scriptures every week to about 15,000 of their Eastern sisters, and distributed among them over 10,000 copies of the Scriptures, or Portions of the Scriptures. These women are to the work of the Bible Society what the Zenana missionary is to the Missionary Societies—penetrating where the ordinary missionary cannot go, and sowing the seed of the Word in fields otherwise inaccessible. That all this work is silently producing immeasurable moral and spiritual results it is not permitted us to doubt.

Everywhere in India in the present day new life is to be seen. We see it in the breakdown of the superstitions of centuries; we see it in the growth of new beliefs, in the formation of new religious societies, in the spread of education, in the demands for social and political reform, in schemes for the amelioration of the condition of women, and in a thousand ways, among which not least is the extraordinary growth of the Native Christian Church and the spread of Christian truth. In such a state of things, the dissemination even of good secular literature is invaluable as a civilizing and elevating agency. How much more the circulation of God's living Word of Truth. That Word is spirit and life. It is living seed which has within it a germinating force. "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise, night and day; and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."

In every Missionary Report you will find instances of this living, quickening, self-evidencing power of the Scriptures. Carey first published his Bengali New Testament in 1801. Seventeen years afterwards, when the mission extended to Dacca, there were found several villages of Hindu-born peasants who had given up idol-worship, were renowned for their truthfulness, and were seeking for a true teacher come from God. They traced their new faith to a much-worn book, kept in a wooden box, in one of their villages. No one could say whence it had come; all they knew was that they had possessed it for many years. It was Carey's first Bengali version of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And what happened only the other day at Akola? I had better give the story in Mr. Fuller's own words. He says: "Some time ago I was in one of the large towns in our district. In the evening, after a hard day's work, I sat down by the cart to rest, when three men came up to me, one of them falling prostrate at my feet after slipping a rupee into my hand. I raised him up gently, and enquired what he wanted. From his conversation I gleaned the following story: Eleven years ago a blacksmith in his village had bought a copy of the New Testament from some gentleman who was passing through. I could not learn who it was, and he and this farmer and another had been reading it all these years. Six years ago the Brahmins

became so enraged that he was held down forcibly and made to drink water in which a Brahman had dipped his toe. In all this time they had never met with a Christian. When I went through this part of the district two years ago he saw some of the books I had sold to others, and this day he met someone who had seen me and bought books, and he had dropped his work and had hurried in without delay, reaching me, as I have said, late that evening. His talk was a continual surprise to me. He seemed to know the New Testament thoroughly, compared the Pharisees to the Brahmins, and was very familiar with Paul's epistles. I went to his village the next morning, and they were very joyful and entertained us, saying our coming had given them great support. He bought a first book to learn to read. His knowledge of the Scriptures was the more remarkable, as he had only heard them read by the others. When they brought out the worn book, carefully wrapped in a cloth, I touched it with a feeling of reverence." And so in many other cases.

I suppose there is no one who has lived long in India and interested himself much in mission work who could not give similar instances from his own personal experience. For the Bible is now much studied in India, and is growingly appreciated every day. Peshab Chunder Mozamdar, the present leader of the advanced Brahmos, in a recent public lecture to native students at Lahore, recommended the Bible as the best book they could read, and the diligent study of Christ's precepts therein as the only way to attain purity of heart. In the large and important town of Islamabad, in Kashmir, we are told that most of the wealthy Muhammadans possess a copy of the Bible; many of them read it, and one native gentleman acknowledged that he was going through it for the eighth time, and liked it more and more. In the south of India we read of a juvenile society being formed in one of the colleges for the study of the Christian Scriptures, all the members of which are heathen high-caste lads. In Bengal we read of school boys choosing copies of the Bible for prizes, and begging that their knowledge of Scripture may be specially noted on their school certificates.

When the Rev. R. Bateman returned the other day to Narowal, the *elite* of the place gave him an address of welcome according to Indian fashion, and along with it, as the most appropriate gift they could select, a New Testament stamped with the municipal seal. In the Punjab, where, at the present moment, a most remarkable missionary movement is going on, the colportage sales have risen by one-half and added 15,000 to the issues of the previous year.

And so the leaven is working. Christianity, as someone has said, is in the air. The personality of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is impressing itself deeper and deeper upon the people. "You may deny His doctrine," said Keshab Chunder Sen to his countrymen, "you may even hate His name; but you cannot resist His influence." "In the midst of these crumbling systems of Hindu error," says Peshab Chunder Mozamdar, "in the midst of this self-righteous dogmatism and acrimonious controversy, in the midst of these cold spectral shadows of transition, secularism, and agnostic doubt, to me Christ has been like the meat and drink of my soul." But let us not be in a hurry to count conversions. They will all come in God's good time. Be it ours to labour patiently, prayerfully, hopefully. God is never in a hurry. "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient."

#### NOTICE.

The following numbers of the BIBLE SOCIETY RECORDER are required to complete sets, viz.: April, 1876; September, 1877; and all of the issues of 1878 and 1879. Secretaries of Branches, or any friends who may have spare copies of these dates, or of any of them, will confer a great favour by mailing a copy of each to JOHN YOUNG, Bible House, Toronto.

## THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN CHINA.

ADDRESS AT THE OPENING MEETING OF THE HELPERS' ASSOCIATION,  
OCTOBER 7, BY REV. WILLIAM WRIGHT, D.D.

We are friends of the Bible Society, because the Bible has been our friend. We aim at spreading it everywhere among others, because its message of peace has been a blessing to ourselves.

On the first page of that Divine Book, the first recorded words of God are: "Let there be light." It is the work of the Bible Society to carry out, in its own sphere, that first-recorded Divine command.

A cry for light from a little girl in Wales was the incident that led to the formation of the Bible Society. That cry was heard by Wilberforce, by Zachary Macaulay, by Granville Sharp, by Mills, by other good men, and from that beginning the light has spread to Wales, to China, to the world.

This century of ours is the century of organized philanthropic effort. That is its chief characteristic. Everywhere—in schools, in hospitals, in homes for the outcast—you see the desire to help and you see it organized. There is a deep feeling that there is much evil around us—that it should and that it may be lessened; that our obligation to our neighbour is not fully discharged by Oriental hospitality or mediæval doles; that neither the cup of cold water from the table of the sumptuous glutton, nor proxy benefactions from ecclesiastical hands, relieve the civilized State from further concern as to the wants of the people: and hence our civilization has, during our century, made provision, however blunderingly, for the physical and temporal wants of the needy.

But the philanthropy of the century has not been limited to local and material needs. It aims at nothing less than the bringing of infinite grace to the infinite wants of man's moral nature, and in its all-embracing energy takes in those that are afar off as well as those that are within its own narrow sphere. In this work of universal beneficence the great central agency is the Bible Society. That Society began its career in the early days of the century, and in the composition of causes which have gone to the formation of what is noble, and true, and self-sacrificing in the century it has been the dominant and leading factor. In this connection I include all the Bible Societies.

It was in 1804 that the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded. In that year the Basle Society also came into existence. Within the next eleven years twenty-eight Bible Societies were formed. The following year saw the commencement of eight more Bible Societies, the most important of which was the American, the great rival of the British and Foreign in all generous, peaceful, and world-wide enterprises. The number of independent Bible Societies rose to seventy-three, and our Society has now about 7,000 auxiliaries, branches, and associations at home and abroad.

It is worthy of remembrance that the first subject which engaged the attention of the Bible Society was China. Nearly a century has passed since then, and now at its close it is again China which is absorbing attention. Last Monday resolutions of Committee were passed with regard to China which affect one quarter, at least, of the human race.

There has been within this period immense progress. When Morrison resolved to go to China he heard of a New Testament MS. which was in the British Museum. He copied much of it himself, and was able to take with him to China a complete transcript. It was proposed to publish it, but the scheme was given up, as the Committee did not know its value, and as each copy would have cost £2. Now a Chinese New Testament can be produced for 6d. Morrison began by revising the parts which were published by our Society. Nothing can be grander than Morrison's work. He went out to China when it was at the peril of a European's life to go. He fought with

the language, fought with the climate, fought with a thousand difficulties. He conquered them and then died. He may truly be described as the man who gave the Bible to China. He compiled a dictionary and grammar, and threw light on the language. After his day the light became clearer year by year.

From the earliest times China has had a fascination for the Western minds. Its mystery added to the charm. Marco Polo first opened up the vague and unknown land, but his accounts were not credited. Soon others followed. The country was opened up, little by little. Christian missionaries were in the vanguard.

Soon Morrison as a translator was followed by others. There was need of revision of the earlier work, and more than one scholar attempted the task. But the missionaries were isolated, and separated from each other. Differences in rendering were inevitable; differences of view were unavoidable.

These difficulties can be understood only in the light of the nature of the Chinese language and dialects. Some leading facts must be borne in mind on this subject.

The old—the classical—language of China is the Wen-li. It is a written, not a spoken, form. Its system of ideographic signs is cumbrous in the last degree. But it is the scholar's treasury. It is the language of learning, the key to civil promotion. To know it is to be an educated man in China. The vast system of competitive examination is based upon it. The knowledge and use of it in literature is indispensable.

In this classical script five versions of the Bible have been produced. Unhappily they are variant versions. A united band of English and American scholars began a united version; but, as the work went on, a divergence of view revealed itself, and the result was two versions instead of one. The American is literal and faithful, but uncouth and foreign. The English is idiomatic and polished, but paraphrastic. It should be added that there is a simpler variety of this classical speech known as "Easy Wen-li," and that into this script versions have also been made for the less learned of the people.

The other leading language is the Mandarin. This is spoken as well as written. It is the actual language of some 200 millions. It is the commercial and every-day medium for thought and conversation. In this language also, versions have been made. But the Mandarin lacks the prestige and the classical status of the Wen-li, though it comes home more fully to the people.

As years went on, varying versions in Mandarin, as well as in the many local dialects of the country, became multiplied. There was a general feeling among scholars and missionaries that something should be done towards unification. This feeling lay deep in the minds of the Committee of the Bible Society, and to effect such a union I had the honour of attending the Shanghai Conference on behalf of our Society. The Committee thought that the time had arrived when the missionaries might be asked to devote their best scholarship and highest intelligence to the production of a Bible which would unite all, instead of being a source of division.

"You have come ten years too late," said some. "You have come forty years too soon," said others. There was a general agreement, however, that there was urgent need for an attempt at united versions, but that it was impossible to bring about the union.

Here, however, was exemplified the truth of that great law in Christian service, that whenever there is any work which should be done for God, and when men say it is impossible, the time has arrived for doing it.

The Conference in Shanghai, composed of 432 delegates, representing forty-two organizations, was full of earnestness.

Men and women had been praying, and there was a sincere desire to achieve something, but a hundred difficulties stood in the way. No details can be given now, but it may be added that when there seemed no possibility

of success the Spirit of God took possession of the Conference, and in Christian charity and brotherly love enthusiastic resolutions were unanimously passed, one delegate only out of the 432 voting against two of the resolutions. Committees were appointed to select translators to carry out union versions in the various languages. The strife of forty years was closed. When this great result was achieved, the united Conference, with glad, full hearts, sang the Doxology, an expression of the deepest thanks and worshipfulness.

It was not an unimportant part of the Conference's work that they remembered the blind, and appointed a strong Committee to look after their interests.

The work of the Bible Society in China has always been on a large scale. Up to 1853, £30,000 had been spent, and the expenditure up to the present time has reached a total of £150,000.

This expenditure will go on in an increasing ratio, and with a Union Bible, and a thousand more missionaries to carry it to the people, the Word of God will fly swiftly throughout that great empire.

The field is unlimited, and the influences of the race and its future are also unlimited. The Chinese are the English of the East. They are pressing forward everywhere, pushing out weaker races. If we don't Christianize them, they will heathenize us.

A splendid work lies before the Bible Society. The little seed planted by the portals of this century has grown into a mighty tree, with majestic outspreading branches. The branches extend to China, and truly the leaves of the tree are for the healing of that nation.

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#### THE BIBLE IN 1890.

In the eighty-sixth annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society we have an interesting account of the latest transactions of that venerable society. It is an account of work of the most important kind which, in almost every part of the world, is extending and exerting, year by year, a happier influence, its sole object being to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, in the languages of all people that on earth do dwell. The issues of the year have again been large—rising to a total of over three million, seven hundred and ninety thousand copies. The story of the Bible in France is pleasantly told by M. Gustave Monod, of Paris. There is a light upon its page and a happy energy in its tone contrasting strongly with the accounts of former years. "The circulation has leaped into a total which nearly trebles that of 1889." M. Monod expresses his conviction that the horizon is brightening in France—the current of popular thought and life is, very apparently, less irreligious than it was a few years ago. In Belgium, one of the hardest fields for the society's work, on account of the prevailing socialistic atheism, there has been substantial progress. Some of the educated Roman Catholics in that country are feeling it a reproach that the Scriptures are seldom read by even the most devout of the people. The spirit of enquiry has, however, been awakened, and the Word of God is coming to be in demand. In Germany the circulation of all the Bible societies rose last year to 600,000 copies, and it is gratifying to note that the young Emperor is a warm friend of the work. In Austria, notwithstanding the hostility of the Church of Rome, the agents of the Bible Society are encouraged in their work. In Italy the outlook is hopeful. The total issues from the dépôt in Rome last year were 21,593 copies. In Spain the aspect of affairs is "the quiet and slow, but sure advance of the Holy Scriptures over all the land." The accounts from Africa picture the advance of European civilization and Christian influence. The reports from India

afford impressive testimony to the revolutions and advances in religious thought that have been made. In China, although the progress is still slow, "there is a movement of the dry bones." In Canada there has been marked progress all along the line. The Scriptures, in whole or in part, are now printed by this society in 291 languages or dialects. The total receipts for the year were over one million of dollars; and the amount of good that has been done by the army of colporteurs employed by the Bible Society is beyond calculation.—*Presbyterian Record*.

#### BOARD MEETINGS—TORONTO.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the U. C. Bible Society was held on Tuesday evening, the 21st October, at 7.30 o'clock, the Rev. Robt. Wallace in the chair. After the opening devotional exercises led by the Rev. John Burton, B.D., the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved, a report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was submitted and adopted. The Treasurer informed the meeting of the receipt of a bequest of \$100 from the late Alexander Armstrong, of Brampton. The Rev. Mr. Stobo, Agent and Secretary of the Quebec Auxiliary, was introduced to the meeting and gave an interesting account of the work in that District. He was assured that the Quebec Auxiliary had the hearty sympathy of the Board. A letter was read from the Superintendent of the Methodist Missionary Society asking at what rate 300 Cree Bibles could be bought for distribution among the Indians. The matter was referred to the Agency and Colportage Committee. A communication was received from the Rev. A. F. McGregor, resigning his position as Director of the Society on account of his moving from the city. His resignation was accepted with regret. The Depository's Cash Statement, the List of Gratuities, Memo of Cash Balances and the Schedule of Colportage were read, Rev. Bernard Bryan pronouncing the benediction.

The November meeting was held on Tuesday evening, the 18th, at 7.30 o'clock, the President in the chair. The Rev. Dr. Johnston opened the meeting by reading from the scriptures and afterwards leading in prayer. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Rev. Mr. Burton gave an interesting account of his visit to the Parent Society's building in London, England, and of his intercourse with several of the officials there. Mr. N. W. Hoyl's supplemented this information by some additional observations of his visit there last summer. The Permanent Secretary reported the receipt of \$5,000 from the executors of the will of the late Wm. Gooderham, which sum was deposited in the Canadian Bank of Commerce. It was ordered that the amount bequeathed be known as the Wm. Gooderham Bequest, to be invested in approved securities, the annual interest on which to be devoted towards liquidating the debt on the building and furniture, jointly with the U. C. Tract Society, after which to any specified work determined on by the Board, and the officers of the Society for the time being to manage the Bequest. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was submitted and approved. The Rev. Geo. H. Sandwell was elected Director in place of Rev. A. F. McGregor, resigned. Applications from Mr. H. C. Dixon for 10 Bibles and 10 Testaments for use of inmates in Richmond St. lodging house, from Mrs. Dr. Wilmott for 2 doz. School Bibles in English for the Indian girls at Crosby Home, Fort Simpson, B. C., from the Rev. E. F. Wilson for 36 plain Bibles and 24 Reference Bibles in English for the Indian School at Shingwauk, Sault Ste. Marie were granted. The monthly statements were submitted and the meeting closed with the benediction by the Rev. H. G. Baldwin.



The Board met in the evening of Tuesday, December the 16th, at half past seven o'clock, the Rev. Manly Benson in the chair. The Revs. B. Bryant and James Grant led the devotional exercises. The minutes of last meeting were read and approved. A report was submitted from the Agency and Colportage Committee and approved. A letter from the Rev. Geo. H. Sandwell was read, accepting the position of Director on the Board. The Rev. N. S. Hunt, D.D., Secretary of the American Bible Society, in a communication dated the 26th November, informed the Board that the 75th Anniversary Meeting of their Society would be held in New York on the 13th May next, and at the same time requested the Directors to send a representative of this Society who would take part in the meeting on that occasion. The Directors cordially accepted the invitation and elected the Rev. John Burton to visit the American friends as they desire. The Rev. Mr. Burton accepted the appointment. A letter was read from the Rev. E. F. Wilson of the Shingwauk Indian School at Sault Ste. Marie, thanking the Board for the donation of Bibles made to his mission and requesting a further gift of three Bibles of a larger size; granted. An application from the Superintendent of the Mission Union, Toronto, dated 15<sup>th</sup> inst., was submitted for a gift of 30 Bibles for the use of those attending the mission; granted. The Secretary stated that arrangements had been made for a meeting of the joint Committee on "Ketchum Trusts" with a view to an early distribution of prizes to the scholars attending the various Sunday Schools in this city, in accordance with the terms of the bequest. The names of several gentlemen were suggested as desirable to attend and speak at our annual meeting to be held in the latter part of May next and the Secretary was instructed to open correspondence with the object of securing such services. The usual routine business having been disposed of, the meeting was closed with prayer led by the Rev. H. Grasset Baldwin.

#### NOTES OF THE MONTH.

FROM THE "BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY REPORTER."

##### A RETROSPECT OF TEN YEARS.

A leading member of Committee, W. Blomfield, Esq., has recently made a careful survey of the last ten years of the Society's history. Some of the results are very instructive. In 1880 the Society had seventeen foreign agents; in 1890 there are twenty-seven. Then there were 238 versions in circulation, now there are 291. The price-list of the various editions at that time occupied fifteen pages, but it has gradually increased to twenty-three. The circulation has much increased in 1880 it was 2,780,362; in 1890 it was 3,792,263. The issues for the Blind have also largely extended. The *Annual Report* has, with the growing work, naturally developed its size: ten years ago it was a volume of 272 pages; now it is 475, and this after careful compression. It must, however, be regretfully noted that the total income of the Society has not grown with its other growth; it was £213,347 in 1880; in 1890 it was only £212,077. Other facts and comparisons serve to reassure the mind on the financial position, but there is evidently ample cause for serious watchfulness and for heartier work. It adds a touch of natural sorrow to the retrospect to notice that during the decade sixteen members of the General Committee have died.

The end of the year has come at last, and the retrospect is naturally very varied. To some the backward look is painful, to others full of gladness and peace. Now, perhaps, is the time to study the wisdom of "forgetting those things which are behind"—whether sad or joyful—in comparison with the more urgent duty of "reaching forth unto those things which are before." The failure must not depress us, nor the success elate us too much. Let

them both pass: may we not serve Christ the better for them both, and be assured that all God's servants, the sorrowful as well as the glad ones, work "hand to hand" for the good of those who love Him?

Here is an extract from the recent report of the Basle Missionary Society, referring to its work in the East Indies. It must be read with sincere sympathy by all who have followed the accounts given in the Society's own Report and elsewhere of the womanly but difficult work of Biblewomen for their neglected sisters:—

"Especially do we ask for the prayers and sympathies of our friends on behalf of our Biblewomen. Although they meet with much that tends to dishearten and discourage them while making their house-to-house visits, still they too can tell of many pleasant, joyful and encouraging experiences which prove that their labour is not in vain, as here and there the Gospel message throws into heathen darkness a ray of light which would never have entered there but for such women's work among women. We are therefore most thankful for the assistance received from the Bible Society, that has enabled us to take up and carry on this important work hitherto."

The annual meeting of the Exeter branch of the Society was held in October, and the reports of the year show an advance—slight but so far welcome—on both the contributions and the circulation of the previous year. In his address as chairman, Earl Fortescue made a plea which should be laid to heart, and which came from his lips with special authority. The great benefit, he said, connected with the operations of the Society, which commended itself so much to his sympathies, was its earnestly Christian and thoroughly unsectarian character. He was sorry to say that in his old age he had observed a decided, though gradual, increase of the spirit of sectarianism. When he contemplated the internecine conflicts of Christians of different denominations in the presence of the augmented efforts and growing boldness of the infidel assaults, he was reminded of the conflicts of the various factions within the walls of Jerusalem, whilst the Roman soldiers, besieging them from without, were constantly drawing their line of impenetrable iron tighter around the doomed city. The evil results to the cause of Christianity from these internecine struggles, in diverting attention from the defence and assault against the common foe, was to him a melancholy spectacle. But the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Young Men's Christian Association, were two agencies that seemed to him to be completely divested of anything like sectarianism. They appeared to have realized the essential unity and co-operation which ought to characterize Christians, and especially Protestant Christians. In this noble Bible Society might be found the grandest example, on the greatest scale, of, if not general Christian union, at least general and hearty co-operation in the work of spreading the Word of God.

I attribute my illumination entirely and simply to the reading of a book. Yes, and it is an old, homely book, modest as nature, also as natural as she herself—a book which has a work-a-day and unassuming look like the sun which warms us, like the bread which nourishes us—a book which looks at us as cordially and blessingly as the old grandmother who daily reads in it with her dear trembling lips and with her spectacles on her nose; and this book is called shortly *the book*, the Bib'. With right is this named the Holy Scripture; he who has lost his G can find Him again in this book, and he who has never known Him is here struck by the breath of the divine word.—*Heinrich Heine*.

## THE CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE.

BY FRANK WOODS.

At the beginning of this century it is said that the Bible, or portions of it, had been published in about fifty languages, mostly European. The number is now reported to have increased to about 300 languages or dialects, the 250 increase being for foreign mission fields.

The first report of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1808 showed an issue of 81,500 Bibles and Testaments, of which 16,500 were of the Old, and 65,000 of the New Testament and portions. For the last five years the issues of the Bible in whole or parts by this society have averaged 4,000,000 copies yearly, and 120,000,000 volumes have been issued in the 85 years of its organization; about one-half the issues now are circulated in mission lands through the efforts of about 600 colporteurs and agents. These often precede and prepare the way for the living missionary.

The American Bible Society in its first annual report in 1817 showed an issue of 6,450 complete Bibles, which has increased yearly until it has reached an average for the past ten years of 1,440,000 copies yearly, of which over 500,000 volumes annually are circulated in mission fields; in this work about 400 colporteurs are employed.

These issues, with those reported by other societies, show an annual circulation of the Bible, in whole or in portions, of about 6,000,000 volumes, and an entire issue for 85 years of 214,000,000 volumes. The issue of 6,000,000 volumes for 1888 is believed to be more than the entire issue of the Scriptures in all the centuries previous to 1800. In this work the two societies named have expended over \$60,000,000.

In view of such a wonderful increase of Bible circulation, we may well call this the great Bible and missionary century of the world's history. As it was about twenty years before the first missionaries learned a foreign language, so as to make a translation of the Bible, no great increase appeared until after 1830, while more than one-half of the 214,000,000 copies shown in our statistics, and of the translations and circulation, were the work of the past twenty-five years.

It is not too much to say that the 250 translations each represents an amount of patient heroism, self-denial and scholarship that are worthy of an honourable place in the world's history. In over 300 languages the Bible now reaches nearly all the known countries of the world. Asia gets a goodly portion of the circulation; nearly 500,000 volumes of the Bible, in whole or in its parts, were scattered among the 350,000,000 of Chinese for 1888. Of other countries a circulation of over 300,000 is reported for India, 76,000 in Japan, 13,000 in Persia, 11,500 in Ceylon, 37,000 in the Malayan Islands, 6,000 in Syria, 18,000 in Liberia, 300,000 volumes in Russia, 125,000 in Turkey, 7,750 in Greece, 137,000 in Italy.

At Milan, in Italy, an Italian publisher has begun the publication of the Bible in numbers at one cent each, of which 50,000 copies were sold the first week.

In Africa, Algiers and Tunis get 7,750 volumes, Egypt 30,500, Madagascar 20,000. Of the more than thirty translations into the languages of Africa, and through the many agencies of eastern, western and southern portions, many other thousands are circulated, but the statistics are not easy to collect.

In North and South America, Mexico has had 120,000 volumes in the past twenty years; and for 1888, Brazil received 28,000, Peru 8,000, and other portions of South America over 75,000 copies, of which the Argentine Republic received 32,300 volumes. Agencies in Central America among the Indians, and in the West Indies, call for many thousands more. As the Bible is translated into twenty-two languages for the Pacific Islands, many

thousands of volumes are yearly circulated there ; and in many instances, as in the older mission fields, a Christian literature is one of the early fruits of Bible circulation. Of the translations used in mission fields, 93 are for Asia, 31 for Africa, 24 for North and South America, and 22 for the Pacific Islands. Statistics, however, tell but a portion of the wonderful story of how these millions of messengers, winged by the Holy Spirit, do their work in announcing the coming kingdom of our Lord.

The history from the more than one thousand colporteurs, mostly natives, of how the Bible is received, is full of thrilling facts and incidents that would fill volumes every year. The queen of Madagascar at her coronation, a few years since, placed her hand upon the Bible, saying that it should be the foundation of her government. In the interior of Africa, where Bishop Hannington was murdered, young men or boys would hold on to their Bibles, though threatened with death for doing so. A leading man in Brazil said to one who was urging the merits of the Bible, "You say you have had that book for generations in your country. Where was your father that he allowed my father to die without a knowledge of it?" A missionary in India asked a Brahmin priest if he read the Bible. "Yes," said he, "I have read the New Testament through over seventy times, and the Old Testament over thirty times." A Mohammedan priest in Persia brought his Koran to the Bible agent to exchange it for the Bible.

The Bible is not given away in these lands except in special cases, but is sold to many who buy it at a sacrifice in their poverty, and to some who will walk a day's journey to get it. Among the purchasers also are learned men, priests and teachers who represent the various heathen faiths of Asia. Chunder Sen, the well-known philosopher of India, who rejects idolatry but does not accept Christianity, says that the name of Jesus is the greatest power in India.

Thus, beyond all power of words or statistics to depict, the wonderful words of life as found in the Bible are transforming life, not only changing individuals and communities, but lifting peoples and nations throughout the world up into the light of a Christian civilization ; and it is not too much to say that not only is the great advance of the nineteenth century in moral and Christian culture a direct outgrowth of Bible circulation, but the unparalleled material and intellectual prosperity as seen in large portions of the world would have been impossible without the power exerted by this same Bible.

It is to be regretted that information of such mighty influences, working out the highest interests of mankind, cannot be more often found in our religious and secular press. The people might then have some of the enthusiasm that characterizes the reception of the Bible in the mission fields of the world.

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#### RELATION OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY TO MISSIONS.

At the annual meeting of the South American Mission, in September last, Rev. Andrew Milne, general agent of the American Bible Society for South America, presented an interesting report of his work and that of his assistant, Rev. Francisco Penzotti. Brother Milne has, in his time, visited nearly every South American State in the prosecution of his work. The circulation of the Scriptures has, in some measure, prepared every field for the advent of the missionary, and is preparing other fields in States not yet within any mission. If the Bible Society is as helpful in other mission-fields as it is and has been in South America, I apprehend its importance as an auxiliary to other forms of mission work has not been fully appreciated by the Church at home.—*Bishop Walden, in the Western Christian Advocate.*

RECEIPTS FROM BRANCHES AT THE BIBLE HOUSE, TORONTO.  
FROM 1ST JULY, 1890, TO 31ST JANUARY, 1891.

NOTE.—(1) To Quebec Auxiliary ; (2) Unappropriated ; (3) For Recorders.

BRANCH.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Aldborough .....		\$2 53		
Allenford .....	8 05			
Amherstburg .....	27 00	25 00	15 00	
Amherst Island .....	4 18	2 09		
Arkona .....	5 00	11 55		
Arkwright .....	22 89			
Armor .....	2 77			
Arthur .....	20 00			
Asnburn .....	6 30	7 73		
Attwood .....	3 89			
Auburn .....	9 95	4 34		
Bath .....		1 08		
Battersea .....	5 45	4 07		
Bayfield .....	1 50	22 57		
Beamsville .....		20 00		
Beaverton .....		4 06		
Beeton .....	4 95			
Belgrave .....	3 60	4 11		
Bervie .....	6 80			
Binbrook .....		3 23		
Blake .....		7 07		
Bloomfield .....		8 41		
Bluevale .....		2 00		
Blyth .....	12 65	28 55	28 55	(1) 28 55
Bracebridge .....		9 27		
Brampton .....		18 15		
Brantford .....	250 80			
Broadview .....	8 45	9 75		
Brooklin .....	4 04	3 82		
Brucefield .....		3 57		
Buxton .....		1 34		
Camlachie .....	1 90	14 12	7 06	
Campden .....		18 00		
Campbellford .....	2 00	8 30		
Canfield .....		54		
Cannington .....	6 75			
Castleton .....	9 03			
Cataragui .....		12 74		
Cayuga .....		15 71	15 71	
Cayuga South .....	10 86	55 80		
Chesley .....		42 50	42 50	(1) 42 50
Churchill .....		2 00		
Claremont .....	16 96	5 04		
Clinton .....		3 25		
Colborne .....	42 20	27 38		
Coldsprings .....		3 80		
Coldwater .....		1 60		
Cornwall .....	10 00			
Craigvale .....	1 30			
Crediton .....		2 39		
Creemore .....		1 72		

## RECEIPTS FROM BRANCHES—Continued.

BRANCH.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Lucknow .....	11 17	17 75	17 75	(1) 17 75
Lynedoch .....		4 50		
McGillivray .....	1 30	1 22		
Madoc .....	17 42	3 69		
Manitou .....	10 00			
Maple Valley .....		22 62		
Mara .....		9 34		
Melrose .....		3 50		
Midland .....	11 51	36 44		
Mildmay .....	10 00	43 51		
Milford .....		1 00		
Milton .....	8 90			
Milverton .....		3 58		
Minnedosa .....	17 85	15 80	15 80	
Moira .....	6 65	11 65		
Mooretown .....	12 79	4 79		
Morrison .....	1 26			
Mount Forest .....	11 75	44 50	44 50	
Newbridge .....	10 00			
Newburgh .....	1 25			
New Dundee .....	10 00	23 94		
New Hamburg .....	34 95	3 56		
Newtonville .....	3 75			
Niagara Falls South .....	3 00			
Nile .....	1 22	1 56		
North Sydenham .....		45 50		
Oakville .....	4 95			
Odessa .....		3 82		
Odessa .....		4 50		
Omence .....		29 37	29 37	
Oneida .....		10 10	10 10	
Otterville .....				
Paisley .....	8 00	48 21		
Parham .....		50		
Paris .....	52 00			
Parkdale .....	8 87			
Parry Sound .....	36 42			
Penetanguishene .....		3 98		
Percy .....	15 32	29 20		
Pickering .....		2 69		
Pittsburg .....		2 77		
Port Colborne .....	17 00			
Port Dover .....	17 00			
Port Elgin .....	15 00	5 00	5 00	(2) 5 00
Port Hope .....	10 53	221 65		
Port Rowan .....	3 88	3 12		
Prince Albert .....		11 96		
Roslin .....		12 27		
Rugby .....	4 00	30 00		(1) 20 00
St. Ann's .....	4 46			
St. Helen's .....	3 75	7 79	7 79	(1) 7 79
St. Mary's .....		39 09	39 09	
St. Williams .....	5 20	1 61		
Sault Ste. Marie .....	9 64			
Seaforth .....		9 60		

## RECEIPTS FROM BRANCHES—Continued.

BRANCH.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Dereham .....	15 72	2 52		
Deseronto .....	9 86			
Drayton .....	3 45	16 30	16 30	
Dresden .....	7 90	15 90	15 95	
Dunbarton .....	8 64	6 00		
Dungannon .....	1 97	2 16		
East Williams .....				(3) 3 00
Edgar .....	8 69	20 40		
Egmondville .....		1 71		
Eldon .....		3 92		
Elkhorn .....	12 25	14 95		
Elmira .....	26 29	48 94		
Elmvale .....		2 32		
Eramosa .....		38 28	38 27	
Fenelon Falls .....	20 00			
Frankford .....		13 25		
Galt .....		126 00	252 00	
Garafraxa .....	2 94			
Garden Island .....		19 35		
Georgetown .....		30 00	50 00	25 00
Glanford .....		21 60		
Glenmorris .....		38 00		
Goderich .....	10 00	3 32		
Goodwood .....	16 58			
Grafton .....	7 40	39 35		
Greenbank .....		4 52		
Greedwood .....		3 40		
Grenfell .....	23 50	3 65		
Grimsby .....	18 45	12 20		
Hagersville .....	6 09	55 97		
Harrowsmith .....		1 56		
Hespeler .....		31 35	15 00	(1) 27 00
Hibbert .....		16 00	16 00	
Indian Head .....	6 34	8 95		
Innerkip .....		17 30	17 30	
Inverary .....		1 00		
Jarvis .....		7 75		
Keswick and Medina .....	2 85	1 55		
Kilsyth .....		39 50		
Kincardine .....	15 96			
Kinburn .....		92		
Kingston .....	200 00	100 00	125 00	
Kinlough .....	2 58	3 80		
Kinmount .....	3 97			
Kippen .....		80		
Lakeside .....		7 00		
Langside .....		1 69		
Langton .....	3 45	9 35		
Laskey .....		41 75	36 25	
Lefroy and Bell Ewart .....		4 00		
Little Britain .....		6 56		
Londesboro .....		3 16		

## RECEIPTS FROM BRANCHES—Continued.

BRANCHES.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Sebringville .....		4 54		
Seeley's Bay .....	3 12	1 31		
Shakespeare .....	5 01			
Smithville .....	4 00			
Sombra .....	15 70	1 00		
Sonya .....		11 76		
Southampton .....		5 27		
Stirling .....	8 56			
Strabane .....	1 50	20 00	20 00	(1) 18 00
Sunderland .....		4 43		
Tamworth .....	17 52	3 69		
Tavistock .....	24 94	44 68		
Teeswater .....	7 25			
Theodford .....	7 73	17 35	7 34	
Trowbridge .....		2 69		
Tweed .....	3 87	34 01		
Underwood .....	13 99			
Uxbridge .....	50 00	1 00		
Varna .....	80	1 08		
Victoria Road Depository .....	21 43			
Vittoria .....	3 81			
Walton .....	5 12			
Washington .....	4 55	23 00		
Waterford .....		5 71		
Waterloo .....	47 32			
Watford .....	19 15			
Welland .....	4 92	66 08		
Wellington .....	8 26	9 24		
West Lorne .....		12 70		
Whitewood .....	11 00	24 00		
Warton .....	17 53	18 62	20 00	(1) 10 00
Winterbourne .....	15 00	50 00		
Wolfe Island .....		2 17		
Wolseley .....	15 08	15 20		
Woodstock .....	65 41	100 00	225 00	(1) 75 00
York .....		30 00		