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THE STORY OF THE
BIBLE SOCIETY

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BY
WILLIAM CANTON



LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1904

PREFACE

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to sketch the origin, growth, and progress of the British and Foreign Bible Society during the hundred years which began on the 7th March 1804, and which will be brought to a close on the 6th March next by the universal observance, among the Reformed Churches, of "Bible Sunday" as a day of thanksgiving for the blessing which the free circulation of the Holy Scriptures has been to the world.

Special attention has been paid in the earlier parts of this book to the unforeseen and providential developments by which the Society has been enabled to realise in some degree the world-wide purposes for which it was instituted; and the reader has been placed in a position to understand the Society's methods, the nature and extent of its operations, and the sympathy and financial

encouragement which it has extended to every effort to disseminate the Scriptures. In the later chapters prominence has been given to the personal and religious aspects of the work.

This story of the Bible Society has been undertaken at the desire of the Committee, and is published with their approval as a memorial of the Centenary.

WILLIAM CANTON.

8th February 1904.

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PRELUDE

ON the 12th September 1878 Cleopatra's Needle was raised to its massive pedestal on the Victoria Embankment. In the core of the pedestal were inclosed two earthenware jars containing memorials of Great Britain in the nineteenth century. In one of these, on the invitation of Mr Dixon the engineer, the British and Foreign Bible Society had deposited various copies of the Scriptures—the Bible in English and in French, the Pentateuch in Hebrew, Genesis in Arabic, and the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St John in two hundred and fifteen languages.

Thirty-three centuries ago the Obelisk was cut in the red granite quarries of Syene. The sculptors engraved it with symbolic bird and beast, scarab and bee, snake and reed; and figured the great king, Thothmes III., presenting gifts of water and wine to Tum, the sunken Sun, the Sun of the Night. Under clouds of gnats, driven hard by the rods of the task-masters, long files of captives dragged it on sledges to the sacred river, while gangs of water-carriers poured a flood under the runners to keep the groaning wood from catching fire. It was floated down the Nile on a ship-of-war, and was erected with infinite labour before the

splendid temple of the Sun in the little city of On—known in after times as Beth-shemesh by the Jew, and Heliopolis by the Greek. In those days Joseph was dead, and lay embalmed in his painted mummy-case or coffin of porphyry ; dead too was Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On ; but the children of Ephraim or the children of Machir may have read the inscription on this high stone, for the name and renown of Zaphnath-paaneah, the “Sustainer of Life,” still protected his kinsfolk, and the land was filled with them.

Thothmes passed away, and other Pharaohs ruled, and died, and lay in glory, every one in his own house ; and a king which knew not Joseph arose, and the lives of the children of Israel were made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. In those evil days “the daughter of Pharaoh” may have looked on this colossal token of departed grandeur. A scholar in the priestly college of On, Moses must have often seen it in his boyhood. Rameses, the great oppressor, carved on its shaft the columns of hieroglyphs on either side of the inscription of Thothmes.

Rameses too died, and was buried with his father and grandfather in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings ; and Merenptah his son sat on his throne, and Moses returned out of Midian. Then was the heart of Pharaoh hardened to the likeness of this pillar of granite, and Moses stretched forth his rod, and the plague of frogs squatted and croaked on its pediment, and the plague of flies blackened the ruddiness of its aspect, and the

plague of hail rattled upon it, and the plague of locusts dashed in myriads against it, and the plague of darkness clothed it as with a garment. In the dead of the night there was a great cry in Egypt, "such as there had been none like it, nor shall be like it any more"; and Israel went out of Egypt, bearing the bones of Joseph; and on the Mountain of the Law God gave His people those Commandments which were, perchance, the first written portion of the Bible.

Centuries swept by, and the Obelisk stood changeless amid the wreck of war and the fall of dynasties. The prophecy, "He shall also break the images of Beth-shemesh," may have been uttered in On; and within sight of this graven stone Jeremiah may have blotted his papyrus with tears as he wrote his Lamentations over "the miserable estate of Jerusalem by reason of her sin."

In the long years which followed, Greek traveller and Greek philosopher gazed on the Obelisk, and its shadow fell on the tents of Alexander as he halted on his march to Memphis; but its last association with the Old Testament belongs to the time of Cleopatra, who planted a garden of balsam-trees in the fields which it overlooked. Never before had the balm of Gilead grown beyond the borders of Canaan.

Is it not one of the strangest coincidences on record, that after a lapse of three millenniums the Bible should have been committed to the guardianship of this ancient monolith, whose gold-capped summit flashed out to the far pastures of Goshen in an age in which the story of

Exodus had scarcely yet begun to be lived, and the incidents in the last chapters of Genesis were still the vivid recollections of what had happened as it were but yesterday? This storied column was reared to the glory of a man whose dead face may still be seen in the Ghizeh Museum ; but with these sacred Scriptures in its keeping, with the memories of Israel in Egypt clinging to its hieroglyphics, as the nests of the wild bees cling to those on the solitary obelisk that marks the site of the vanished city of On, it is in truth a Bible monument.

When, in some hidden future, it shall have fallen from its place, when its treasure-chamber shall have been rifled, and perchance a new race shall regard with interest, or amusement, or wonder, the toys, the pipes and razors, the coins of Britain, the standards of weight and measure, the map of the vast metropolis, found in these jars, one deposit, if it fall into the hands of civilised men, will be prized above all the rest. It may be that by that time the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, "as the waters cover the sea"; it may be that in good and evil the world of that age shall resemble the world of to-day ; of this at least be sure, that whatever shall have perished, whatever shall have been forgotten, whatever shall have changed, the Bible will still survive. Scholars, if no others, will surely still be able to read the best known of these languages ; men will handle these books of a bygone age with delight and reverence, and will recall the story of the Bible Society that intrusted them to the keeping of the great stone.

CHAPTER I

“WHY NOT FOR THE WORLD?”

“SURELY a society might be formed for the purpose. But if for Wales, why not for the kingdom? Why not for the world?”

The words were spoken amid a hum of eager conversation. The time was the 7th December 1802. The place was the counting-house of Mr Joseph Hardcastle, a prosperous merchant who carried on business at Old Swan Stairs, near London Bridge. Though the room overlooked the Thames, the river was scarcely visible from its lighted windows in the dark of that winter morning, when, in keeping with the early habits of the period, the committee of the Religious Tract Society had met to breakfast at the hospitable board of one of its members, and to attend to the affairs of their society. The speaker was their secretary, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, minister of the Baptist congregation at Battersea; and this was his reply to an appeal which the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala had just made to the committee for assistance to supply the people of Wales with the Scriptures in their native tongue.

Ordained to the ministry in 1780, Mr Charles

had withdrawn from the Church a few years later, and thrown in his lot with the Calvinistic Methodists at Bala. Summer and winter among the wild hills he had carried the tidings of the Gospel, founding Sunday schools as he went, and supervising the itinerant schoolmasters whom he provided at his own expense for the benefit of the scattered villages. As early as 1787 he was in correspondence with Thomas Scott, the Commentator, regarding the dearth of Bibles in the Principality. Often in his journeys he had been asked for the Scriptures, but "there were none to be bought for money, unless some poor person, pinched by poverty, was obliged to sell his Bible." During the sixty-nine years which had elapsed since its first Welsh edition in 1718, the S.P.C.K. had published 65,000 Bibles and 5000 Testaments—an average of about a thousand copies a year among a growing population of some hundreds of thousands. In 1770 the Rev. Peter Williams had printed at Carmarthen the first of several small editions of a quarto Welsh Bible with notes, "but the price, 18s., was too high for the poor to command."

Especially after the great spiritual awakening in 1791-3 the scarcity of the Scriptures had been keenly felt; the hearts of the people had been stirred to their very depths, ignorance was disappearing before the Sunday schools and the itinerating day schools, and on all sides a bitter cry was rising for the Word of God. Repeated efforts had been made to induce the S.P.C.K. to print an edition of 10,000 copies. The Rev.

Thomas Jones of Creaton, who was not less active than Mr Charles himself in this emergency, had given the society security that 4000 copies should be paid for as soon as they were ready for sale, but the S.P.C.K. had questioned the need and shrunk from the expense. In 1796 it had at length consented to undertake the venture, and in 1799 an edition of 10,000 Bibles and 2000 Testaments had been issued. This supply proved quite inadequate to the demand. By April 1800 every copy had been sold, and whole districts were still unprovided for. Applications were made for yet another edition, but unhappily the straitened finances of the S.P.C.K., whose work was not confined to the distribution of the Scriptures, did not at the moment admit of another large expenditure. To Mr Charles it was a disheartening result after twelve years of unwearied endeavour.

In this same year, 1800, had occurred an incident which touchingly illustrated both the scarcity of the Scriptures in Wales and the desire of the people to possess them. In a valley under Cader Idris, in the parish of Llanfihangel, there was a little Welsh girl of sixteen who had long loved the Word of God, but who had no other chance of reading it than by going to the house of a relative two miles from her home. For years she had been saving all she could, and now in 1800 she travelled from Llanfihangel to Bala—twenty-eight miles through the mountains—to buy herself a Bible. Alas, she had come too late; every copy of the new edition had been disposed of. Deeply moved by the girl's tears and the simple piety of her story, Mr Charles

gave her a copy which had been laid aside for one of his friends, and Mary Jones retraced her long journey, happy in the fulfilment of her heart's desire.

The population of Wales had now reached 540,000, and their spiritual needs called for renewed exertions. A project was started by Mr Jones of Creaton, for the printing of an edition at Chester, but it was found impracticable. Next, it was proposed that a Welsh Bible Fund should be raised by subscriptions from all parts of the Principality. The poverty of the people occasioned deep discouragement, but it was not without hope of being able to interest his generous English friends in the furtherance of this plan, that Mr Charles had gone up to London in December 1802 for one of his regular periods of service at Lady Huntingdon's chapel in Spa Fields. As he lay awake a morning or two before this meeting of the 7th—for the subject was "much on his mind"—the idea occurred to him of having a society established in London, on a basis similar to that of the Tract Society, for the supply of the Scriptures to the Welsh; and this was the design which, as a member of the R.T.S. committee, he had now laid before them, with an eloquent appeal to their sympathy and influence.

Amid the hum of conversation which followed Mr Charles's address, the voice of Mr Hughes was heard: "If for Wales, why not for the kingdom? Why not for the world?"

CHAPTER II

“BUILT IN TROUBLOUS TIMES”

THE vast project suggested in those memorable words was hailed with enthusiasm. Week by week it was discussed and developed. In an essay on *The Excellency of the Holy Scriptures: an Argument for their more general Dispersion*, Mr Hughes appealed to the public to assist in founding “the first institution that ever emanated from one nation for the good of all.” A code of regulations was drafted by Mr Samuel Mills, and revised and expanded in debate at Old Swan Stairs, until in all essentials it assumed the shape in which it became the constitution of the British and Foreign Bible Society—the happy title proposed by Mr Hughes in place of the original “Society for promoting a more extensive Circulation of the Holy Scriptures at home and abroad.” At a general meeting of the R.T.S. in May 1803, the project was advocated with fervid eloquence. Progress, however, was seriously retarded by doubt, indifference, incredulity, and sectarian prejudice. Nothing came of a resolution that application should be made to his Majesty George III. for his patronage; and though by the beginning of

1804 the promoters had secured the adhesion of such distinguished men as William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Charles Grant, Zachary Macaulay, Lord Teignmouth, and Henry Thornton, at the actual inauguration of the Society "no royal prince, no nobleman, no bishop, no member of Parliament was present."

In February 1804 invitations to a public meeting at the London Tavern were sent out to those who were thought likely to espouse the cause. They were accompanied by an address (prepared by Mr Hughes), from which a single passage may be taken to indicate the spirit of faith and courage that animated the projectors:—

"If the present period is not the most auspicious to such undertakings, neither is there any danger of its being fatal to them. 'The wall of Jerusalem,' it is written, 'shall be built in troublous times.' In fact, how many successful efforts for the promotion of human happiness have been made amidst the clouds and tempests of national calamity! It also should be remembered that the present is the only period of which we are sure. Our days of service are both few and uncertain: whatsoever, therefore, our hands find to do, let us do it with our might."

The times were indeed troublous. Once more a French army of invasion was massed along the coast from the Zuyder Zee to the mouth of the Seine. England was a vast camp, with 520,000 men under arms. The troops lay down to sleep with their marching orders, notwithstanding the watch kept in the martello towers and the patrol of the long line of British ships-of-war.

On Wednesday, 7th March 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded at the London

Tavern, in the presence of about three hundred persons of various denominations. Mr Granville Sharp presided. When Mr Robert Cowie, Mr William Alers, Mr Samuel Mills, and Mr Hughes—all members of the R.T.S.—had spoken of the need for the Society and of the nature and range of its contemplated work, the Rev. C. F. A. Steinkopff, pastor of the German Lutheran church in the Savoy, and a member too of the R.T.S. committee, described the scarcity of the Scriptures in the foreign countries he had visited, and appealed to the compassion and munificence of British Christians on behalf of his German fellow-countrymen. Then, on the spur of “an impulse which he had neither the inclination nor the power to disobey,” rose the Rev. John Owen, curate of Fulham and chaplain to Dr Porteus, the Bishop of London. He had come to the meeting with much hesitation; he was amazed to find that Quakers had been invited to take part in the proceedings; but the appeal for Germany had touched his heart, and the scene before him—the unexampled combination of Christian denominations whom doctrinal and ritual differences had kept for ages asunder—carried him back in the spirit to the zeal and charity of the apostolic age.

“To him it appeared,” as he afterwards wrote, “to indicate the dawn of a new era in Christendom; and to portend something like the return of those auspicious days when the multitude of them that believed were of ‘one heart and one soul’; and when, as a consequence of that union, to a certain degree at least, ‘the Word of God mightily grew and prevailed.’” Inspired by these deep emotions,

he threw in the weight of his advocacy, and moved the adoption of the resolutions establishing the British and Foreign Bible Society. They were carried with enthusiastic unanimity, an executive Committee was elected, Mr Henry Thornton, M.P., was appointed Treasurer, and a sum exceeding £700 was subscribed on the spot.

The single object of the Society was "to encourage the wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment." No test of any description limited the liberal catholicity of its constitution. All creeds and professions were heartily welcome to co-operate in a work designed for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Though a singular spirit of conciliation and self-effacement prevailed, care was taken to safeguard denominational susceptibilities. Three Secretaries were appointed—the Rev. Joseph Pratt, secretary of the C.M.S., and the Rev. Joseph Hughes, to represent the two great divisions of English Christianity, and the Rev. C. F. A. Steinkopff to represent the Protestant Churches on the Continent. The same representative principle characterised the constitution of the executive Committee of laymen, six of whom were foreigners and the remaining thirty Churchmen and Nonconformists in equal numbers. In April the Rev. John Owen was elected Secretary in place of Mr Pratt, and on his earnest recommendation; and on the 16th May the office of President was accepted by Lord Teignmouth, who, as Sir John Shore, had been Governor-General of India in 1793-8, and on his retirement had been raised to the peerage.

In this manner, after fifteen months of labour and prayer, the British and Foreign Bible Society was started on its great and beneficent mission. The distribution of the Holy Scriptures was no new idea sprung upon the religious world. It entered into the scheme of the S.P.C.K., founded as far back as 1698. It was one of the objects of the S.P.G. (1701), of the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (1709), of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge among the Poor (1750), and of the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools (1785). Indeed one organisation, founded in 1780, bore the name of the Bible Society, but as its work was confined to soldiers and sailors, the title was afterwards changed to the Naval and Military Bible Society. Later still, the French Bible Society was instituted in 1792, but its projects were wrecked by the outbreak of the Revolution, and it was dissolved in 1803.

In the design of the British and Foreign Bible Society, however, there was an unprecedented breadth of purpose. In its constitution there was a catholicity of spirit which appeared to many to be wholly impracticable. That catholicity, in truth, was essential to its efficacy and its permanence; but it was nothing short of marvellous that at a time when the conflicts of Churchmen and Nonconformists were most bitter and most deplorable, Christians of all communions should have consented to unity of action, and should have subordinated their personal convictions and even their prejudices to the achievement of one sacred

object. This was not the only particular in regard to which devout persons thought that they perceived the overruling of Providence. In the events which led up to the formation of the Society, still more in the framing of its constitution—a constitution which, strange to say, is virtually the same to-day as it was one hundred years ago—they discerned “the impress of a divine direction.” “Almost everything,” wrote Mr Owen in his History, “almost everything that is wise and efficient in the practical departments of the institution arose out of accidental and extemporaneous discussion.” Skill and foresight, organisation and patronage were not lacking; but as the passing years brought with them unexpected growth, and spontaneous departures, and an undreamed-of development of resources, there was much to deepen the solemn impression that, in a very special manner, the blessing of God rested upon this work.

Though its organisation and the exclusiveness of its purpose gave the Bible Society an extraordinary distinctiveness, it was intimately allied in its origin with many of the religious and humanitarian movements of the time. Their firmest adherents were often among its staunchest friends. The committee of the R.T.S. founded it; the L.M.S. and C.M.S. came into close alliance with it; it worked in hearty collaboration with the Sunday School Union. Like them it could have traced its descent from the spiritual awakenings which took place in this country in the eighteenth century, and the names of John Newton, Thomas

Scott, Charles Simeon, and the eminent men of the Clapham circle, vindicated its place in the Evangelical succession. In that passionate revival of religious life men have recognised a counter-vailing power prepared against the anarchy and paganism of the French Revolution and the colossal tyranny of Napoleon; and to its effects on the mind and character of the nation—far beyond any other cause or influence—has been ascribed the stability of Great Britain in the most terrible crisis the world has ever known.

Taken by itself as a simple event, it is astonishing that in such a year as 1804 it was possible to found a Bible Society at all. During the whole of those twelve months and for eight months in 1805 Napoleon was waiting for his “six hours’ mastery of the Channel.” Not a few doubted the endurance of our wooden walls and hearts of oak, and went to sleep half prepared to be aroused by tap of drum or glare of beacon-fire. Farmers returned from market with lengths of bunting, to be stitched by their girls and run up on their church-tower at the first news of the landing of the French. In at least one great house in Norfolk coaches were kept ready to whirl the children and the women into the depths of the Fen country. And there was some justification for troubled minds, for the Government had issued “Regulations for the preservation of good order, to be adopted in case of actual invasion”; arrangements had been made for the safety of Queen Charlotte and the royal princesses; there was an armed escort ready with thirty waggons to hurry the treasure of the

Bank of England to the crypt of Worcester Cathedral ; and a sentry stood beside the big gun on Edinburgh Castle to start the beacons and church-bells in angry summons from sea to sea. The times too were of the hardest. Three per cents. had fallen to $54\frac{1}{2}$, and bread had risen till it reached 1s. $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the quartern loaf. Yet in spite of heavy taxation, of the need for economy among the well-to-do, of the pinch of poverty among the poor, the Society prospered, and was able to set its hand to the world-wide task which it had undertaken.

The tension was not relaxed till the joy-bells rang out for the victory of Trafalgar and the host encamped along the Channel poured across the Rhine to new conquests. Indeed until the arrival of Napoleon at St Helena, ten years later, the history of the Bible Society must be read with a background of warfare ever present in one's memory.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLES OF BRITAIN

LET the reader now conceive himself at the centre of a vast panorama—a busy, ever-changing picture of the Bible Society's work during the first dozen years of its existence. The four quarters of the world revolve into his view; the landscapes of strange countries, people of every colour and of many tongues, distract him with a bewildering multiplicity of interest. From the outset the Society was in action no less than in name Foreign as well as British. By the close of 1816 its operations had extended to Greenland and the Red Indian settlements of Canada; to the colonists in Australia and the missionaries in the South Seas; to India and China and the Malay Archipelago in the far East; to the backwoods of America, the plantations of the West Indies, the seaports of Brazil and Chili, in the far West. If the unity of its adherents had suggested a return to the days when the multitude of believers were "of one heart and one soul," the extension of its labours recalls that first rapid diffusion of the Gospel which has ever been one of the wonders of Christianity.

In this chapter we shall briefly survey a portion of the work on which the Society was engaged at home, and then proceed to sketch the undertakings which were simultaneously in progress in so many parts of the globe.

It was a memorable day in July 1806 which brought to Wales the new supply of the Scriptures—an edition of 10,000 copies of the New Testament. When the news reached Bala that the cart conveying the first precious consignment was on the way, “the Welsh peasants,” writes an eye-witness, “went out to meet it, welcomed it as the Israelites did the Ark of old, drew it into the town and eagerly bore off every copy as rapidly as they could be dispersed.” Late in the summer twilight young people could be seen reading the books, and when night had fallen they still turned the pages by the glimmer of dim lamp or rush-light. In the morning labourers carried them afield, that they might turn to them in their intervals of rest. Two years later an edition of 20,000 Bibles and 30,000 Testaments was put into circulation, and one of these Bibles Mr Charles gave to his baby grandson, who afterwards became president of Trevecca College in South Wales, and related the incident at one of the Jubilee meetings of the Society. Up to June 1817 there had been printed for Wales 52,297 Bibles and 91,188 Testaments—a yearly average of 11,000 copies of Scripture since the Society had been founded.

At one of the early meetings of the R.T.S. committee at Old Swan Stairs, a resolution was passed in which it was provided “that no English

translation of the Scriptures should be gratuitously circulated by the Society in Great Britain." The promoters, no doubt, foresaw what was afterwards amply proved by experience—that, as a rule, gratuitous distribution is a mistaken policy; but another consideration probably entered into the framing of that limitation. It was the general opinion that outside Wales—and even the dearth in Wales was questioned—there could be no great scarcity of the Scriptures in these islands. Actual inquiry soon dissipated this misconception. In the Colchester district it was ascertained that of 1059 families, 521 were totally destitute of the Bible, and many of the others possessed "only mutilated and nearly useless parts." In the first year of their existence the Bristol Auxiliary circulated 4210 Bibles and Testaments, and the Manchester and Salford Auxiliary 7034. At Sunderland there were 25,000 persons who attended no place of worship, and "among 500 vessels trading from that port but a few were furnished with a single Bible." Of 925 families in Southwark, it was found that 530 had no copy of the Scriptures; and in the course of eleven and a half years 20,085 Bibles and Testaments were distributed in that populous borough. We pass, however, from this section of the Society's home work to notice details of more pitiful interest.

Here is Newgate with its unspeakable horrors; men in hundreds, women in hundreds, women with numerous children, all unemployed, uncared for, herded together like the beasts which perish. They pass the time in gambling, drinking, fight-

ing, masquerading, singing evil songs, telling tales of vice and villainy, planning new crimes. Among the prisoners there are boys and girls from nine to thirteen years of age. There is a chaplain, but his chief function appears to be on the scaffold. He does not visit the wards. "He never knows that any have been sick till he gets a warning to attend their funeral." Newgate, the typical English prison, is in keeping with the criminal law, which recognises two hundred and twenty-three capital offences, and dooms a child of ten to the gallows. Is it not time that the mercy and compassion and hope of the Word of Life should not only be made known within prison walls, but should be brought home to the hearts and consciences of all men so that the existence of such dungeons of infamy should be tolerated no longer? Among the jails, hulks, convict-transports, penitentiaries, workhouses, and hospitals, the Society distributed in these years over 3000 Bibles and 5200 Testaments, at a cost of about £1300. Were the books wasted? Let one incident serve as an answer. When the convicts on board the *Three Bees*, bound to Port Jackson, learned that the Scriptures were not furnished by Government, they sent Lord Teignmouth a letter of thanks, with 169 signatures. "Your gift," they wrote, "gives a new object to our hopes. . . . It assures us that we 'in no wise are cast out.'"

Work on a larger scale and of an exceptional character was accomplished in connection with the prisoners of war. In 1805 there were 30,000 of

them ; in 1811 the number had grown to 47,600—Frenchmen, Spaniards, Italians, Dutchmen, Danes, Norwegians, detained on parole, confined on the old battleships in the Medway and Hamoaze, drafted inland for safety, interned at Greenlaw in Berwickshire and in the palisaded casernes of Norman Cross. At their wits' end what to do with so many, the Government built Dartmoor on the granite waste of the treeless "Forest" to accommodate from seven to ten thousand. The first grant from the Society was voted two days before Christmas 1805. The Scriptures were received with thanks, with tears, with joy. The men were seen reading them against the bulwarks of their prison-ships or within the stone walls of their courtyards, and in hospital they cheered the last hours of the dying. Many stinted themselves to obtain them. "Not my own," said one poor fellow ; "I pay six rations a month for the use of it." Reading-parties were arranged ; even schools were formed, in which "old men with spectacles" learned to read the Word of God. The Scriptures were the surest antidote to national antipathy and the true solace for individual sorrow. "They have contributed," wrote a French officer from one of the ships in the Medway, "to sweeten the bitter cup of which an inscrutable Providence has condemned us to drink deep for so many years."

During the conflict with the United States, forced on us by the policy of Napoleon, many American prisoners shared the fate of these foreigners. Over three hundred were taken on the 1st June 1813, when the *Shannon* captured the *Chesapeake*. They

were committed to Dartmoor, and a special consignment of 1500 volumes was forwarded for their use—an act of Christian brotherhood which was long remembered in the States.

From 1805 until the fall of Napoleon £6558 was spent in providing prisoners of war with the Scriptures, and over 49,600 copies were distributed by the Society. Whenever cartels were despatched, particular care was taken that every man as he embarked should have a volume of the Word of God to take home to his family; and to many of the French officers small consignments were intrusted for distribution on arrival at their destination. In what unknown ways, and among what people, the work bore fruit can only be conjectured, but more than once the colporteur of a later day was aided and befriended by old men who had not wholly forgotten their days of exile in England.

Nor were the British prisoners of war forgotten. Over 6000 volumes were sent to them in their French prisons. Our own soldiers and the foreign soldiers in our midst—the thousands of Hanoverian troops who passed over into England and formed “The King’s German Legion” in 1803, and the twelve hundred Black Brunswickers who dashed across four hundred miles of country between Bohemia and the mouth of the Weser—our sea-fencibles, sailors, and fishermen (British and foreign), the poor of all nationalities, were offered the Gospel in their own tongues; and in supplying these wants an expenditure of £3142 was incurred.

Thus, apart from its large and deliberate operations abroad, the Society in doing its home work

was in a measure carrying out the world-wide task it had undertaken. But it was not of cartels and convict-ships alone that it took advantage; missionaries, Government officials, travellers, emigrants, schoolmasters, captains and pursers of long-voyaged merchantmen were all used to convey the sacred volume to strange lands and the isles of remote seas.

Within four hundred miles of London Bridge, however, there was a land of mountain, heath, and forest almost as little known as Tasmania to the Committee of the Bible Society,—“a dark and remote country inhabited by wild Scots.” The genius of Sir Walter had not yet thrown a glamour over “the hills beyond Pentland”; Telford had but begun his nine hundred miles of new roads; the first stage-coach from Perth to Inverness did not start till 1806, and it was not till 1809 that the Bridge of Dunkeld—the door to the central Highlands—was thrown open for traffic. Englishmen were yet alive who had seen the formidable creatures of the kilt and claymore when the Young Pretender marched to Derby, but in the Highlands the feudal days of chief and vassal had gone by; the small farms and clachans of the clansmen had been cleared to make room for the sheep-walks of capitalists, and thousands had been driven out to eat the bitter bread of exile.

There was still a population estimated at 335,000 of whom 300,000 were said to understand no language but Gaelic. In many places all the religion that existed was a strange medley of half-forgotten Catholicism and fragments of a more

ancient nature-worship, a superstitious dread of the spirits of wood and river, and a rooted belief in charms, incantations, holy wells, and Beltane fires. Schools had been founded both by Parliament and by the Scottish S.P.C.K., but in the vast parishes the children were far-scattered and separated by moor and marsh. The scarcity of the Scriptures was extreme. In answer to an inquiry, a minister in Islay "did not suppose that among 4000 souls under his care there were a dozen Gaelic Bibles"; in Skye, with its 15,000 inhabitants, scarcely a copy was to be found; and all the Western Isles were in a similar condition. The price (25s.) was prohibitive, and even had the people been wealthy, the books were rarely obtainable. Nor was this state of things surprising. From 1618 to 1767 the only Scriptures in circulation appear to have been about 1200 copies of the Irish Bible, the language of which was sufficiently akin to their own to be generally intelligible. Between 1767 and 1804 there were issued 30,000 copies of the New Testament and 5000 Bibles in Gaelic, and an edition of one or more of the sections of the Old Testament which were printed before the version had been completed.

On taking up the case of the Highlands, the Committee put themselves in communication with the Scottish S.P.C.K., and the latter, though it was preparing a new edition of the Bible, not only afforded all the information needed, but generously furnished the Committee with its revised Gaelic text. An edition of 20,000 Bibles and 10,000 New Testaments was put to press without delay,

and in 1807 Gaelic Bibles were to be had at 3s. 6d. and Gaelic Testaments at 10d. In a wild district among the hills men and a cart with two or three horses were seen. Smugglers! *jaloused* the minister who observed them: "But judge of my surprise and thankfulness," he said, "when I found it was the first cargo of Bibles from the British and Foreign Bible Society!"

Joyful excitement in the Highland straths!—weekly and bi-weekly Bible meetings; little Bible schools, which grew too big, and "hived off"; gatherings once or twice a month, on moonlight nights, when as many belonging to the other schools as were able convened at the "mother-school." What times to remember were those moonlight nights! The hush of the hills, the silvered rock and tree, the schoolroom lit with dim iron crusies, the strange gathering of faces; for at these monthly meetings there were to be seen from two to three hundred persons of both sexes and all ages—"from childhood to the old and grey-headed using their spectacles in learning to read their native language"; with one book between every two students, since even with the addition of their own purchases the copies bestowed upon them were still too few to supply all. At a later date one hears of the great distances which many came on foot to obtain copies of the Scriptures.

Another large edition of Bibles and Testaments was printed in 1809, and the Edinburgh Bible Society, which was started in that year, undertook the distribution. Up to 1817 about 32,000 copies of the Scriptures were circulated in the Highlands,

at an expenditure exceeding £1750. But the Gaelic version found readers far beyond the borders of Scotland. Large numbers of the first edition were consigned to correspondents for sale or gratuitous distribution among the poor in Canada and Nova Scotia, whither thousands of Highlanders had emigrated. Among these there must have been many who cherished memories of chief and clan; and aged men and women with the "second sight" of the heart, to whom the sound of the wind brought back the cadences of a lost pibroch, and the smoke of the evening fire recalled visions of clachan and strath, of heather and boulder, of the green graves of the unforgotten dead; and for whom the sight of the Gaelic Scriptures, with their promise of life beyond death and union after exile, must have been a foretaste of the Wells of Elim. Copies were afterwards sent to the United States, and to the 93rd Highlanders at the Cape, and in a little while the Gaelic version was scattered far and wide, wherever the Highland tongue was spoken or read.

Let us turn to another distressful country. In Ireland, with its population of five and a quarter millions, there were not a dozen places outside the capital where the Scriptures could be purchased at the time the Bible Society was founded. One of the first steps taken by the Committee in 1804 was to open communication with the religious organisations in Dublin. It was ascertained that during the twelve years of its existence the Dublin Association for Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion had expended £2380 in

distributing 16,725 Bibles and 20,355 Testaments at reduced prices; that these had been eagerly bought up; and that the increasing demand threatened to exhaust the resources of the Association. The Committee made arrangements to facilitate and extend its labours, and at once began on its own account, through the medium of individual agents and Sunday schools, an extensive distribution among the poor of all denominations. The Dublin or Hibernian Bible Society was established in 1806, and in the following year the Cork Bible Society, and the Bible Committee of the Synod of Ulster. About the same time another active coadjutor was found in the London Hibernian Society, which was formed in 1806 for establishing schools and circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland, and which, thirteen years later, had 529 schools and 58,202 scholars under its care. Derry Bible Society (with nine Branches) was founded in 1812; New Ross Bible Society in 1813. By the close of 1813 the Hibernian Bible Society had established 53 Branches; it had opened depôts for the sale of the Scriptures in a hundred towns, and its circulation for the year was 50,000 volumes. Twelve months later it had established Auxiliaries in Galway, Kerry, King's County, and Kildare, and its circulation was between 80,000 and 90,000 volumes—a total of 200,000 from its commencement. To these Irish Bible Societies, during the brief period of which we are speaking, the Committee voted money grants amounting to £2706, and supplies of Scriptures to the value of £2216, and they provided the London Hibernian Society

with more than 16,000 copies for the schools in Ireland, at a loss of £1731.

All the assistance they could give was sorely needed. The people were miserably poor. By the end of 1804 the National Debt had risen to fifty-three millions—a leap of six and twenty millions in the four years that followed the Union. Population and taxation had increased, but the revenue was falling. The prosperity of the towns began to flag, and in a few years Dublin, which had been practically ruined by the abolition of the Irish legislature, sank to the level of a second-rate city. Agriculture had been stimulated by the Napoleonic wars, but after the proclamation of peace agricultural prices fell, and there was no trade to counterbalance the loss. In 1814 and 1815 the chronic pinch of poverty was intensified by the failure of the potato crop. In these unhappy circumstances the Bible proved to thousands a very present help. The poorest were eager to possess it. “We will buy a little less meal, and take home the Word of God with us; we may never get Testaments for 7d. each again.” Even beggars became purchasers. “I would feel less,” said one poor blind creature with five children, “knowing my child to be hungry, than to have it living without the Word of God.”

So much for those parts of the country in which English was used. Irish was still spoken over nearly the whole of Ireland; in 1812 it was calculated that two millions, out of about six, were “incapable of understanding a continued discourse in English”; and indeed down to the Great

Famine Irish was the home-speech of half the population. When Mr Hughes and Charles of Bala visited the country on behalf of the Society in 1808, the latter was convinced that if religion was to be spread, there must be Erse Bibles, preaching in the native tongue, and schools in which the children should be taught to read Irish. In 1809 the Committee issued their first edition of the New Testament in Erse. It was speedily bought up; a second edition was called for, a third, a fourth; and then the whole Irish Bible was published. Little cause for wonder; a century and a quarter had elapsed since the appearance of the small and expensive edition of Bishop Bedell's version—nearly half of which had been sent over to the Highlanders in Scotland. Up to 30th June 1817, the Society printed 5000 Bibles and 10,750 Testaments in Irish. To the "wild Milesians," who passionately loved their mother-tongue, the Scriptures in this form were welcome beyond words. They became "the class-book of the hedge-school, and supplanted those foolish legends which poisoned the minds of youth." In remote villages one came across scenes similar to those in the Highland straths: numbers of people met in the evening, not for amusement, drunkenness, or gaming, "or to enter into illegal combinations or dangerous conspiracies, but to have the sacred volume read aloud to them." Here, as in the north of Scotland, it was found that the Word of God was the best of schoolmasters.

At this time, too, the Roman Catholic clergy presented themselves in an engaging light. One

of the earliest grants of the Society was a thousand copies of the English New Testament to Roman Catholic schools at half the cost price. A bishop not only authorised but recommended the admission of the books; Roman Catholic as well as Protestant children attended the Sunday schools opened in various places; and in one chapel, after reading the Gospel of the day from an Irish Testament the priest went on to explain that the difference between the Roman Catholic Testament and the English and Irish Testaments was the difference between "four and two," and "two and four" making six. Indeed in England and Scotland as well as in Ireland there were priests who availed themselves of the facilities offered by the Society to provide their schools with the Scriptures; and both on the Continent and in the United States there were appearances which warranted the hope that the Church of Rome would in some measure co-operate in the Biblical movement.

As early as 1805, before the Committee had yet had time to accomplish much in the way of printing, New Testaments were purchased for distribution in Jersey, where, in consequence of the war, the supply from Holland had been suspended, and the Word of God had become so scarce that "old second-hand family Bibles sold at £2 and £4—which none but the rich could afford." The first boon to Jersey was followed by others, and Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark were not forgotten. A considerable consignment was also forwarded to the Scilly Isles, where as yet no flower-fields

had been laid out, and fishing, kelp-burning, and pilotage furnished the means of subsistence.

English Bibles were sent to the Isle of Man in 1808, but at that date the islanders still clung to their native tongue; and in 1810 the Committee prepared an edition of the New Testament from the Manx version begun in the dungeon of Castle Rushen by Bishop Wilson in 1722 and completed by Bishop Hildesley his successor. In 1771 the MS. of part of that version was held for five hours above the breaking seas, and was one of the few things saved from the wreck of the vessel in which it was being taken to Whitehaven to be printed. A second edition was issued by the Committee in 1815, and a third in 1819. But the day of the Manx tongue was closing. In 1825 the Bishop of Sodor and Man intimated that the islanders preferred the English text. Even as late as 1872 copies of the Manx Scriptures were in circulation, but the depository sale-list for 1875 was the last in which they appeared among the Society's publications.

At this point we close for the present our account of the home work of the Society. For the first time probably people realised that six languages were spoken in these islands. In those six languages alone the Committee printed, up to June 1817, 801,339 Bibles and 803,883 Testaments, a total of 1,605,222 copies of the Scriptures. The figures imply a growth of work, a largeness of demand, an activity of distribution, a devotedness to the cause which need no comment, except perhaps this, that on the Committee and its

Sub-committees politicians, public men, bankers, lawyers, merchants gave—as indeed they have ever since given—their time and experience both lavishly and gratuitously, and that it was not till 1823, after Mr Owen's death, that a salary was attached to the office of Secretary.

Out of this expansion of operations arose the need for a Bible House. For twelve years the Society possessed no local habitation of its own. The library (to which Granville Sharp presented the first contribution of rare Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters) and the depôt were in one place, the accountant's office in another, the Committee room in a third. On the 24th June 1816 the Society took possession of 10 Earl Street, a commodious building, the site of which stretched from pavement to pavement across what is now Queen Victoria Street, about a hundred of yards west of the present Bible House. There for half a century, though Secretaries passed away and new Presidents occupied the chair, it “never wanted means and instruments for the furtherance of its objects.”¹

¹ Lord Teignmouth's speech at the Fifteenth Anniversary.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOOK AND THE SWORD

TWO months after the meeting at the London Tavern, the first continental Bible Society was founded. England was distracted with fire and drum and the tramp of battalions; French battle-ships and the chain of camps along the coast rendered the Continent inaccessible from Brest to Helder Fort; still the news of the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society was conveyed to Germany and Switzerland, where it was hailed with delight by good men, both of the Reformed Churches and of the Roman faith.

In Central Europe the distribution of the Holy Scriptures was an older idea even than it was in this country. A Würtemberg Bible Society, "the first since the Reformation," flourished as early as the second part of the sixteenth century. In some sort it was a "foreign" society too, for one of its objects was to help the poor and persecuted Protestant brethren in Austria, Carinthia, Croatia, Slavonia, and Transylvania; and many thousands of copies of the Word of God were circulated before it was suppressed. In the seventeenth century the dearth among the poor in Silesia was supplied by

a Ladies' Bible Association, but its work ceased on the death of its foundress, Dorothea Sibylla, Duchess of Brieg. More fortunate than either, the Bible Institution at Halle in Saxony, founded in 1710 by Baron von Canstein and directed, after his death, by his friend Francke, who had already originated the celebrated Halle Orphanage, was still in existence. During the ninety-five years which had gone by it had issued over three million volumes of the Scriptures in many languages, and these had been dispersed not only through Europe, but in America and among the Russian colonists in Asia. It had done much to preserve the light of the Gospel in a world fast darkening into materialism and infidelity; and the time had now come when it was to afford the Bible Society frequent and opportune assistance.

As foreign secretary of the R.T.S., Mr Steinkopff was in touch with the religious leaders and associations on the Continent. Through him the Committee became acquainted with Jean Frédéric Oberlin, pastor of Waldbach and four other Alsatian hamlets among the high rocks and pine forests of the Ban de la Roche. A savage tract Oberlin found it in 1767; roadless and bridgeless, with some eighty to a hundred wild, ill-clad, hunger-pinched families, whose only language was a strange twelfth-century dialect, in which the corrupted Latin of Romanised Gaul survived. Now, in May 1804, cherry and pear blossom half hid the neat straw-thatched cottages of the well-to-do villagers; crops were springing in the thrifty clearings among the rocks; a silk-ribbon

mill was busy in the valley. On the well-kept mountain roads (which Oberlin had helped to make with his own hands) you might have met bright little school-children chattering in liveliest French ; might perchance have seen Oberlin himself courteously raising his hat to them as they passed—for an ounce of example is worth a ton of precept.

Twenty-two years later, when he shall be borne to his grave beside his beloved church, there will be fixed to his pall the decoration of the Legion of Honour, awarded by Louis XVIII. "for services rendered to an extensive population." Before that time arrives the great-hearted, apostolic man will have extended the work of the Bible Society far beyond his own jurisdiction, and his youngest son Henri Gottfried will have travelled hundreds of miles among the Protestant congregations in the south of France.

Through Steinkopff, too, the Committee heard from Tobias Kiesling of the state of spiritual destitution in which he found the people of Styria, Hungary, and Carinthia, in the course of his travels. When he had the privilege of giving away a Bible or a New Testament, "father and mother," he wrote, "son and daughter, are running after me, thanking me a hundred and a thousand times, kissing my hand and my coat, and exclaiming with tears of joy, 'May God bless you ; may the Lord Jesus bless you in time and to all eternity !'" This letter of the worthy Nuremberg merchant led to the Committee volunteering a grant of £100 to assist any society that should be founded in Germany on the same lines as their own. The offer met with a prompt

response ; on Ascension Day, 10th May 1804, the German Bible Society was established at Nuremberg ; and “the wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment” was begun on the Continent. Contributions flowed in to the new society from Switzerland, where various difficulties prevented the formation of a local organisation ; a further grant of £200 to aid the production of a large edition of Luther’s Bible was voted by the Committee early in 1806 ; and in the course of that year the German Bible Society was transferred from Nuremberg to Basel.

The example thus given awakened a spirit of emulation among the Roman Catholics of Ratisbon. In 1805 they started an institution of their own, and though it had no connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, it promoted the same object, and the version of the New Testament (Schwarzel’s) which it printed for the benefit of thousands who had never seen the Scriptures was free from note and comment, and otherwise received the approval of the Reformed clergy. Up to 1822 there were circulated 65,000 copies ; a decade or two later the Ratisbon Society is believed to have died out.

Meanwhile the Committee were seeking for another and more effectual entrance into that great empire whose condition as to the Scriptures had been illustrated by two striking incidents. In one of the blasphemous orgies of the Revolution, Lyons had been ransacked for a Bible to tie to an ass’s tail, and in Paris, after the Peace of Amiens, Mr Hardcastle of the L.M.S. had for three days sought in

vain for a single copy of the Word of God. A zealous coadjutor was found in the secretary of the Religious Society at Basel, and money grants were voted to enable him to distribute the French Testament among the poor in the towns and cities within reach, and to open negotiations for the supply of correspondents in Lyons, Nimes, Bordeaux, and even in Paris.

February the 11th, 1806, was a red-letter day in the records of the Committee. On that date the Berlin Bible Society, founded in the preceding autumn by John Jänicke, pastor of the Bohemian colony in Berlin, received the sanction of Frederick William, King of Prussia, who sent a generous contribution to its funds. It was the first time that a royal hand had been raised in approval of the cause. In March the Committee transmitted their promised grant of £100. In June they contributed £150 towards the expense of printing the Bohemian Bible, the last edition of which had appeared in 1768 and had long since been exhausted. The Berlin Society had already purchased some thousands of Bohemian Testaments from the Canstein Institution at Halle, subscriptions were beginning to flow in, the co-operation of friends at Danzig had been volunteered, and the Committee had voted another £100, when, on the 8th October, Prussia declared war against France.

During these years, as we have said, the history of the Bible Society must be read with a background of warfare ever present in our memory. It is only by realising the condition of the time that we can understand the difficulties under which the

work of the Society was prosecuted, and the need there was for its accomplishment. In September 1805 the camps along the Channel were broken up, and the French Army of Invasion streamed across the Rhine. The surrender of the flower of the Austrian army at Ulm, the victory of Austerlitz, the Confederation of the Rhine, marked the stages of Napoleon's insatiable aggression. A fortnight after Prussia declared war, the battle of Jena annihilated an army which had been regarded as the most formidable in Europe, and made the Emperor master of almost an entire kingdom containing a population of nearly nine millions.

A period of consternation, of social dissolution, of unspeakable disorder followed. In November, Napoleon issued his Berlin Decree, declaring the British Islands in a state of blockade, prohibiting all commerce with them, confiscating all letters to England and all English goods on the Continent. In Prussia imports and exports were practically abolished, factories were brought to a standstill, money became scarce, business houses collapsed. The very necessaries of life rose to famine prices. In the pillaged cities the hungry crowds that passed along the streets could hardly be controlled. Even the wealthy were reduced to black bread and to roasted acorns instead of coffee. Pastor Jänicke wrote from Berlin in May 1807: "The distress with us is very great; thousands groan under the pressure of extreme poverty. O Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us, and deliver us out of these troubles! Yet adoration to Thy name, that Thy work is still being carried on! Here is the fifty-sixth sheet of our

Bohemian Bible ; if we meet with no impediment I hope the whole work will be completed towards the end of next October. Blessed be the name of the Lord ! His Kingdom will increasingly prosper in the midst of the convulsions of earthly realms."

Then all is silence, till a couple of letters of June 1808 manage to run the blockade. From them we learn that the first copies of the Bohemian Bible had been completed in the preceding September, and were now being distributed in Bohemia and among the Bohemian colonies in Silesia. Gladly would the Berlin Society print a Polish Bible, but its funds are low ; it is bound and encompassed on all sides, and still waits for the *Ephphatha* of the Lord. "The distress of multitudes increases, hundreds of families are without employment, without bread!" And Prince Jerome, who holds his dissolute court at Breslau, is bathing daily in a cask of wine. "From the middle of January to the middle of April last, I [Pastor John Jänicke] have daily distributed 6000 messes of soup. Yet in the midst of these distresses I am not left without hope. . . . Did He not spare Nineveh? Did He not compassionately regard the six score thousand infants, and also the cattle left therein? And will He have less compassion on the many thousand children that are in this city, and in our provinces?"

In spite of decree and embargo the Committee found means to respond. By successive grants amounting to £960 they insured the production of a large edition of the Scriptures in Polish, and subsequently advanced a loan of £300 to enable

the society to tide over the interval between publication and the receipts from sales. The Polish Bible was ready in October 1810. In 1811 there was an insistent demand for another issue of the Bohemian Bible, but the income of the Berlin Society was little more than £20, and in Prussia, Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, the people were miserably poor, money was scarce, and the value of State paper had fallen so low that a hundred florins in paper realised only twelve and a half in specie. The reply of the Committee was another grant of £300, and the second edition of the Bohemian Bible was put to press.

In 1806 the Committee had offered to assist in printing Luther's Bible, the last edition of which had been issued in 1755; but before any arrangements could be made, the King of Prussia had fallen back on Königsberg, and a few months later the Russians had taken their stand under the walls of the old town. It was not till 1809 that, stimulated by a grant of £300, a Königsberg Bible Committee was formed, and even then the prospect of obtaining support from the ravaged country around them appeared so hopeless that they hesitated to begin. Another donation of £200 was accordingly voted; it was announced far and wide from the pulpit that a large edition of the Lutheran version was in preparation, and in a few months 1300 copies were subscribed for; but progress was retarded by many difficulties, and in 1812 the work was still going through the press. When, however, the Polish Bible was completed at Berlin in 1810, a supply was placed at the disposal of the Königsberg

committee, and with the assistance of other friends they started on a project for placing Bibles and Testaments in every Polish school within their range.

Notwithstanding the evasions of the Berlin Decree, intercourse with the Continent was all but suspended. From March 1807, when the German Society was again assisted with £300, to April 1810, only four letters reached the Committee from Basel. These, however, told of large printings, rapid distributions, and the zealous co-operation of local friends. A number of Moravian merchants in Basel had undertaken an edition of the Romansch New Testament for the people of the Grisons, where the Scriptures had long been "out of print," and copies were rarely to be had at any price. This edition was in the Churwelsche dialect spoken in the Protestant Engadine, and on its appearance not only was the Old Testament eagerly asked for, but an earnest request was made for the New Testament in the Ladinische dialect for the Roman Catholics of the Oberland. The expense involved in these two proposals exceeded the resources of the devout merchants, but the Committee readily supplied the funds—£200 for each of the Romansch versions,—and added another £200 for an edition of the New Testament in Italian. In France too the large sales at low prices among the Reformed congregations scattered over the eastern and southern provinces aroused a desire for the Word of God among the Roman Catholics. Basel afforded the principal opportunity of reaching the French people, and the Committee readily seconded

every project devised for their benefit. £200 was forwarded for the immediate purchase of French Testaments; stereo plates of the French Bible were ordered for the German Bible Society; and £300 was voted to assist one of its members in producing a large edition of the Old Testament, of which he had engaged to defray three-fourths of the cost.

In August 1811, with the help of a grant of £500 from the Committee, the Hungarian Bible Institution was founded at Pressburg under the patronage of the Baroness de Zay. There were upwards of a million and a half of Protestants in Hungary, but owing to the fierce religious persecutions of old days and the restrictions which still existed, there were but few copies of the Scriptures in the country. A better time now seemed to have dawned; the Emperor of Austria authorised the Hungarian Institution to establish a press of its own, and in the meantime operations began with the purchase of Slavonic Bibles for sale at a very cheap rate among the poor.

Such, briefly sketched, were the beginnings in Central Europe. The Society had expended upwards of £4700 in money grants, and that amount was raised to £5600 by purchase of Scriptures from the Canstein Bible Institution for distribution among the German colonists on the banks of the Volga, the poor of Germany and Poland, and the unhappy refugees who, in the bombardment and sack of their native towns, had often lost everything but life.

While these events were taking place, the

Bible Society's work in Northern Europe was being prepared for it in a strangely providential way. In the summer of 1805 the Rev. John Paterson and his colleague the Rev. Ebenezer Henderson sailed from Leith to Elsinore, on their way to India as missionaries from the Congregational Churches in Edinburgh. At that time the East India Company, in its dread of "losing our Indian Empire" if any attempt were made to convert the Hindus to Christianity, peremptorily forbade the presence of missionaries in their territories. But if the English missionary was "a man forbid" on an English deck, there were Danish ships and there was the Danish settlement of Serampore on the Hooghly, a dozen miles above Calcutta, by means of which the Gospel might be carried to the benighted millions of Hindustan. On their arrival at Copenhagen they found that they could not embark until the following spring. Their first Sunday in the Danish capital—a Sabbath of busy shops, empty churches, and streets crowded with holiday-makers—convinced them that "there was as much need for a missionary in Copenhagen as in India." They threw themselves into this unexpected field of usefulness; but what seemed only a temporary mission proved to be the opening of a new career. In consequence of financial difficulties the Edinburgh Churches released them from their engagements, and they readily undertook the duties to which the R.T.S. and the Bible Society invited them.

Attention had already been drawn to the spiritual condition of Iceland. Among a popula-

tion of 47,000, with 300 parish churches, there were not more than forty or fifty copies of the Bible in the whole island, and the Scriptures were not to be had for any money. The Danish Evangelical Society, founded in the isle of Fünen in 1801, was on the point of printing an edition of the Icelandic New Testament; and on hearing of the state of affairs the Committee offered a donation of £250 to increase the edition from 2000 to 5000 copies, and a further grant of £300 in aid of an issue of the Icelandic Bible. Paterson saw the New Testament through the press; a large supply was despatched to the island by the spring ships of 1807; and a consignment for the Bishop was awaiting a special vessel, when the danger of the Danish fleet falling into the hands of Napoleon led to the bombardment of Copenhagen. Paterson, with his Bible in his pocket ("Not knowing what would become of me, I resolved to have it for my companion, living or dying"), witnessed that terrible spectacle. On the night of the 4th September the sky was so lit up by the burning town that, although it was wet and cloudy, "we could see the ships plainly at sea some miles off." Curious to think that the commander of those seven-and-twenty sail of the line was Admiral Gambier, a Vice-President of the Bible Society, and that it was an agent of the Society who was watching the shells and red-hot balls which were being flung into the doomed city.

Hostilities suspended the printing of the Icelandic Bible, and Paterson passed over into Sweden. Here there was abundant work to his

hand. Among the whole population there was not one family in ten—among the peasantry there was not one in twenty—that possessed either Bible or Testament. He brought the matter home so convincingly to those in high places at Stockholm that in February 1808 the Swedish Evangelical Society was founded under the sanction of the King and the Privy Council. It was not yet indeed a regularly constituted Bible Society (it became the Swedish B.S. a few years later), but its Bible and its Tract department were kept separate, and it was admissible as an Auxiliary. The Committee accordingly aided its funds with a gift of £300, and it set itself to the task of providing and distributing the Scriptures.

The early months of this year (1808) were filled with rumours of coming trouble. In the Treaty of Tilsit it had been arranged that if Sweden refused to join France and Russia against England, the Czar was to declare war, and to take Finland as his share of the booty. Gustavus IV., who, on the murder of the Duke of Enghien, had dismissed the French ambassador and returned the King of Prussia his order of the Black Eagle (“He never could, according to the laws of knighthood, consent to be brother Companion of an assassin”), refused to make common cause with “the Great Beast of the Apocalypse.” As the result of the campaign which followed, Finland was lost for ever, and Gustavus was forced to sign his abdication. In the summer Paterson and Henderson had set out on a tour of 2300 miles through the north. They travelled

through a considerable part of the ancient province of Dalecarlia, where bread was made of fir-tree bark and the inhabitants of each parish all dressed alike, every parish having its particular colour. At Hernosand they were informed by Bishop Nordin that there were 10,000 Laplanders, who knew no tongue but their own, that the first and only edition of the Lapp New Testament, issued in 1755, was nearly exhausted, but an edition of the Bible was at that moment passing through his own press at Hernosand. They made an excursion into Lapland; entered Finland from Tornea, and hoped to go as far south as Åbo, but the advance of the Russian troops left no alternative but a precipitate flight.

The Committee promptly arranged with the Bishop for 5000 copies of the Lapp New Testament at a cost of £250, and the work was completed under his supervision in 1811. Half of the impression was sent into Swedish Lapland at Government expense, and was distributed, not at the winter markets in the towns, but by inland carriers, who thus placed the books within reach of those who would prize them most in the remote parishes. The Russian Government also authorised the free importation of copies into Russian Lapland, and engaged to forward them to their destination—a gracious concession which gave the Society ground for hope that before long the Bible would have free course in the vast empire of the Czar.

An encouraging instance is recorded of the effect of these measures on the warm hearts of

the Scandinavians. Early in 1810 Sweden was constrained to declare war against England, but this hostile attitude was little more than formal. The ravages of war, famine, and pestilence among the Swedes and Finns had for several years excited the compassion of England, and the order for the war-prayer was met with a warm remonstrance among the Dalecarlians. "War with the English? We were starving, and they sent us food; our souls were perishing, and they sent us the Bible. No, we cannot pray against our best friends." The declaration of war, however, reconciled the opposite shores of the Sound; the King of Denmark granted Mr Henderson leave to superintend the printing of the Icelandic Bible in Copenhagen; and the Society directed that 5000 additional copies of the New Testament should be printed from the same type.

The Stockholm Society was now in full swing. 10,600 copies of the Swedish New Testament had been distributed, but demands came from all quarters, and in the spring of 1811 a fourth edition of 6000 was in the press. The list of its contributors included persons of every rank and condition, from the highest nobles to the poorest servants; donations had been received from Scotland and from friends on the Continent; and as the result of this liberal co-operation it had been able to make gratuitous distributions amongst Swedish sailors and the indigent refugees who had escaped from the pillaged provinces of Finland.

About this time Paterson called attention to the condition of the Finns, a people numbering over a million and a quarter, among whom no portion of the Scriptures had been printed since 1776. The Committee placed £500 at his disposal for the formation of a Bible Society for Finland. In August 1811 he ran the gauntlet of the English gunboats patrolling the Gulf, reached Åbo, and enlisted the interest of Bishop Tengström and Count Steinheil, the Governor-General. In the following year the Åbo Bible Society was founded, with the Count as president. The Czar, who contributed 5000 roubles from his private purse, not only sanctioned the raising of subscriptions and the importation duty-free of all articles necessary for the proposed edition of the Finnish Bible, but graciously consented that a portion of corn tithes originally assigned to the printing of the Scriptures, but lately appropriated to State purposes, should be applied for five years in aid of the edition. A pleasant thought, that once more the corn tax was being used to enforce the text, "Man shall not live by bread alone."

In 1812 it was decided that Paterson should visit St Petersburg, partly to prepare the type of the Finnish Bible, partly to see what measures could be taken in Russia itself, and that Steinkopff should make his first official tour among the foreign Bible Societies. The two met at Helsingborg, where, in company with Henderson, they "related to each other the great things God had done for the Society," and discussed the best means of promoting its objects. It was in the latter half of June; and they were not aware that already had

begun that tragic sequence of events which closed at last in six feet of English earth at St Helena.

On the last day of May 1812 Napoleon had entered Poland, and his legions—498,000 strong—were in full march for the Niemen. In warlike splendour, and with the revolting arrogance of the foredoomed, they had swept through Prussia, devouring the last truss of straw, the last blade of grass. Troop by troop, day after day, the masses had rolled on without ceasing. Never had the people seen so prodigious an army—men of all nations, soldiers in every kind of uniform, generals in hundreds. Their passing was like the migration of hordes of wild beasts and birds of prey. From the field-marshal to the sutler, they were insatiable. “The officers obliged the wife of a poor village pastor to cook their ham in red wine. They drank the richest cream out of the pitchers, and poured essence of cinnamon over it; the common soldiers, even to the drummer, blustered if they had not two courses. They ate like madmen. But even then the people prognosticated that they would not so return. And they said so themselves.” Everything seemed ominous. Their horses no longer neighed when they left the stables; crows and ravens accompanied the army to some disastrous battlefield on the Russian steppes.

The invasion began on the 24th June, and Napoleon himself crossed the Niemen near Kovno. What a portent was that which marked the passage! At the head of his appalling myriads he was challenged by a solitary Cossack on the Russian bank of the river. An insolent boast was

flung back; the scout gazed a moment, then wheeled his horse round and galloped away. Here, as he passes the threshold of the inhospitable wastes which seemed to be leagued with the primeval forces of Nature against his ambition, we leave him for a little. Like Caligula, to whose disordered brain the Sea came in some strange personal shape and spoke words of terror, Napoleon had heard mysterious voices calling him from the unknown. He would start up suddenly from a doze crying, "Who calls me? Who calls me?" and then drop off to slumber again. The hour had come when the unseen Summoners were to be obeyed, and the man went forth to his fate.

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH GOLD

STEINKOPFF crossed the Sound to Copenhagen, where he arranged with Henderson for the more expeditious production of the Icelandic Bible. He presented £120 to the Danish Evangelical Society, which had generously contributed to the Icelandic work, and proceeded through Germany to Switzerland—an undertaking of some personal danger, for, apart from the hazard of traversing countries overrun by rapacious troops and the gangs of ruffians who follow the track of an army, there was the constant risk of incurring the suspicion of the French Government. For nearly six months, however, he travelled unmolested, and expended over £2700 on sowing the seeds of a great Biblical revival. Bible Committees, which were shortly to become independent Bible Societies or Auxiliaries, were formed at Halle (in connection with the Canstein Institution), Zürich, Würtemberg, Frankfort, Osnabruck, Altona, and in Swedish Pomerania; and consignments of the Scriptures from Basel and Halle were committed to discreet friends for distribution in Dresden, Leipzig, Göttingen, Hanover, and other centres.

He found that the Basel Bible Society, which in six years had circulated upwards of 26,000 Bibles and Testaments in German, French, Romansch, and Italian, had founded an Auxiliary at Coire, the capital of the Grisons, and a Bible Committee in Paris, which was only awaiting the sanction of the Ministry of Police for its legal establishment. Among his correspondents was Leander Van Ess, Roman Catholic Professor of Divinity in Marburg University, who had already dispersed 20,000 copies of his own German translation of the New Testament. Steinkopff assigned him £200 for the distribution of 3000 copies among his co-religionists, on condition that the few notes appended to the text were deleted. Subsequently Van Ess received grants amounting to £600, and afterwards he was more fully engaged in the service of the Society. The Berlin Bible Society Steinkopff was unable to visit, but he reported that it had issued 15,000 volumes of the Bohemian and Polish Scriptures, and the Committee, moved by the unhappy condition of Prussia, voted £250 in aid of the new edition of the Bohemian Bible then in the press.

We have often been told of the untiring energy with which England lavished its gold to build up coalition after coalition against Napoleon; no historian has taken account of this spiritual coalition, built up too "with English gold," by means of which the Word of God was searching the hearts of down-trodden peoples and creating a new life within them.

Paterson had set out from Stockholm on the

10th July. This, however, was not the first step taken on behalf of the Society in regard to Russia. In 1806 Lord Teignmouth had written to the venerable Archbishop Plato, who was impressed with the projects of the Society, though his extreme age—he was then in the tenth year of his second century—probably deterred him from venturing on new undertakings. About the same time the attention of the Committee was directed to a lonely station of the Scottish Missionary Society at Karass, a Tartar village north of the Caucasus, about midway between the Sea of Azov and the Caspian. Henry Brunton was translating the New Testament into Tartar-Turkish; at a cost of £650 the Committee provided a fount of type and paper; by October 1810 the printers had completed the Acts, and two years later, as the volume was finished, the life of the translator reached its close.

At Sarepta on the Volga, where since 1765 the Moravian Brethren had been labouring among the thirteen parishes of those German colonists for whose benefit the Scriptures had been ordered from Halle, the work of translation had also been begun. Conrad Neitz was engaged on a Kalmuk version for the nomads of the steppe—some 60,000, roaming with their brown tents and their droves of horses and cattle between the Volga and the Caucasus. A vast horde of their kinsfolk had, less than forty years before, left Russia in that terrible flight which De Quincey has described in *The Revolt of the Tartars*, and this version, it was believed, would be used by them and many another wandering tribe of the same race. The Committee

furnished the cost of a fount of type and encouraged the translator, and in 1812 the Gospel of St Matthew issued from the press.

Assistance too had been offered towards the establishment of a Bible Society for Esthonia and Livonia, where, it was reported, the lower classes were as ignorant as the negro slaves and often more miserable, and where 400,000 families were destitute of the Scriptures. Intercourse was suspended, however, by the war in Prussia and Poland, and it was not till 1811 that a conditional grant of £600 secured the formation of the Bible Society of Dorpat. Collections were set on foot in various parts of the province; a further donation of £400 was made, and a goodly edition of 6000 Bibles and 20,000 New Testaments was got under way.

Another undertaking, and a most important, remains to be mentioned.

One of the Scottish missionaries at Karass was Robert Pinkerton. Failing health obliged him to remove to Moscow, where he found occupation in teaching among the best families. A letter from Steinkopff decided him to promote the cause of the Society; he aroused the interest of several of the nobility, and measures were taken for the organisation of a Russian Bible Society, with so fair a prospect of success that he invited the co-operation of Paterson.

The latter, as we have seen, was now on his way to the capital. In the first week of August 1812 he reached St Petersburg, and was cordially received by Prince Galitzin, Minister of Public

Worship, who listened encouragingly to his proposals and hopes, but feared that the condition of the country was too critical to allow him to proceed. Paterson was not to be daunted. On the 2nd September he arrived at Moscow, one of the last of our countrymen to view intact the old Tartar wall with its high brick towers, the sacred red gates of the Kremlin, the green spires of the churches, the barbaric splendour of cross and crescent glittering over domes and cupolas of silver and gold. The Governor-General accorded him a brief interview. The Princess Galitzin and her sister, Princess Metschersky, showed him hospitality. But at that distracted moment—for the Russians had set fire to Smolensk and abandoned it, and the French were advancing on Borodino—no one could give a thought to the formation of Bible Societies. The closing of the gates of Moscow on the 5th made his departure imperative; on the 14th, from the Mount of Salvation, Napoleon “beheld at last that celebrated city,” and the cry of “Moscow! Moscow!” rose from the whole army, like the shout of Xenophon’s Ten Thousand when they caught sight of the sea. Two nights later Moscow was in flames.

In the days of wild excitement and dismay which followed, Paterson perceived that nothing could be done in St Petersburg, and he had taken out his passport and was on the eve of starting for Sweden when his wife, who had suffered severely from their journey to Moscow, was stricken down with fever, and for weeks lay helpless. He occupied himself in preparing type

for the Finnish Bible and in drawing up an address on the establishment of Bible Societies in Russia.

On the 19th of October Napoleon began his disastrous retreat. One Cossack had challenged his coming; myriads harassed his return. They swarmed in such numbers as to resemble one of the ancient Scythian migrations. "Wild and fantastic figures, on unbroken horses whose manes swept the ground, seemed to announce that the inmost recesses of the desert had sent forth their inhabitants." Before two hundred miles of the terrible march had been completed, an overwhelming snowstorm preluded the intolerable cold which smote the invaders—a cold thirty degrees below zero, a cold so intense that "a sort of smoke came from ears and eyes." Men and women dropped and died in the snow-drifts beside the loot-laden waggons and carriages they were dragging. Groups of soldiers lay dead around the camp fires, their feet charred, their hair frozen to the earth. And everywhere the Cossacks whirled in clouds, with their long lances, their sledged field-guns, their hoarse "Hourra!"

On the day the great frost set in—the 6th of December—Paterson submitted to Prince Galitzin, for presentation to the Czar, the address which he had prepared, together with a memorial and plan for a Bible Society in St Petersburg. His Imperial Majesty, who was on the point of joining the army, postponed his departure until he had examined the scheme; and as with a stroke of the pen—"So be it. Alexander"—he gave it his

sanction on the 18th December, the last shattered remnants of the Grand Army struggled across the ice of the Niemen. Of the mighty host of the invasion 125,000 had fallen in battle, 132,000 had perished of fatigue, hunger, and cold, and 193,000 remained as prisoners.

On the 23rd of January 1813 the St Petersburg Bible Society was inaugurated in the presence of Archbishops and Metropolitans, Ministers of State and nobles, persons of distinction, and the clergy both of the Greek and the Roman Church. On receiving the welcome news, the Committee forwarded their promised donation of £500, and by the end of March the contributions, including a handsome gift from the Czar, who became a member, amounted to 60,000 roubles, and steps were being taken for the formation of Auxiliaries in the chief cities of the vast empire. But, alas! unutterable sorrow fell on the man who had laboured so earnestly and successfully in the cause. Mrs Paterson died on the 7th March, and her newborn babe was laid beside her in the grave "till the morning of the resurrection." So easy is it to lose sight of the workman in the story of the work, that it is well to realise that not without hardship and danger, sacrifice and anxiety, suffering and bereavement, was the work accomplished.

In the first bitter days of 1813 a silent rabble began to appear in long straggling lines among the snowy fields of Prussia—lame, hollow-eyed, frost-bitten creatures, clad in old sacks, in shawls, in bits of carpet, in women's coloured dresses,

in sheep-skins, in skins of dogs and cats; their heads hidden in night-caps, in handkerchiefs, in strips of fur—here and there a helmet or shako; their feet muffled in straw, rags, skin socks, felt shoes. Cold and hunger seemed to have taken a demoniacal possession of them. They burned themselves against the hot stoves in their craving for warmth; in their greed for food they devoured dry bread till they sickened and died. As they passed, the boys scared them into a movement of terror with the cry of “The Cossacks! the Cossacks!” On the 17th February those wild riders of the steppes reached Berlin—wonderful, picturesque, hideous, good-natured savages, who set the children on their horses and rode with them round the market-place, till “every boy became either a Cossack, or a Cossack’s horse.” On the 14th March the Czar and the King of Prussia met—the latter in tears. “Courage, brother,” said Alexander; “these are the last tears Napoleon shall cause you to shed.”

Next day Prussia declared war against France. An irresistible wave of patriotism swept through the afflicted country. From every village, from the mines and the forests, bands of volunteers trooped into the chief towns, singing the martial lyrics of Arndt and Körner. In this passionate uprising of a whole people, the work of the Bible Society may have counted for more than the historian has yet recognised. There was an intense conviction, not merely among the poor and uneducated, that in the evil and misery of human affairs a divine hand was vindicating the claims of justice and righteousness.

In October 1813 the broken legions of the Emperor fell back from Leipzig. Two months later the Cossacks were at Fontainebleau. In April 1814 Napoleon signed his unconditional abdication. A *pulk* of Cossacks escorted him to Fréjus; an English frigate conveyed him to Elba.

The Continent was now thrown open to friendly intercourse. In that blessed hour of peace the hearts of the people who had suffered so long were as broken soil to receive the seed of the Gospel, and the Society was encouraged to renewed exertions by the gracious sympathy of two sovereigns. During their visit to London after the signature of the Treaty of Paris, the Czar and the King of Prussia gave audience to a deputation from the Committee, and warmly promised to protect and favour the cause of the Bible in their dominions.

1814 was a year of exhilarating hopes and splendid activity. Paterson, Pinkerton, Dr Schwabe of the Lutheran Church in Goodman's Fields, and Dr Brunmark, chaplain to the Swedish Legation in London, were all travelling abroad for the objects of the Society. Bible Societies sprang up at Lübeck, Hamburg, Altona, and Bremen. The Berlin Society was merged in the greater Prussian Bible Society, which was strengthened by the accession of Potsdam, of Erfurt (the Thuringian Bible Society), and of the Bible Committees at Danzig and Königsberg as Auxiliaries. Societies were founded at Geneva and Lausanne. The Hanoverian Society was honoured with the patronage of the Duke of Cambridge. The Netherlands Bible Society was

established at Amsterdam, the Saxon Bible Society at Dresden. At Copenhagen the Danish Bible Society, organised through the exertions of Henderson, was sanctioned by the King (Frederick VI.), who assured it of his highest protection. The Swedish Evangelical Society at Stockholm was reconstituted as the Swedish Bible Society; in full Council of State Charles XIII. became patron, and Prince Karl Johan (Crown Prince Bernadotte) accepted the position of its first honorary member. The announcement of each new society gave occasion for that financial assistance which the Committee offered with an ungrudging hand.

The edition of the Icelandic Bible was also completed; large shipments had been sent out by the spring ships, and in June Henderson himself sailed for the island. In his wanderings among the wild and often beautiful scenes of snow and lava, grassy valleys and happy farmsteads, blue lakes with singing swans, rushing rivers and boiling fountains, he found everywhere the need for the benevolence and stirring influence of the Bible Society. During his stay he apportioned 4055 Bibles and 6634 Testaments for distribution, and before he left in the following summer he had the satisfaction of seeing the Icelandic Bible Society formed at Reykjavik.

In regard to 1815 one incident alone shall be mentioned. On Sunday, the 18th of June, while the French guns were thundering against Hougmont and La Haye Sainte, a Bible Society was founded in the ancient city of Brunswick. No

word had yet arrived of the mighty struggle that had begun, and the little gathering did not know that their gallant Duke, who had promised to be patron, had fallen two days before at the head of his Black Brunswickers at Quatre-Bras.

In this brief sketch many things must be omitted—the tours of the Society's agents through parts of Europe but little known even at the present day, the religious condition and the curious manners and customs of the people, the formation of Bible Societies, each with its own interesting story. The progress of the cause will be most clearly indicated by a few significant figures.

In Northern Europe, including Denmark, Finland, and Iceland, the total expenditure of the Society up to the close of 1816-17 amounted to £11,890. Fifteen Bible Societies and Auxiliaries had been formed, and they had received from the Committee grants amounting to £9424, and had printed 41,500 Bibles, 73,600 Testaments, and 3000 Psalters.

In Central Europe, including Hungary and Switzerland, the total expenditure of the Society (which covered the distributions effected in France) was £27,523. Ninety-six Bible Societies and Auxiliaries had been founded; the editions of the Scriptures issued by them showed an aggregate of 119,000 Bibles and 54,000 Testaments, and the grants with which they had been assisted by the Committee amounted to £21,025.

In 1814 Pinkerton had made arrangements for the establishment of a Polish Bible Society at

Warsaw, but the hostility of the Archbishop of Gnesen, Primate of Poland, resulted in the issue of a Papal Rescript expressing horror "at this pestilence, this most crafty invention, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined." Through the interposition of the Czar the Polish Bible Society was founded in defiance of the Vatican, but in Roman Catholic Austria the hope of promoting the cause was extinguished. An edict was issued prohibiting the formation of Bible Societies and the circulation of the Bible. Seizure followed prohibition, and three chests of Bohemian Bibles, which were taken by force, were only restored on condition that they should be sent out of the country at the expense of the consignee. A monitory Brief was also addressed by the Pope (Pius VII.) to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Mohilev, Metropolitan of Russia, but, strangely enough, a couple of months later, at the inauguration of the White Russian Bible Society at Mohilev, a Roman Catholic canon, in the presence of a Roman Catholic bishop, encouraged his co-religionists to support the pious labours of the Bible Societies, and quoted the memorable Brief of Pius VI. to Martini, Archbishop of Florence, regarding the Scriptures:—"These are most copious fountains, which should lie open to each individual for the drawing of holiness both in morals and in doctrine."

At the close of 1816-17 there were twenty-six Russian and three Polish Bible Societies and Auxiliaries; the grants from the Committee had exceeded £13,800, and the printings of the

Society at St Petersburg—now the Russian Bible Society—comprised 58,000 Bibles, 90,000 Testaments, and 7000 Portions in sixteen languages. The expenses in connection with Karass and Sarepta, the Volga colonies, prisoners of war in Russia, and the poor, raised the Committee's disbursements for the benefit of Eastern Europe to £16,079.

To sum up. In Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe, the Committee's direct grants amounted to £55,492, and during his continental tours Steinkopff distributed £6712—a gross total of £62,204. The Scriptures printed by these foreign organisations numbered 218,500 Bibles, 217,000 Testaments, and 10,000 Portions—an aggregate of 445,500 volumes.

In Southern Europe the conditions were peculiar, and for some years the work was irregular and almost fortuitous. Notwithstanding the presence of our troops in the Peninsula, direct and sustained operations were found to be impracticable in Spain and Portugal. Gibraltar served as a fixed centre from which a more or less casual distribution took place, and sea-captains, officers of the Navy, and correspondents scattered the Word of God from the Straits to Cyprus and Smyrna. One good commander of a merchantman had "the high gratification of presenting on Mars' Hill eighteen Testaments to as many Greeks." The New Testament in modern Greek was welcomed by bishops and archimandrites of the Greek Church; and after a sharp scrutiny demanded by the priests, Diodati's Italian New Testament received episcopal sanction

at Messina. An agency, and, as the period we are sketching drew to a close, a Bible Society, were founded in the island of Malta, the position of which, in the crossways of three continents, marked it out for the great central depôt of the Society's work in the Mediterranean. The effect of organised activity was soon observable; communications were opened with Aleppo, Baghdad, and Alexandria; and copies of the Society's edition of the Ethiopic Psalter reached the mysterious realm of Abyssinia. The distributions in Southern Europe amounted to 1000 Bibles, 31,325 Testaments, and 220 Psalters, in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, modern Greek, Arabic, Armenian, and Ethiopic, at an expenditure of £4170.

In connection with these operations in Europe, the Committee printed at home 131,939 Bibles and Testaments, and 2100 Psalters, in Ethiopic, Arabic, Greek (ancient and modern), German, Danish, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Now let us pass to the New World from this cursory survey of the Society's work in the Old.

CHAPTER VI

BEYOND THE ATLANTIC

IN 1808, while Prince Jerome was bathing in a cask of wine at Breslau and Pastor Jänicke was daily serving out six thousand messes of soup to the starving poor of Berlin, far away beyond the Atlantic preparations were in progress for the formation of the first Bible Society in America. On the 12th December it was established at Philadelphia.

No spot in the New World could have been more happily chosen for the inauguration of such an institution. This was the City of Brother-love laid out by William Penn a century and a quarter before; and here, while the city was still in its sylvan age, and the boundaries of streets were as yet only blazed on the chesnut and ash and walnut trees of the primeval forest, the Quakers thanked God that they were at liberty to worship Him "according to the dictates of the Divine Principle, free from the mouldy errors of tradition."

The project originally entertained by the founders of the Philadelphia Bible Society was one large organisation, which should include the whole of the United States, raise a common fund, and

distribute the Scriptures in every part of the country. A bold conception even in 1808, when for the most part the dominion under the Stars and Stripes extended along the Atlantic, when the Union comprised no more than eighteen States, and the "Far West" of the settler's dreams lay considerably to the east of the Mississippi. In 1810 the total population, including 1,191,000 slaves, was seven millions; to-day the population of the State of New York alone exceeds that figure. The time had not come for so great an enterprise, and the Society was founded on a smaller scale. The Committee at once sent a donation of £200, and a supply of Scriptures in Welsh, Gaelic, French, and German—versions which could not be obtained in the States,—and the work of distribution began. Was it needed? Let the secretary of the Philadelphia Society answer. The number of families and individuals who possessed no copy of the Word of God was so large that "the entire funds of the society might have been spent in supplying the wants of the city alone." Up to 1782 scarcity might perhaps have been attributed to the monopoly of the King's Printer, which had extended to the British colonies beyond the seas; in that year, however, the first American Bible was published with the approval of Congress, but, unhappily, the freedom of the Biblical press had not contributed extensively to the diffusion of the Scriptures.

In 1809 six more Bible Societies were formed, among them those of New York and Massachusetts. For the directors of the latter an equally startling

surprise was in store. Even among a population whose "forefathers had crossed the ocean with little more than this volume in their hands," it was discovered that there was a deficiency of the Scriptures, and seven years later "many could hardly believe that the wants of our own State should continue to be so great." It is, however, a curious fact that alike in the Old World and the New it was usually taken for granted that Bibles and Testaments were an almost universal possession, and it was not until a conscientious inquiry had been made that the astonishing rarity of the Word of God was demonstrated.

Louisiana was included in the Union in 1812; and when the government of the country was taken over, it was not till after a long search for a Bible to administer the oath of office that a copy of the Latin Vulgate was at last procured from a priest. As the result of a missionary tour undertaken at the expense of the Philadelphia, Connecticut, and New York Bible Societies, the New Orleans Bible Society was founded in 1813. A free population of 100,000, of which 70,000 were Roman Catholics, and a slave population of 40,000 were at once brought within the field of distribution; and the great southern port, with its crowded shipping, promised splendid openings to the Spaniards of Cuba, Campeachy, and the Mexican provinces. The Roman Catholic priesthood offered no opposition, were surprised indeed that opposition was considered possible; and the Bishop, who doubted whether there were ten Bibles among all the Roman Catholics in New Orleans, examined the French Testament and

sanctioned its circulation. With the co-operation of the Committee, the Philadelphia and New York Societies undertook large editions of the New Testament for gratuitous distribution in this newly acquired region.

Reference has already been made to the hostilities between the United States and Great Britain in 1812. But if the "Americans" were at war with England, "they were not at war with her pious and benevolent institutions." In June 1813 a supply of Bibles and Testaments, destined by the London Committee for Nova Scotia, was captured by an American privateer, brought into Portland, and sold by auction. The Massachusetts Bible Society was stricken "with shame and regret" at the occurrence, and an appeal was made to the public of Boston for subscriptions to replace the value of the books. In a day or two twice the amount was forthcoming, and it might have been indefinitely increased. On two other occasions the same friendly service was rendered. In 1814 Massachusetts redeemed a consignment of captured Bibles and Testaments, and forwarded them to the Cape; and a third supply, which was taken in to New York, was delivered up free of all charge by the owners of the privateer, and sent on to Canada. Kindly incidents to set beside the sympathy of the English Committee with the transatlantic prisoners at Dartmoor! Happily these troubles between two kindred peoples were composed by the peace signed at Ghent on Christmas Eve 1814.

By the close of 1814 the New York Bible Society had distributed a total of 10,114 Bibles, and had

contributed to the expense of the Oriental versions which were being prepared in India. In the spring of 1816 there were 130 Bible Societies, Auxiliaries, and Female Associations in the United States. Four had been started in Indiana territory ; one in Illinois, farther west ; even "the Father of Waters" had at length been crossed, and the Bible had a home in Missouri. The work which had to be accomplished, however, seemed to expand with the fleeting years. From 1809 to the beginning of 1816 the number of Bibles circulated by all the American societies did not exceed 150,000, and it was estimated that in eight States or Territories alone there were still 78,000 families destitute of the Word of Life.

It was in these circumstances, and after the labours of seven years had prepared the public mind for the great undertaking, that in May 1816, at a convention of delegates representing thirty-one institutions, the American Bible Society was established at New York. "In that convention there were revolutionary patriots, soldiers, and statesmen ; presidents and professors of colleges and theological seminaries ; the most eminent surgeon of his generation ; and plain untitled citizens. There were Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Reformed Dutch, Congregationalists, Friends ; and Dr Morse, who was a member, says, 'Roman Catholics among the rest.' But among them all there was not a dissentient voice ; and so great was the Christian harmony and love, that some of those least affected could not help crying out, 'This is none other than the work of

God!" The office of president was accepted by the Hon. Elias Boudinot, LL.D., who, as President of the Congress of the United States, had, thirty-three years before, signed the treaty of peace which established the independence of the people of the United States.

The British and Foreign Bible Society testified to their good wishes by a donation of £500 and a set of stereotype plates for the French Bible. Up to that time it had assisted seventeen of the earlier societies with grants amounting to £3272.

Of the hundred and thirty Bible Societies already in existence forty-three at once joined the national organisation; forty-one new societies were formed for the express purpose of co-operating in its labours. In 1818 its Auxiliaries increased to 194; in 1821 to 233; in 1824 to 376. In a few years more the parent Society encountered in the greatest of her daughters a friendly rival in good works in all the populous mission-fields of the East and West, and in the island groups of the South Seas.

We leave the United States in 1816 on the threshold of a new epoch. The waggon-trains were streaming farther and farther into the sunset; and farther and yet farther into the West the Red Men were retreating before the bees and the weed which was called "the White Man's foot." The Bible had crossed the Mississippi, had reached the shores of Mexico and the southern half of the great continent, had been sent even to that most westerly outpost of the expanding Republic—the settlement forming at the mouth of the Columbia river.

The Committee's first contact with the West Indies was a grant of a hundred French Testaments which were sent out to San Domingo early in 1807. In the following year 900 Bibles and Testaments (£118) were consigned to a zealous Quaker whose trading had been greatly prospered at Antigua, and who offered to distribute them free of freight and charge among soldiers and sailors and the sick in hospital, "who might have long since neglected such reading." During the next eight years 4000 Bibles and 11,500 Testaments, in Spanish, Dutch, English, and French, were distributed, at an outlay of £2330, not only in the far-scattered archipelago, but at various points on the mainland—Paramaribo in Surinam, Demerara and Berbice in British Guiana, and among the settlers in Honduras. At Paramaribo the Moravian missionaries had a congregation of 500 negroes, many of whom had learned to read, and among the islands there were at least 12,000 negroes belonging to the same communion. The effect of the Scriptures soon modified the ill-will with which overseers had hitherto regarded attempts at self-improvement among their slaves: "they saw thieves becoming honest, rebellious persons obedient, and instead of meetings for dancing and revelling, heard of gatherings for prayer and praise." In San Domingo, divided under the rival Governments of President Petion and Henry I. (Christophe), 4500 copies of the Word of God were introduced into the schools.

Most encouraging was the spirit awakened by the benevolent exertions of the Society. Although

in 1812 the times were hard, the Europeans in Jamaica sent the Committee subscriptions exceeding £750. The Jamaica Auxiliary of the People of Colour was also founded, and contributed £195 in two years; and Auxiliaries were established at Antigua and Berbice, which transmitted £202.

Though little real progress was effected in South America during these years, still there too the Society made a beginning. Through merchants and travellers and godly sea-captains the Scriptures found their way to Cartagena, to Brazil, and round the Horn to Chili. In 1806 six hundred copies were consigned to Buenos Ayres and Monte Video—the first time that the New Testament in Spanish had been seen there. They obtained a rapid circulation; even the priests bought them, and commended them as “good and fair copies”; but when our flag was lowered at Buenos Ayres in 1807 all religious publications distributed during the British occupation were called in under the severest penalties.

We turn to the far North—to the vast expanses of Canada, to the illimitable hunting-grounds of the Hudson's Bay Company. These last extended to the Great and Lesser Slave Lakes, but the White Man's tenancy was confined to a few forts and block-houses for trade in furs and peltry with the red tribes of Algonkins, Sioux, and Chippeways. The first assistance given by the Committee towards the production of a foreign version of the Scriptures was a grant in 1804 for an edition of the Mohawk-English Gospel of St

John, to be distributed among the Six-Nation Indians in Upper Canada, Ohio, and Oneida County. So little, however, was known of the Red Men, that nearly twenty years elapsed before it was discovered that the little book was intelligible to the Iroquois—the Iroquois, who *were* the Six Nations, just as the British are the four nations of the United Kingdom.

The population of Canada in 1800 was estimated at 470,000. The western boundary of Ontario was marked by Lake Winnipeg, but the colonists had not yet ventured far into the trackless forests; the great majority were located in Lower Canada, and as late as 1835 the site of Bytown, which afterwards became the City of Ottawa, was in the bush. The first grant to men of our own colour was made in 1807 to the people of Nova Scotia—the old French Acadie of Longfellow's *Evangeline*. As needs were made known and ships were available, consignments of the Scriptures, in Gaelic, Welsh, English, and French, were sent out to Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Montreal. In 1808 steps were taken to form local Auxiliaries; in the following year the first congregational collections were forwarded to the Committee; and in 1813 the Bible Society of Nova Scotia was established at Halifax, with Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, Lieutenant-Governor, as president. Bible Societies were afterwards founded at Pictou, Quebec, Niagara, and Yarmouth (Nova Scotia), and contributions amounting to £1509 were received from British North America up to the close of 1816. During that period the

Committee had circulated 12,500 Bibles and Testaments at an expenditure of £1700.

One more field of labour in these latitudes remains to be noticed—Labrador, that wilderness of boulders and cariboo moss, where snow lies from September to June, and the short summer brings green to little but stunted spruce, birch, and aspen in the hollows and deep ravines. In the summer of 1810, the stout ship *Harmony* coasted the low shore lined with glittering icebergs, floating or stranded, and cast anchor in Hopedale Bay. Nine-and-thirty years had gone by since, in August 1771, she had landed at Nain the Brethren of the first Moravian settlement in Labrador. Summer after summer the *Harmony* had brought tidings from home, and carried on the trade between the Eskimo and Great Britain. Whether the first *Harmony* was carved into memorials we have not learned, but when at last she left the grey seas of the North another *Harmony* took her place, and so for nearly a hundred and thirty years one *Harmony* or another came and went without disaster on her annual voyage until, in 1900, for the first time the ordinary means of traffic had so expanded as to suffice for the purposes of the mission.

In this summer of 1810 she brought back the Rev. B. Kohlmeister. Aged Thomas the Eskimo was the first on board, and he fell on his pastor's neck, weeping: "Art thou indeed Benjamin? And do I see thee once more before I die?" Kayaks crowded round the ship; women and children were waiting eagerly on the shore. "I could not refrain from

tears of joy," wrote the good missionary, "when I found myself once more in the midst of my beloved Eskimo." He had brought them a priceless treasure—the Gospel of St John which he had translated into their own tongue, and which the Committee had printed for their benefit. The books were distributed in the winter, when all had returned from their hunting excursions; and as they were given only to those who could read, considerable progress was made by scholars of all ages. The people took "St John" with them to the islands when they went out in search of fish or game, seals, wild geese, or berries; and in their tents or snow houses they spent the evenings reading by the glimmer of the moss in their lamps of soapstone. But most they liked to gather in some large dwelling at nightfall, when they returned from the sea or the hunting-ground, and hear the Word of God read by some one, child or adult, who had been taught in the schools of the mission.

In 1816 these strange people who called themselves "The Men" (Innuits) were in possession of the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Romans.

The Moravian Brethren had been attracted to Labrador by the report that the natives spoke the same language as the Greenlanders. They soon discovered that the Greenland version was unintelligible to these tribes, but having put their hand to the plough they did not turn back. The Greenlanders, too, on the edge of the everlasting glacier-ice, were remembered by the Committee, who sent them in 1813 the New Testament in their own harsh

speech of *ik* and *ok*. A callous, intractable race they seemed to Paul Egede, who, when he left them after fifteen years of toil and privation, preached from Isaiah xlix. : "I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." For several years the Moravians thought that they too were spending their strength for nought ; but at last they discovered the simple way of the Gospel to the Skrelling heart. The sight of John Beck working at his translation excited the curiosity of the Eskimo. They asked what he was writing ; he read them the story of Gethsemane. As they heard of the agony and sweat of blood, they laid their hands on their mouths in wonder, and one of them, Kayarnack—the first convert in Greenland—cried out, "How was that? Tell me that once more. I too would be saved."

CHAPTER VII

MORNING LANDS AND SAVAGE ISLES

ONCE more we change our outlook. The early transactions of the Society in the East bring us into close contact with men whose names will for ever be "a glory and a sweetness" to the Christian Church. There were the memorable "five chaplains"—David Brown, Claudius Buchanan, Henry Martyn, Daniel Corrie, Thomas Thomason; there was the devoted band of Baptist missionaries—William Carey, Joshua Marshman, William Ward. Without their co-operation little, humanly speaking, could have been achieved by the Society; without the aid of the Society half a century would scarcely have sufficed for the work they accomplished in the brief period of which we are now writing.

Within a month of its foundation the thoughts of the Society were directed to the teeming regions of the forbidden East— forbidden India, forbidden China. One can understand the semi-civilised policy of exclusion symbolised by the "Ten Thousand Li Wall," but it is hard to believe that there was ever a time when British Christians deliberately "paltered with eternal God for power," presented thank-offerings at the shrine of the

sanguinary goddess of the Hindus, suppressed all public confession of the Lord Jesus, forbade missionaries to land, protested in the face of the English people against the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of India, and called for measures to arrest "the rash and unwarrantable proceedings" of a Society, the chief object of which was "the universal dissemination of the Christian faith." Yet such was the case. It was under the flag of the little Danish settlement from which they took their name that the Serampore Brethren made their home, and a stubborn opposition had to be broken down before the Parliament of Britain emancipated the religion of Christ in its Indian possessions in 1813.

Among the myriads within the Great Wall the Committee hoped to distribute the Word of Life at no distant date, but, to their disappointment, a manuscript in the British Museum, represented as a Chinese translation of the New Testament, proved to be only a Harmony of the Gospels. The incident, however, led to an invitation to the missionaries at Serampore, David Brown, and other zealous friends in India to form themselves into a corresponding committee for the diffusion of the Scriptures and the preparation of Oriental versions. This communication was crossed by a letter from William Carey to the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, announcing that the little community under the Danish flag was already engaged in the translation of the Scriptures into Hindustani, Persian, Marathi, and Oriya. To the Committee it seemed as though Providence were making the rough ways

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smooth. Taking for granted the formation of the Bengal Corresponding Committee, they placed at its disposal £1000 to advance the work so auspiciously begun. It was not till September 1806, however, that the actual formation of that committee was reported by David Brown, who explained the delay in a single sentence: "We have lost Lord Wellesley, the friend of religion and the patron of learning, and succeeding Governors have opposed all attempts to evangelise the Hindus; have opposed the translation of the Holy Scriptures; have opposed the formation of a society for carrying into effect here the objects of your invaluable institution."

Thanks to the grant, the Bengal Correspondence Committee had been encouraged to take over the Biblical translation department of the College at Fort William (threatened with extinction when the East India Company reduced the establishment) and to enter on an independent scheme of Oriental versions. Bengali, Sanskrit, Telugu, and Gujarati were added to the list of languages in which versions were begun. A second grant of £1000, then a third of £1000 annually for three years, were voted by the Committee at home. Work was undertaken in Sikh, Kanarese, and half a dozen other tongues; and the annual £1000 was doubled and guaranteed for three more years. Large and larger supplies of Bibles and Testaments in various European languages were meanwhile being sent out for distribution, and an edition of the Tamil Scriptures was ordered from the press of the German missionaries at Tanjore.

In 1810 a *Bibliotheca Biblica*, for the benefit of the translators, was started in Calcutta, and the Society helped to stock the depôt which was attached to it, and the need for which may be gathered from the fact that not a copy of the Scriptures in the original, not even a French Bible, was obtainable in the wealthy city which was crowded yearly with traders from all quarters. Several hundred reams of paper were also shipped to Bombay for the printing of the Malayalam New Testament, the MS. of which had, in compliance with the wish of Dr Buchanan, been prepared under the direction of Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of the Syrian Church.

On New Year's Day 1811 Henry Martyn pleaded the cause of the Portuguese, the Tamil, the Malayalam, and Sinhalese Christians in India and Ceylon who were in lack of the Word of Life, and departed, stricken with consumption and wasted to a shadow, to his last studies under the orange tree at Shiraz, to his grave on the steep hillside at Tokat. In the following month his fervid words gave birth to the Calcutta Bible Society, the primary object of which was the supply of the Scriptures to the Christians in India; and the Committee at home voted copies of the Scriptures and printing paper to the value of £1000 in furtherance of its work.

Societies were established in 1812 at Colombo, in 1813 at Bombay, in 1814 at Batavia in Java, and in 1815 at Amboyna, one of the Spice Islands of the Molucca group. Here in the very heart of paganism, in notable contrast with the rulers of

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India, the Dutch had spread the light of the Gospel over the region of their conquest. In the Moluccas there was a population of 20,000 Christians, and every village of any consideration had its church and pastor, or its school and teacher. As far back as the opening years of the seventeenth century, the Gospel of St Matthew had been rendered into Malay. The Bible, translated at the expense of the Dutch East India Company, left the press in 1733, but copies were now extremely scarce, and in 1816, at a sale, a perfect Bible fetched £10.

In 1813 the exclusive powers of the East India Company were abolished; an Act emancipating the Gospel and creating an Indian Bishopric came into operation in April 1814, and in the November of that year Thomas Fanshawe Middleton, the first Indian Bishop, landed in Calcutta.

By the close of 1816 the Bible was in circulation in Bengali and Oriya; three-fifths of the sacred volume had been printed in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Marathi; the Pentateuch and the New Testament had been issued in Chinese; the New Testament in Hindustani and Malay; the Gospels in Persian and Telugu; and versions were in progress in Sinhalese, Pali, Pashtu (Afghan), and about twenty other tongues. A Bibliotheca Biblica, with a depôt for the sale of the Scriptures, had been established at Bombay: Branches of the Calcutta Auxiliary had sprung up in Malacca and Penang.

In 1786, when David Brown landed in Calcutta, there was but one place of worship in Bengal, the House of Prayer (Beth Tephillah), better known as the Old Mission Church, which had been built,

mostly at his own expense, by the missionary Kiernander from Tranquebar. Before his death in 1812 Christianity had been openly professed by the European community, and he had "lived to see the streets opposite to our churches blocked up with carriages and palanquins, and to welcome hundreds of communicants to the Supper of the Lord."

The grants to the Bengal Corresponding Committee in aid of Oriental translations amounted to £33,885. Other grants voted to Madras, Bombay, Ceylon, Java, and Malacca, brought the total up to £46,000.

We pass on into the farther East. In 1807 Robert Morrison was sent out to Canton by the L.M.S. He was truly a pioneer, though more than eleven centuries before his time the missionaries of the great Syrian Church had penetrated into the Yellow Empire. A granite monument, unearthed at Singanfu in 1625, tells how O-lo-pen, "watching the azure clouds and bringing with him the Sacred Books," had traversed the deserts of Mongolia, reached the capital of Shen-si in 635, and obtained a decree in favour of the new religion, the Scriptures of which "were translated in the imperial library." That ancient version had perished; there was no trace of the translations said to have been made by the Roman missionaries of a later day; indeed so little was known of the capabilities of the language that about 1800, before the existence of the British Museum MS. was generally known, even learned

men are said to have declared that a Chinese translation of the Scriptures was from the very nature of the language a literary impossibility. A transcript of that MS. Morrison took with him to the East, and found it of material assistance in his own version of the New Testament.

If India was a forbidden land, much more dangerously so was China. Foreigners were tolerated solely for the purpose of trade; and any native who taught the language to a foreigner was liable to the penalty of death. It was not till 1809, when Morrison accepted the office of translator to the East India Company, that his position at Canton was freed from imminent risk. In 1812 the Committee heard of his Biblical labours, and at once aided him with £500. In the following year, on receiving his version of St Luke, they again voted £500. The completion of the New Testament was followed by a grant of £1000; and £1000 in each of the two succeeding years testified to his assiduity and their unfailing helpfulness. Two thousand copies of the New Testament left the press in January 1814, and his colleague, William Milne, proceeded to distribute them among the swarming Chinese colonies in Java, Molucca, and Penang. In May that year, near the sea, by a spring which issued from the foot of a high mountain, Tsæ-Ako, who had helped Morrison to print the New Testament, was the first Chinese convert to receive baptism. The Word of God was read, instruction was asked for, idols were sometimes destroyed, but complete conversions were few and tardy. In 1816 a

version of the Old Testament was in progress, and arrangements had been made for the issue of large editions of the New at Malacca, where the work would not be liable to interruption from Chinese hostility.

One hasty glance we must cast over the seas of the South. To our small colonies at the antipodes the Society sent out its first grant by the devoted Marsden in 1807. Up to the close of 1816 six hundred copies of the Scriptures were despatched to Van Diemen's Land, and 6340 to New South Wales. In that last year the good ship *Active* was bearing out to Eimeo the Society's first grant of paper for the printing of *Te parau na Luka*, the Gospel of St Luke in Tahitian, in the preparation of which King Pomare had given much help. The days of bloodshed and idolatry were over; cannibalism was a shameful memory of the past. The missionary had taken the stones of sacrifice for his printing-press; the natives had fashioned their spears into pulpit-rails.

In the Mauritius, where there were many aged people who had never seen a French Bible, an Auxiliary Society was founded in 1812, and over 3000 copies of the Scriptures were provided by the Committee.

As early as 1806 the spiritual needs of the garrison and colonists at the Cape had been thought of by the Committee. During the next decade 6490 Bibles and Testaments, in Dutch and English, were distributed at an outlay of £1435. The beloved Gaelic, as we have seen,

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found its way to the 93rd Highlanders. Dutch and German Testaments were also despatched from Bengal for the benefit of the schools and the converted Hottentots at four missionary stations. The Scriptures reached the Namaquas too, through their pastor, the Rev. C. Albrecht, who was translating the Gospel of St Matthew into their native dialect. In 1813 the Bible and School Commission was formed at Cape Town for the education of the poor and the circulation of the Scriptures; in 1815 an Auxiliary was established at Caledon, a hundred and twenty miles east of Cape Town; and both of these institutions contributed to the funds of the Society. One grant of peculiar interest was that made to the Moravian Brethren, who, after some years of prohibition, had been allowed to resume their mission among the Hottentots. They had returned to the spot chosen by their first missionary, George Schmidt. Beside the ruins of his old house and garden, the pear-tree he had planted for food had grown to an immense size, and a host of baboons had taken possession of it and of the whole glen, which was thence called Bavians' Kloof. The pear-tree was their first church and served as a school for two or three hundred children, who learned to read and to understand the doctrines of Christianity. In the course of time a spacious church was built, but as late as 1809 the children were still taught under the shadowy branches of Schmidt's pear-tree. The copies which the Committee sent out were distributed among the children who could read, and one sequel to that gift was the following

incident. A young Hottentot woman grew "so angry with God and her teachers" that she resolved to go into the far country, and there "put in practice whatever her sinful heart suggested." "Therefore," she afterwards related, "I set off one day, full of evil thoughts, and when I got out into the open field, I saw two of the school girls, who had been out to fetch sticks, sitting on the grass. On approaching them, I found they had got one of the new books [a Testament], and were reading aloud. Just as I passed them, they read, '*Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him!*' These words went into my heart like lightning. It seemed as if I had pronounced them myself against our Saviour. I cried to Him to have mercy upon me and to forgive me my many sins." And so she retraced her wayward steps.

In 1813 a Bible Society was founded at St Helena, and the first intimation of the event was accompanied by a contribution of £160.

The first distribution of the Scriptures on the West Coast of Africa took place in 1808. In the next eight years 2841 Bibles and Testaments, including some copies in Arabic, were consigned to Sierra Leone and Goree. An interesting glimpse of the time is preserved in the letter of a missionary who was cast away near the Gambia River in 1813. The wreck was plundered, and he endeavoured, not without success, to recover some of his possessions; but, "as for the Arabic Bibles," he was informed, "the Mohammedan natives would not part with them at all." For

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one copy an offer to the value of £8 had been made, and refused. A translation of the Gospel of St Matthew into Bullom, the language of a numerous coast tribe, was printed by the Committee in 1815, and in 1816 a Bible Society was formed for Sierra Leone and the British stations and settlements on the coast.

In 1813 Spanish Testaments were sent out to the Canary Islands, and as early as 1809 Portuguese Testaments were distributed in Madeira, where the priests encouraged the people to purchase them, and expressed their regret that they could not obtain the whole Bible in their own tongue.

Here we close our sketch of the operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society during the first thirteen years of its existence.

CHAPTER VIII

“A WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL”

IN thirteen years the Word of Life had been scattered abroad in many tongues. Armed frigates, convict-ships, merchantmen under their clouds of canvas had borne it over the seas of the world. The Eskimo read it on the verge of the polar ice-cap; the Hottentot child spelt it beneath the pear-tree in the Clough of Baboons. The Red Indian carried it in his breast as he threaded the forest or paddled on the Great Lakes; on the Russian steppes it was in the hands of the Tartar herdsman; it had reached the Brahmin and the Sudra. The Negro learnt it by heart on the West Indian plantations; the Chinaman pondered over it, and burnt his idols of rice-paper; the South Sea Islander waited to exchange for it his bamboo full of cocoa-nut oil. Independent of the versions printed by its Auxiliaries abroad, the Society had circulated 1,816,382 copies of Scripture, and its total expenditure amounted to £541,504. In other words, it had spent at the rate of £41,650 a year.

If the founders of the Society perceived the “impress of a divine direction” in the course of

its formation there was much to deepen their recognition of guidance and blessing in the unforeseen growth and development of resources which enabled it to conduct its operations on a scale so little anticipated.

Up to the close of 1808 the receipts of the Society from subscriptions, donations, legacies, and congregational collections averaged £6000 a year. These appeared to be the only available sources of revenue; and from these Wilberforce dreamed and hoped that eventually there might accrue an income of £10,000 a year. Suddenly, and with a strange spontaneity, Auxiliary Bible Societies began to appear in 1809. The town of Reading led the way on the 28th March; two days later the Nottingham Auxiliary was founded; eight more were formed before the end of the financial year; and, as if by magic, the annual income expanded from £6000 to £14,000. In 1812 the Auxiliaries contributed £24,813—more than twice and a half as much as the income from all other sources put together. They sprang up on all sides, unpremeditated, independent, composed of all religious denominations. By August 1814 every county in England had, by one Auxiliary or more, allied itself with the Bible Society. In 1816-1817 there were 236 Auxiliaries and 305 Branches in the United Kingdom. From year to year the Society added a peer or prelate, statesmen or persons of social distinction, to the number of its patrons; but the Auxiliaries impressed the local nobility and county families, and included among their patrons or presidents royal dukes

and duchesses, marquises, earls and countesses, viscounts, barons, baronets, and knights beyond reckoning.

The Princess of Wales became the patroness of the Blackheath Auxiliary. But for the pistol of the assassin, Mr Perceval, the Prime Minister, would have presided at the formation of the Northampton Auxiliary. Lord Liverpool, his successor, was patron of the Cinque Ports Auxiliary. The Cambridge, East Sussex, Kent, and Westminster Auxiliaries were honoured with the patronage of their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Gloucester, Sussex, Kent, Cambridge, York, and Cumberland. The Auxiliary at the little market town of Wellington in Somersetshire had for its patron the Marquis of Wellington, at that moment (1812) pursuing his triumphant career from Madrid to the frontier of France.

In 1814 the Committee adopted a code of rules drawn up for the use of the Auxiliaries by Mr Richard Phillips and Mr C. S. Dudley. These provided for a close inquiry into local needs, and transmission to the Society of subscriptions and donations (after deduction of incidental expenses), on the understanding that half the amount transmitted should be returnable in Bibles and Testaments at cost price. To a great extent these provisions had been anticipated in practice. It was the twofold excellence of the Auxiliary system that, while it helped to provide the means, it helped perhaps even more to carry out the work for which the means were provided. These numerous local organisations, each with its little body of zealous

workers, had special facilities for ascertaining and supplying the needs of their own familiar districts. As the result, a remarkable increase took place in the circulation of the Scriptures. In the first five years of the Society's existence (1804-9) the sale of the Scriptures realised £9763, and the number of copies distributed was 158,429; in the second five (1809-1814), during which the Auxiliaries arose, the sales amounted to £56,055, and the number of copies was 828,658.

At this point our attention is attracted to another extraordinary development, the instantaneous effect of which is most clearly indicated in a dozen figures:—

Year.	Auxiliary Contributions.	Sales.
1812-13	£55,099	£9,524
1813-14	53,400	24,766
1814-15	61,848	27,560

In these three years, while the Auxiliary contributions were still on the increase, the sales expanded from £9500 to £27,500. The secret of this striking vitality was the rapid growth of the Bible Associations, which sprang up outside the Auxiliaries in dozens, in scores, in hundreds. The truest help is that which helps men to help themselves. Richard Phillips had a large faith in the poor; believed it quite possible to awaken in them “a desire for that sacred treasure which so many thousands of them had never possessed”; and drew up accordingly a set of rules for the organisation of these new forces. The Associations were the Bible Societies of the poor, who

cheerfully gave their 1d. or 2d. a week to provide themselves, and afterwards to assist in providing their poorer neighbours, with the Word of God. They came into closer contact than even the Auxiliaries with the masses of the people; they searched out the spiritual destitution of the country, and provided the means of relieving it. The Auxiliaries had given the Society a secure and permanent basis, and had enabled it to devote the central funds to general purposes. This new movement gradually released the funds of the Auxiliaries, so that, to a very large extent, these also could be employed for the general purposes of the Society. One illustration may be quoted. The Tyndale Ward Auxiliary reported that twenty-four Associations, at work in a population of 29,605 among the Northumbrian moors, were gathering subscriptions and donations at the rate of £1603 per annum. If every part of Great Britain, it was remarked, contributed in the same proportion, from its sixteen millions of people there would be an income of £865,000 a year.

At the same time Juvenile Associations and Ladies' Bible Societies were springing up. With regard to the latter there was a solemn shaking of heads—much grave talk of the proprieties, of domesticity, of the refinement of the sex, of “the sphere of the Christian fair.” Grim stress was laid upon the indecorum of young women visiting (without escort too) the cottages of the poor, where their feelings might be hurt by improper language, or their delicacy wounded by the occurrence of unpleasant scenes. Even Mr Owen,

who was in favour of the co-operation of “females,” felt anxious that they should be employed in a manner “comporting with that delicacy which has ever been considered as characteristic of the sex, and which constitutes one of its best ornaments and its strongest securities.” We smile at it all now; but it is a curious illustration of the manners of the time, that not until the first anniversary held in Exeter Hall in 1831 were “the Christian fair” permitted to take part in the public proceedings of the Society. In the interval, however, they quietly vindicated their claim to a share in the work by doing it; and in 1824, when the Associations numbered 2000, five hundred were Ladies’ Associations.

The origin of this feminine movement was also spontaneous. Its initial weakness was lack of experience and business tact; but already the idea of such co-operation had occurred to a man of marked administrative ability. Struck by an account which Oberlin had given in one of his letters of the good accomplished by three lowly women who ministered to Christ in the wild mountain district of which he was pastor, Mr Dudley recognised the possibilities of the Ladies’ Associations, and set himself to supply the organisation which they needed. Of the efficiency of his method Liverpool furnished a brilliant example. During the eight months preceding his visit to that city, about 700 persons had been enrolled as subscribers to the Ladies’ Branch; 276 copies of the Scriptures had been sold and 35 distributed gratuitously; the amount collected was £412; and

the report stated that "the further the collectors advanced in their work, the more they were convinced of its urgent necessity—and of their inability to perform it." Mr Dudley's system was adopted. Under the patronage of the Countess of Derby, over six hundred ladies were engaged in a methodical investigation and supply of 341 districts. In less than three months they obtained 7292 subscribers, issued 1338 Bibles and Testaments, and raised more than £970. At the close of the first year the number of subscribers exceeded 10,000; more than 3000 volumes had been sold; and the amount collected was £2252, of which £518 was assigned to the general purposes of the Society.

There was yet another direction in which the work of the Society was specialised. Marine Associations had already been formed at Whitby, Hull, and Aberdeen, for the benefit of the seagoing population; but a great advance was made in 1818. With the Lord Mayor (the Right Honourable C. Smith, M.P.) in the chair, and Lord Melville, Lord Exmouth, William Wilberforce, and other distinguished persons as vice-presidents, the Merchant Seamen's Auxiliary Bible Society was inaugurated at the Mansion House, "to provide Bibles for at least 120,000 British seamen now destitute of them," and the first step was to appoint an agent to visit every outward-bound ship as it left the Thames. No great interval elapsed before Seamen's Auxiliaries were founded at various seaports; the small coasting-craft were not overlooked; and the Naval and

Military Bible Society extended its operations to the inland traffic on our rivers and canals.

From year to year the work on the Thames grew to such dimensions that the services of three agents were required. Their statistics showed that a remarkable change was taking place among the seafarers who frequented the Port of London. In the first year of the Merchant Seamen's Auxiliary the agent had visited 1681 ships (24,765 men), and in upwards of 590 (6149 men) had found not a single copy of the Scriptures. In 1829, eleven years later, in the crowd of shipping visited at Gravesend, only four vessels (47 men), and these foreigners, proved to be wholly destitute. In the first year, too, officers and men on board 1082 of the ships visited were in possession of 2200 Bibles and Testaments—a ratio of 2.03 copies per vessel; in 1829 the crews of 250 ships, visited for the first time in the Thames, had 2058 copies, or 8.2 volumes to each ship. Slight as are the figures, they testify to the spiritual influence which was gradually affecting the vast mass of the people; and if further evidence were needed that poor hard-working men had learnt to value the Word of God which was now placed within their reach, it will be found in the following significant facts. In 1818-19 the river agent distributed 6370 volumes, but of these no more than 597 were sold; 5773 were left on board unpaid for. In 1830 he distributed 5389, of which 5369 were purchased; and in 1840, out of a total of 6416 copies distributed, all but six were bought.

Many interesting details might be related of this

mission on the great river. On board the *Mary* of Kirkcaldy every hand, from the master to the cabin-boy, had his Bible, and read it. It was the same with a Dutchman; there were daily prayers, singing, and reading, and grace was said before and after meals. One old man in a French craft paid for his Testament from his cargo of apples. A Rochelle captain, who had been given a French Testament in the old days when he was a prisoner of war, and who had lost it, "greedily received the present of another," and promised to read it to all under his command. Some men bought twice and thrice; their earlier copies had been left at ports oversea where they were "highly prized, equal to old gold." Occasionally both captains and men made such donations as they could afford, to help the Society and defray the expenses to which it was put.

Few vessels under any flag entered or left the Thames that were not visited by one of the agents, and the good effected by the Auxiliary was so marked that the French and Foreign Bible Society asked to be furnished with its regulations, and decided to form similar institutions in every port in France.

Up to the Jubilee Year of the Society the Merchant Seamen's Auxiliary circulated 187,551 copies of the Scriptures in various languages.

A casual reference has been made to emigration. Between 1801 and 1831 the population had increased from about fifteen millions and three-quarters to twenty-four. Times were hard and were growing harder, and men's thoughts began

to turn more adventurously to new countries. The number of emigrants increased from 2081 in 1815 to 56,900 in 1830, and to 90,700 in 1840, and the Bible Society was anxious that no emigrant ship should cross the seas without an ample supply of the Scriptures. The attention of the Auxiliaries at different ports was called to the subject, and special grants were voted to the Auxiliaries of the colonies whither the emigrants were sailing, so that the settlers should be provided with the guide to the true Land of Promise.

To local organisations was committed the care of poor creatures shipwrecked on our shores ; and thus, in the manner we have briefly indicated, all soldiers and sailors, crews of coasters, fishermen, and boatmen on inland waters were brought within the range of the Society's work.

It was to the spontaneous forces which we have described that the Bible Society owed, under the divine blessing, its stability and the means of entering on the large projects sketched in the preceding chapters. Organisation had supplied what was required for thorough efficiency ; but if the growth of the Auxiliary system was to keep pace with the expansion of the Society's work, it soon became manifest that some new factor must enter into the reckoning. There were districts in which no Auxiliary or Association had been formed ; there were others in which, after the first vigorous efforts, there were symptoms of lukewarmness, of inactivity, even of disintegration. The stirring effect produced by the attendance of a Secretary or of a member of the Committee at meetings of

Auxiliaries and Branches indicated the supplementary element that was needed. The vitality and enthusiasm of the institutions depended on their being kept in close touch with headquarters; each small Association, every humble worker, must be made to feel that they were a necessary part in the great machinery.

All this pointed to the supervision of an agent who should combine a spirit of initiative with a genius for encouragement and stimulation. How much might be accomplished by a qualified worker was exemplified by Mr Dudley. In 1817-18 he travelled 4500 miles—in those days there were no railways,—attended 107 Auxiliary committee meetings, and took part in 128 general meetings, at 59 of which new organisations were founded. A shrewd, far-seeing, indefatigable man, with wonderful administrative tact and a cheery disbelief in the existence of impossibilities! The Committee had the good fortune to secure him as their first district secretary in 1819, and he spent himself in their service over forty-two years. A second district secretary, Mr William Brackenbury, was appointed in 1828; a third, the Rev. William Acworth, in 1829. In that year there were 2349 Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations, and the receipts amounted to £85,000.

Many able and willing assistants were found among the members of the Society, but experience made it yearly more evident that the energy of the Auxiliary system depended on regular meetings, and that for the maintenance of these the Committee could count on the district secretaries alone.

A fourth appointment was made in 1833; and England and Wales were mapped out into four divisions, each of which should be under the constant supervision of its own secretary. In 1834 the map was rearranged, and two more districts were added—the Metropolis, where the population had grown from 864,845 in 1801 to 1,474,069 in 1831; and Wales, where the Rev. Thomas Phillips satisfied the long-felt need for a representative to whom Welsh should be as familiar as English. The Principality had well earned the consideration with which it was treated; it had supplied itself with 350,000 copies of the Scriptures, and had aided “the glorious work” by contributions little short of £90,000.

Such were the initial stages of what is to-day the splendid organisation of district secretaries, with its staff of able and zealous men, four of whom have been from nineteen to twenty-eight years in the Society’s service. In the late thirties some of the larger Auxiliaries—Ashton-under-Lyne, Manchester and Salford, Plymouth and Devonport, and Norwich—localised the district secretary (the “accredited agent” he was then called) on their own account, and defrayed the expenses by means of special private subscriptions. Many of the friends of the Society still continued to render gratuitous assistance—among the rest Daniel Wilson (afterwards Bishop of Calcutta), Baptist Noel, Carr J. Glyn, Henry Moule (father of the present Bishop of Durham and of quite a little community of Chinese missionaries), and, down even to the closing years of the half century, Henderson and Paterson, then on the sun-

set side of sixty and seventy, and the venerable Steinkopff, who, on the verge of eighty, was yet alert and zealous in the interest of the great cause.

Let us glance at some of the results of the district secretary system. In 1832 the annual meetings throughout the country amounted to 557. In 1845 the number was 1637. In 1853 it had increased to 2402. In other words, omitting Saturdays and Sundays, and supposing the work to have been equally distributed, nine meetings were held daily in the Jubilee Year of the Society, and the places of meeting extended from the Cheviots to the Land's End. Correlated with the increase in the number of annual meetings were the growth of the Auxiliaries and Associations, the augmentation of income, and the enlarged distribution of Scriptures. In 1848 there were 3217 Auxiliaries and Associations; in 1853 there were 3315. In 1840 the income was £111,449; at the close of 1853, exclusive of the Jubilee and China Funds, it exceeded £125,600. The yearly circulation of Scriptures amounted to 653,000 copies in 1834; in 1845 it reached for the first time, and exceeded, the enormous figure of 1,000,000; in the Jubilee Year the half century closed with an annual issue of 1,367,528 copies.

In the production of some of these later figures, however, yet another agency came into play. The adaptability of the colporteur—French in origin, as the name implies, and the most energetic Biblical influence in France—was tested in Staffordshire in 1838 with satisfactory results, and again a few years later in Radnor. A trial on a larger scale

was made by the Manchester Auxiliary within a radius of twenty miles round the city. The population, distributed in such busy centres of industry as Wigan, Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, Warrington, and Burnley, was considerably in excess of a million, and the area was made a special district with an agent or district secretary in 1850, and as many as five colporteurs were engaged. Up to the end of the Jubilee Year the aggregate circulation of the Auxiliary was 492,589 Bibles and Testaments; and as the result of 258,848 visits and calls the colporteurs had disposed of 67,146 of these. The Liverpool Auxiliary engaged two colporteurs, one for the poorest districts, the other for the shipping in the Mersey. In twelve months the former sold 7029 copies; the latter 2471, of which all but seven were in some foreign language. In consequence of the success of these experiments a special effort in colportage was one of the measures to which the Committee proposed to apply the Jubilee Fund.

It was in these unforeseen ways that the Bible Society became a mighty institution in the religious life of this country. Its work abroad was too conspicuous in its novelty and its magnitude to be overlooked, but its beneficent influence on the masses of our own population has not received due recognition in history. Of that aspect of its mission we shall speak in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

OF the extent to which the Bible Society entered into the daily life of the English people little has been said. There are no statistics by which we may gauge the pressure it brought to bear on the social questions of the time; the share it took in abolishing barbarous and oppressive laws and securing the conditions of a more prosperous existence; the impulse it gave to education; the effect it had in checking the spread of atheism and infidelity, and in keeping men sane and orderly in dark years of distress, labour trouble, and political excitement. No doubt its action and influence were impersonal, and often unconscious; they were not on that account any the less real.

Recall the miseries of some of the early years which followed the close of the Napoleonic wars—years in which wheat rose to famine prices, and factories were closed, furnaces blown out, pits shut down; and hungry men wandered vainly over the country in search of employment; and incendiary fires and the wrecking of machinery expressed the brute rage of the poor driven to desperation. Consider the thirty years during which the

monstrous Corn Laws blighted the hopes and energies of the people. In Edinburgh bread could not be sold till it had been twenty-four hours out of the oven, and by-laws were passed to regulate the family supply. In country places labourers tried to keep body and soul together on roots and wild plants, and died of starvation. Trade in foreign cattle was forbidden absolutely. Taxation was excessive. Salt was taxed to four times its value. Light and air were taxed, if they passed through a window. Everything was taxed, from the school-boy's top to the medicine of the dying man. As late as 1830 the innumerable petitions presented to the House of Commons showed that distress prevailed in all parts of the kingdom and in every branch of industry. Yet during this long interval of suffering and agitation—when the Government persisted in its exasperating policy of fixed bayonets, cavalry charges, and hurried measures passed to supersede the ordinary course of justice—the Bible Society was expanding its operations throughout the country, and it was chiefly among the classes who felt most keenly the burden of heavy taxes, dear food, and low wages that the new Branches and Associations were being formed. Between 1818 and 1823 inclusive, the receipts from Auxiliaries and the product of sales amounted to £493,833—an average of £82,305 a year. In 1826 there were 2066 affiliated organisations; in 1831 the number had grown to 2614, and in that year 583,888 copies of the Scriptures were circulated. Were these but so much waste paper? Had all these Associations throughout the length and

breadth of the land no practical significance? Was this eagerness among all classes to possess the Word of Life merely a craze? Was there "no accounting for it"? Or was the Bible Society in truth a living and far-reaching power among the moral, social, and political forces of the period?

In the autumn of 1831 these islands were smitten by that terrible visitation of cholera which carried off 53,000 of the population in that and the following year. During the time the disease raged 30,865 copies of the New Testament and Psalter were distributed on loan among the poor in the chief cities. If the only direct help which the Society was permitted to extend to the suffering and the dying took the form of a book, let it not be forgotten that indirectly it ministered to their material wants. Wherever a Bible Society was founded, there too sprang up the charitable institutions which fed the hungry and clothed the naked. Owing to the prevalence of cholera, or to a dread of it, the usual meetings were in some few instances suspended, but the district secretaries never shrank from the risks connected with their duties, and in 1832 as many as 118 organisations were added to the roll.

So too in later years—when distress was acute, when a fourth of the houses in some manufacturing towns were deserted, and the nation was distracted by Corn Law agitation, clamour of infidels and socialists, outbreaks of Chartism—the ever-increasing number of Auxiliaries and Associations, the hundreds of meetings held annually throughout the country, the work of the district secretaries and

local agents, the hundreds of thousands of Bibles and Testaments which had been distributed, restrained the passions of multitudes of men, and guided them into the paths of moderation and constitutional reform. Later yet, when the principles of the Reformation were threatened; when momentous questions, which had slept for ages, were reopened; when claims long held in abeyance were pressed with startling boldness and importunity, there was aroused by some mysterious stimulus so urgent a Bible movement in the great towns that in the three years, from April 1844 to March 1847, there were distributed 1,900,776 copies of "that book which must form the only standard of appeal."

Speaking a week or two after the event of the abortive Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common in 1848, Hugh Stowell declared that only a working clergyman could tell how much we owed, not to the promptitude of our magistracy, not to the wise and timely measures of the Government—these, he believed, would have been insufficient to keep the people, under the pressure of their sore distress, calm, tranquil, submissive; "it was the Bible that had done it." Chartism, according to a living historian, died of growing education and of a strengthening sense of duty among all the more influential classes. What contributed to that growth or to the strengthening of that sense so much as the labours of the Bible Society?

In 1818 more than half of the children in the country were growing up without education, and

one-third of the men and women who went to be married could not sign the register. It was in the Society's Bibles and Testaments that thousands of old people learned to read; and the supply of the schools was one of its cares. Cheap issues were provided in 1825. In 1840 further reductions in price took place, and in three months 185,218 volumes were sold, at a loss to the Society of £6970; in seven months 382,377 were disposed of, and the loss amounted to £14,410. During the twenty years ending 1854 these contributions towards the advancement of education involved an expenditure of £28,725.

To one class of the population a brief reference must be made. When the Bible Society was founded there was not in any language a chapter of the Bible which the blind could read. In the busy world of the seeing the sightless had been invisible. Yet the proportion of the blind was about 1 to every 975 of the population, and in 1851 they numbered 21,487—11,273 males and 10,214 females. The subject was taken up by the Committee in 1836; encouragement was given impartially to the various systems of reading, and to-day there are many languages in which "the dark people" of various races may learn for themselves the glad tidings of the Gospel. The whole Bible is available in English, and portions have been prepared in Gaelic and Welsh, in French, in Dutch, German, and Swedish, in Russ, in Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew. To these must be added about half the Bible in Arabic, and portions in Armenian

and Armeno-Turkish, in two forms of Chinese, in seven Indian languages, in Japanese, and in Batta—the tongue of tribes which were cannibals less than seventy years ago.

More interesting than figures, the pages of the *Monthly Extracts* contain details which show how closely the Bible Society was connected with all classes of the community. One reads of the ferryman on the Wear who obtained for his Auxiliary a number of subscribers among the passengers who were in the habit of crossing in his boat; of the blind man who presented 208 farthings, the earnings made by his Scripture-readings, for which he got $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a visit; of the labourer who tilled a corner of his field for the benefit of the Society; of the charwoman in Leeds who out of her hard-won savings made an offering of £4; of that soul of sweet content in an almshouse, who devoted to the cause the whole of a little legacy of £27 which had been left her. How truly Dr Chalmers wrote: "You take from the poor? No, they give"; and when the object of the gift is the circulation of the message the Saviour left behind Him, "it is a comfort which many of the poor are ambitious to share in."

One reads too in these *Monthly Extracts* of the road-mender in a Cornish parish—a most regular subscriber to the local Association—who spent his dinner-hour with his Testament in a quiet corner of a field, and marked with blades of grass the passages which most impressed him. Then there was the blind Irish harper, who learned to read in

spite of finger-tips which had grown horny with strumming; there were the children who put their pennies together that a blind boy might receive an embossed Gospel. And with what wonderful persistence the aged mastered the alphabet and unravelled the mysteries of print! In a garret in Manchester one old lady learned to read the New Testament at the age of eighty-five. The Bible of another aged person, whose proficiency did not include a knowledge of figures, was distended with strips of cloth of many kinds and colours, sizes and shapes—these were her Concordance.

Among those who were more happily circumstanced the same spirit prevailed. Flower-beds and fruit-trees, eggs and broods, were dedicated to the diffusion of the Word of Life. Record was kept of a stray swarm of bees in Lincolnshire which was hived and devoted to the cause in 1829. The produce of the hive and of successive swarms realised £41 10s. up to 1836-37. Among the services rendered to the Society was a cordial hospitality. On his appointment as district secretary to Wales in 1835, Mr Phillips received a friendly welcome wherever he went. In Anglesey his expenditure did not exceed 5s., and during an absence of five weeks from home he was not allowed to pay for a single night's accommodation. Experience similar to his was no uncommon thing with the representatives of the Society in all parts of the kingdom, and indeed beyond it.

How the Bible festivals helped to brighten the lives of the people! In some places works were

closed and high holiday was kept. One hears of the great barn at Potton decorated with greenery and devices in roses and daisies. At Witchampton in Dorset a flag was hoisted and the bells were rung on "Bible Day." Witchampton Bible Day was idyllic. In 1848 the children's fir-tree in the schoolroom was laden with fruit—little cotton bags, it seemed to the prosaic—which, when gathered, turned into £3 9s. 7d. A parrot in his cage was the guardian of a box into which he had prevailed on his visitors to drop 15s. 3½d. In the course of seven years (1853) the "Bible parrot" had collected £10. Thirty years later Witchampton still observed its pretty traditional customs. The bells in the little church on the hill rang on "Bible Day" in 1882; the aged pastor (the Rev. Carr J. Glyn), who for over fifty years had seen his people grow up in love and devotion to the Society, opened the "Bible boxes"; the schoolroom was festooned with garlands of summer flowers; and on the tables behind which the speakers were to sit were two lovely fuchsias in bloom, one with sovereigns and half-sovereigns hung among its white bells; the other, with crimson bells, decorated with silver pieces, all as new and bright as possible. The gold tree had been "an institution" for several years; the silver one was a new idea planned as a surprise by the schoolmistress of the village. In a neighbouring cottage might still be seen the parrot—not living now, but stuffed and "not very beautiful." But Polly, though dead, still spoke, for over its box was written the request it made so quaintly, "Give

a shilling to the Bible Society!" In the sunny churchyard, on the tombs of a bygone generation, the visitor read under the names of the departed: "He (or she) was for many years a sincere friend and contributor to the British and Foreign Bible Society." The venerable pastor attended the meeting on "Bible Day" 1896. He had then completed his ninety-seventh year. It was his last "Bible Day."

With such incentives and examples it would have been strange had the children not taken a part of their own in the Bible movement. Numerous juvenile Associations were formed under the playful names of The Twig, The Rivulet, The Blossom, The Drop, The Crumb. The little unseen children, too, who visit the pillows of bereaved parents still aided the work. For years subscriptions were kept up "in memoriam," and many a gift was received from a dead hand. The long list of contributions to the China Million Testaments Fund in the Jubilee Year contains many entries for "100 copies — £1 13s. 4d." Among them there may still be seen one with the brief intimation, "From Elizabeth." No one knows who Elizabeth was. Outside her own household, probably only one person ever knew. He kept her secret to the end, but happily he told her story.

Several years before the Jubilee, Elizabeth lost a favourite child—a child specially loved for the sweetness of her disposition and dutiful conduct, and for the early indications perceived in her of "some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel." After a long and painful illness, the child died when

she had reached that age of confidence and companionship at which the loss of children is most grievous. Elizabeth mourned deeply, but prayer and time at length assuaged the anguish of her bereavement. Happening, however, to be looking one day over a drawer in which her daughter used to store away little trifles, she found a small bag which contained an old half-crown, one of the child's keepsakes. At the sight of it, all the half-stilled sorrow welled up afresh; she kissed the coin, and as the tears ran down her cheeks, resolved never to part with it while she lived. From that day, although she believed and confessed that "He had done all things well," the contents of the child's drawer began to warp her thoughts, and to beget a scarce-conscious repining at the divine dispensation. From that unblessed condition she was saved by the arrival in her village of a colporteur selling Bibles at the cheapest rates and Testaments for little more than threepence. As soon as Elizabeth heard of it, conviction flashed through her mind, and she said within herself: "I have sinned: I have locked up uselessly my dear child's money—have laid it hid in a napkin. This very piece would have bought nearly ten Testaments, and who can tell what good these might have done? God forgive me, I will do so no more. This piece is the Lord's, and all I can save from time to time shall be consecrated to His service." Thenceforth, various small sums were set aside, and the amount was sent in from year to year as "The Savings of Elizabeth." The friend who preserved her story—a story which

she may have left children to remember, which it is even possible she may herself still remember, in extreme old age, in some unknown English village—concluded it with the happy phrase, “Elizabeth goes her way, and is no more sad.”

CHAPTER X

IRELAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

No such happy developments as those we have described occurred in Ireland. Still, so far as the straitened circumstances of the country permitted, the Irish organisations worked on the broad lines of the system. In 1822 the Hibernian Bible Society had gathered about it 147 contributory institutions; in 1834 its Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations numbered about 630, and it had distributed, from its establishment in 1806, a total of 707,767 copies of the Scriptures. Other agencies, which were liberally assisted by the Committee, were actively at work,—chief among them the Sunday School Society for Ireland, the Baptist Irish Society, and the London Hibernian School Society, which in 1825 had extended its operations to twenty-nine of the thirty-two counties of Ireland, and supported 1072 schools with 88,699 scholars, among whom there were 10,000 over the age of fifteen. In 1834 the number of these schools had increased to 1690, and 770 of them were day schools.

The special importance of the Scriptures being made accessible in the native Irish was strongly

impressed on the Committee in 1823 by the vicar of Powerscourt, afterwards Bishop of Cashel. He pointed out that in the quiet and orderly counties of Antrim, Armagh, and Londonderry, the number of children educated in Sunday schools was in the proportion of one to twelve of the whole population. In Limerick, too well known by its atrocities and murders, the proportion was one to nine hundred and seventy-seven. In the whole province of Munster the proportion was one to about four hundred. In Munster and Connaught there were perhaps two millions who spoke no language but Irish, and the Scriptures would be read in Irish where an English Bible would be rejected with disgust. In consequence of these representations, the Committee decided to print in the Erse characters 5000 copies of Bishop Bedell's Irish Bible, 20,000 of the New Testament, and a large edition of the Gospel of St Matthew. The good effects produced by these books were described as incalculable. "The native Irish," wrote one correspondent, "so love their language that, despite of priestly anathemas and every opposition, they will receive and learn to read the Irish Bible. I have known several who, before they would give up their Irish Scriptures, have given up their own for a foreign land."

The circulation of the Hibernian Bible Society reached the large figure of 73,134 copies in 1842, and three years later the financial position of the society had so far improved that its income sufficed to satisfy the demands made upon it. The London Hibernian Society appears to have

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been dissolved in 1846, but its work was in a great measure taken up by the Sunday School Society for Ireland. Wonderfully blessed in its labours was this Sunday School Society! Founded in 1809, when there were about eighty Sunday schools in the whole island, it began operations with two schools and eighty-seven scholars. In January 1842 it had 3002 schools, with 22,746 teachers, whose services were gratuitous, and 241,046 scholars, of whom 142,614 were reading the Scriptures, and 48,988 were over fifteen years of age. About one half the total number had no other means of education.

In 1844 the Irish Evangelical Society gave colportage a trial. The experiment succeeded beyond the most sanguine hopes. In places which were hidden among the mountains, and in which books were of the rarest, many Bibles and Testaments were bought up eagerly by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. In some of the wild and rocky regions, where the people were "clothed" in hay and straw, the colporteurs held evening meetings, at which many Roman Catholics were present and listened with great attention. Everywhere the people were poor, but they were glad to hear "the story of peace" in their native Erse—a language which carried with it every endearing association, and a charm that dispelled all their prejudices against England and Protestantism.

In the autumn of 1845 the Hibernian Bible Society adopted the system on a large scale; and this was at the very moment when the first symptoms of the terrible potato disease made their appear-

ance. Even in that year the poor suffered acutely. The late spring of 1846 promised some alleviation, but in a single August night nearly the entire potato crop of the four provinces, the sustenance of not less than eight millions of people, blackened and rotted in the soil. No other food was to be had; and the deadly famine began. At the beginning of September twenty-four districts were proclaimed in a state of distress. "The people were beside themselves." In Queen's County about 200 men, armed with scythes, pitchforks, and guns, attacked a farm held under the Court of Chancery, and carried off the grain in drays and cars. At Clonmel the whole population turned out armed to prevent the despatch of corn to Limerick. Tuam was "in open rebellion." Cattle were harried in broad daylight; people watched the bread as it came from the ovens, and "almost killed each other for it." Light-headed with hunger, poor creatures wandered about looking for stray turnips, berries, roots, wild nuts, water-cress, anything that would dull the aching for food. Loathed as they were, the workhouses were crowded till they could hold no more. Everywhere it was hunger, nakedness, fever, dysentery, death.

In February 1847 it was reported that there was scarcely a county in Ireland in which people were not dying of starvation. In many cases the dead were buried without coffins; in some, they were not even brought to a burial-ground, but interred in the fields. A special prayer for divine intervention was offered in the churches; a general fast was fixed by proclamation; in individual

charity and from national resources, "English gold was poured forth without stay or stint"; still the famine raged almost unchecked. In the midst of the horrible starvation a mania for firearms seized the people; but there was that which many of them desired more than firearms. During eighteen months that the colporteurs travelled through the stricken country they sold 64,000 copies of the Scriptures. The total issue of the Hibernian Bible Society in 1846 was 108,645 copies. At the same time the Sunday School Society was circulating 68,000.

As the result of these and subsequent distributions an extraordinary religious movement sprang up in different parts of Ireland in 1849. Roman Catholic farmers and peasants, wrote a correspondent of the Irish Society of London, begged for instruction in the Irish Bible, and asserted their "inalienable right to read it." At sundown young men and old, women and children, stole from their homes to the lonely cabin on the mountain side to search the Scriptures by the light of a bog-wood splinter. Ferocious Ribbonmen, mad against the Protestant faith, "read 'the strange book,' and became clothed and in their right mind, and were found sitting at the feet of Jesus." In Galway, "great congregations (of converts) were starting up everywhere; I had nearly a hundred Catholics at my last meeting." In Sligo the Roman Catholics were delighted to receive the Scriptures. "Most of the ships"—those sorrowful, crowded, insanitary emigrant ships, in which sometimes a fifth of the steerage

passengers died upon the voyage—"were visited by some clergymen previous to their sailing; such visiting, however, was given up when cholera appeared in Sligo, as our time was then entirely occupied attending to the sick and dying."

Unhappily a bitter intolerance was aroused in the priests as they saw their people leaving them. It is as painful as it is useless to dwell on these things. Let it suffice to say that at the anniversary meeting of 1852 the Bishop of Cashel stated that undeniable evidence had been laid before him of people who were "actually dying of starvation for no other crime than that they read the Word of God," and that "of the emigrants who were flying from Ireland to America, a large proportion were not merely going from poverty and distress, but were going also from spiritual despotism and persecution."

In the Jubilee Year the Scriptures had been distributed in Ireland to the extent of over four million copies, and of these nearly two millions and a quarter had been circulated by the Hibernian Bible Society. The total grants in money and books voted up to that date by the Committee for the benefit of the Irish people was £147,398.

Scotland, like Wales, took an important part in the operations of the Auxiliary system. In 1823 the Edinburgh Bible Society had affiliated seventy-six Auxiliaries, and was in a position to transmit to London £1150 in free contributions. The Glasgow Bible Society had fifty Branches and Associations grouped around it. The magnitude

of the work that had been accomplished in the Lowlands by these great organisations may be gathered from the fact that, in the same year, when a Ladies' Branch Society, with eighteen Ladies' Associations, was started in Glasgow under the guidance of Mr Dudley, there were found in a population exceeding 160,000 only two families who were wholly destitute of the Scriptures. In the Highlands, however, the dearth was very great, and the Edinburgh Society were superintending for the Committee the issue of 10,000 Gaelic Bibles and Testaments.

About this time the peace of the Bible Society was invaded by a perfect storm of controversy on the subject of the Apocrypha. In framing the constitution of the Society its founders had not foreseen the possibility of difficulties arising with the Continental Churches as to the exclusion of the uncanonical books from the Bibles issued for their use with the aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society. When the question first arose, the Committee found themselves confronted by a choice between two alternatives—either the Bible was to be distributed in the traditional form sanctioned at the Reformation, or it was not to be distributed at all. They adopted the only course possible to men burning with zeal for the spread of the Scriptures among nations distracted by infidelity and decimated by war. Serious objections, however, were raised by many members who contended that the application of the funds to the diffusion of any addition to the sacred Canon was a distinct violation of the fundamental

rule of the Society. Attempts were made to formulate a compromise which should satisfy all parties, but in the midst of these the Scottish Bible Societies withdrew in 1825. Even the amendment of the constitution by the addition of regulations expressly "excluding the circulation of the Apocrypha," and providing for the administration of all grants in conformity with that rule, failed to restore the old spirit of co-operation and mutual consideration.

The secession of the Auxiliaries north of the Tweed entailed a perceptible decrease in the income of the Society. During the five years ending 1825-26 the receipts from Scotland had amounted to £24,914, of which the large proportion of £20,685 were free subscriptions. In the year following the controversy they fell to £235. Many adherents, however, remained steadfast; new Auxiliaries were formed in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness, and even Edinburgh itself, where a depôt was opened for the sale of the Scriptures in a number of languages; and the Committee were still able to render considerable service without interfering with the operations of the Scottish Bible Societies. The poor in the Highlands continued to be the object of their special solicitude. Much work had already been done, yet in the western districts of Inverness and Ross in 1826 there was only one Bible for every eight persons above the age of eight, while in other parts of the Highlands and Islands, including Orkney and Shetland where reading was very general, there was one copy for every three.

One-fourth of all the families in these districts—100,000 souls—were still wholly without the Scriptures. In the Hebrides and along the coast an almost inconceivable poverty prevailed. “In some parishes,” wrote a correspondent, “there is indeed no money whatever in circulation; multitudes pay the small rents exacted for their sterile patches by assisting in the manufacture of kelp, while their sustenance for part of the year is frequently sea-weed and shell-fish.”

Ten years later, when the failure of the harvest had left them almost without “bread or firing,” Dr Paterson pleaded their need to no unheeding ears. Indeed, scarcely a year passed in which, either in the straths and islands or among the emigrant ships at Greenock, the correspondents of the Society were not busy on behalf of the Highlanders. Of the grants—in the aggregate £11,250—voted to Scotland by the Committee between 1817 and 1854, by far the greater part went to their relief.

From the date of the schism to the Jubilee Year the Scottish adherents of the British and Foreign Bible Society sent up to Earl Street free contributions amounting to £11,901. Gradually, as time passed by, the bitterness of the Apocrypha controversy was allayed. As president of the Scottish Bible Society the Duke of Argyll attended the Jubilee meeting in Exeter Hall on the 8th March 1853. Referring to bygone differences, he said that the two Societies had long been in a position of earnest co-operation, and his own presence on that occasion was as much due to personal feeling and affection as to his official character. It was not till

1861, however, that all the Bible Societies north of the Border combined to form the National Bible Society of Scotland.

In the Principality the Bible cause flourished under the management of the district secretary, who spoke Welsh and English with equal felicity. Between his appointment in 1834 and the close of the Jubilee Year the free contributions formed a total of £60,328, and the purchase account amounted to £47,406. The Island of Anglesey alone—small as it was, thinly populated, and comparatively poor—contributed £12,123 free, and obtained Scriptures to the value of £3618. Anglesey, indeed, was an object-lesson in Auxiliary administration. Every parish in the island was included in one or other of the dozen Branches, the work of distribution and collection was simplified by the subdivision into districts, and the pence of the poor were received with the same consideration as the guineas of the wealthy. “You would be astonished as well as delighted,” wrote Mr Phillips, “to see the names of servants, labourers, and poor children, as contributors of sums under one shilling.” And beyond the Kymric boundaries, whithersoever the natives of the Principality migrated, they carried with them their love of the Society. The Cambrian Societies at London, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, and other places, were among the most liberal of its supporters. The annual collections from the Welsh congregations at Liverpool often amounted to £300 and £400.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONTINENTAL AGENCIES

THE results of the Apocrypha controversy were not confined to this country. The new rules produced a complete and permanent change in the relations between the Continental Bible Societies and the parent institution. Owing to its peculiar circumstances, France was least affected. The earliest efforts of the Society for the benefit of France were made, as we have seen, from outside its frontier. The pastors of the Reformed Churches awakened to the need for the Scriptures among their people, and, with the aid of the Committee, editions were undertaken at Paris, Montauban, and Toulouse. During a visit to the French capital Mr Owen, with his impulsive fervour, threw fresh life into affairs; the sanction of the Ministry of Police was obtained, and on the 30th November 1818 the Protestant Bible Society of Paris was formed. Its establishment was, as it were, the kindling of the first of a series of beacon-fires. Organisations sprang up in places as far apart as Caen and Bordeaux, Rouen and Lyons, Orleans and Marseilles, Sedan and La Rochelle. In a year or two there were co-operating in

its labours thirty-six Auxiliaries, twenty-eight Branches, and forty-nine Associations.

Considerable money grants and large supplies of the Scriptures were voted by the Committee as occasion required; but the work of the Paris Bible Society was restricted by political conditions to the Reformed Churches, and the Committee were anxious to place the Word of Life within reach of the vast Roman Catholic majority of the population. An agent well qualified for this important undertaking was found in M. Jean Daniel Kieffer, Professor of Turkish in the College of France, and Interpreter of Oriental Languages to the King, who was engaged in revising for the Society Ali Bey's Turkish translation of the Bible. In 1820 a depôt was opened in Paris under his management, and in this manner the Committee endeavoured to secure that catholicity of distribution which in France was otherwise impracticable.

The Scriptures now found their way into hospitals, asylums, and prisons. On board the galleys reckless men were seen grouped about some fellow-criminal who could read, and as the divine utterance touched their hearts "their tears fell on their chains." In the schools, where lay the chief hope of winning France to a religion based solely on the Gospel, the New Testament was largely circulated, with the concurrence of the Minister of Public Instruction.

Up to 1826 the grants of the Committee to the Protestant Bible Society of Paris amounted to £7145. After that date its adherence to the

Apocrypha restricted intercourse, and the assistance extended to it was confined to supplies of the New Testament, almost wholly for specific purposes. The political revolution of 1830, which placed Louis Philippe on the throne, removed many of the obstacles which had interfered with the circulation of the Scriptures, and three years later the French and Foreign Bible Society was formed on the catholic basis, and with the universal scope, of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Committee welcomed this new coadjutor, and a grant of £300, besides a set of stereotype plates, was voted with every good wish for its prosperity.

Meanwhile striking experiments had been made in a method of distribution which was soon to become the most prominent characteristic in the operations of the Paris Agency. Colporteurs had been sent out by the Messrs Courtois, three benevolent brothers, bankers in Toulouse, to sell Bibles and Testaments at a low price. They had gone from cottage to cottage, had attended fairs and markets, had penetrated to villages in the Pyrenees where the Bible was either unknown or regarded as a wicked "Protestant book," and had circulated many thousands of volumes. The system was adopted by the Evangelical Society of Geneva, at Basel, and at Lyons and other French towns. M. Kieffer had also tested it, but was not spared to develop it. Worn out with many labours and cares, he passed to his rest after a short illness in January 1833, and was succeeded in the charge of the Paris Agency by M. Victor de Pressensé.

From 1817 to the close of the year of M. Kieffer's death the grants of the Committee for the work done in France amounted to £75,862. From that date to the end of the Jubilee Year they formed an aggregate of £149,640, of which no less than £144,000 was administered through the Agency. During the thirteen years of M. Kieffer's management, issues of the Agency reached the large total of 730,650 volumes. In the next thirteen years that figure was considerably more than doubled. No less than 1,529,784 copies were distributed, and of that number 1,024,808 were scattered through the Departments of France by colporteurs. In 1837 it was decided that the colporteurs, who up to that time had combined the distribution of the Scriptures with the objects of other societies, should be men devoted exclusively to the work of the Agency. Forty-four were appointed; in a few years there were between seventy and eighty; frequently there were over a hundred. Himself a son of a noble Roman Catholic family, it is a curious fact that of the two hundred and eighty to three hundred colporteurs whom Pressensé employed up to the Jubilee Year, "only the twentieth part were Protestants by birth; all the others were formerly Roman Catholics."

Devout, courageous, discreet men they were, to judge them by their letters and reports; exceptional men, one would call them, but for their frequency; well read in the Scriptures, with chapter and verse at their finger-ends; sympathetic, patient, sweet-tempered, of the true apostolic spirit; wise, too, in a degree not expected in men of their class; not

prompted by love of gain, for £3 a month, for the most part only during a portion of the year, was but moderate payment for long journeys, in all kinds of weather, in places where food and a night's lodging might be refused, where abuse and physical violence might be encountered, where the scoffer and the infidel were blatant, where the priest was often dangerously hostile, and even the guardians of the law sometimes looked askance. They seem to have travelled everywhere, to have shrunk from no risk, difficulty, or distance. By 1854 they had traversed every Department of France, and visited most of the parishes. They were men in the vigour of life—from five-and-twenty to forty years of age—and though at the best their calling was hard, sixteen or seventeen years was no uncommon period of service, and one worthy man—a veteran of the Napoleonic wars—spent twenty-six years in the work.

Could we but follow them in their wanderings! Here at nightfall in October is one who loses his way in the forest. The rain is pouring in torrents; the darkness thickens; and the wind blows with eerie voices among the trees, through which he stumbles. Suddenly a light glimmers; there is a forester's hut. He reaches it and looks in through the window. By the light of a splinter of pine a grey-headed man is reading to a woman and two young men sitting round the fire. On his entrance the old man gives him a seat by the hearth, and asks leave to finish his reading. As he listens the colporteur's heart beats fast; it is one of the Gospels. "You must excuse it," says the forester

when he has finished, "that we did not suffer ourselves to be interrupted by your arrival: we were desirous of learning all that the Lord had to say to us this evening. It has been our custom to close the day in this way for the last nine years, and we are much attached to it." Nine years before, a colporteur had gone through the forest, and had sold a copy of the New Testament at this cottage.

Or it is a village on the sandy heaths of the south-west; and a poor woman is weeping distractedly over her dead son. On his breast lies his Bible. There she has laid it with the words, "If thou art really what my son said, bring him to life again, and I will worship thee." He had said it was a book that worked miracles; it had been his joy, his happiness. The colporteur listens, deeply moved, then opens the book, and reads and explains; "I am the resurrection"; "Yea, Lord, I believe thou art Christ, the Son of God"; they kneel in prayer, and though the woman still weeps, it is without the anger of a rebellious heart.

Or it is a colporteur who has returned in tatters from a country where about all the farms there are two or three large dogs—"No, it was not brambles, but the dogs were very fierce; so I have been obliged to mend my garments a good deal"—and the good soul wonders, like George Fox, the first of all the Quakers, whether there may not be security and joy in a suit of leather.

It may be that the scene is the barricades in the four June days of 1848. One of the *Garde Mobile* falls back mortally wounded into the arms of an

officer. "Take a little book from my knapsack," says the dying man in a faint voice; "it is the Gospels, read it, and bear in mind my last words—it is the Word of God; it is that which can teach you the only sure way of salvation." A few months later the officer, stricken down by a malady contracted during the insurrection, is dying in a remote hamlet. A colporteur appears at his door, and offers him a Bible. "God Himself has sent you to prove a consolation to me in my last days." The story of the June days is told. "I read his book," says the officer, "I love his book. I am desirous of becoming acquainted with the whole of the Word of God."

It may be some small town, and the colporteur finds himself curiously aided by the writings of an American lady. "Yes, I shall buy this book," he is told, "for I see that it is—Uncle Tom's Bible." A translation of the famous story of slavery has carried the sorrows of the poor negro and his love of the Bible into the homes of innumerable French *bourgeois*, and many are eager to possess a copy of *his* Bible.

Here is a scene of another description. The colporteur goes through the streets of the little town. A troop of children follow from house to house, hooting and shouting. The vicar has been preaching against the godless wretches who go about infecting the country with their books. At the house of the priest, the housekeeper receives him with a tempest of invective, shakes her fist in his face, retreats, and slams the door behind her.

There were many individual exceptions, but,

speaking broadly, the Roman Catholic clergy were angrily opposed to the colporteurs, and to the organisation behind them. "There is hardly a sermon preached from the Romish pulpits," said the Rev. F. Monod at the anniversary meeting in 1841, "wherein the circulation of the Bible is not attacked; hardly a charge given by a Bishop, in which there is not a paragraph against the Bible Society. They burn the Word of God when they can get hold of it; but where they burn one Bible we send one hundred; thither our colporteurs go next day, and are sure to sell ten times as many copies as have been burned in that place."

When it is stated that of the 2,271,709 copies of the Scriptures issued by Pressensé up to the Jubilee Year, 1,913,272 were De Sacy's version, and were circulated among Roman Catholics, it will seem less surprising that in so many instances the evangelist followed the colporteur, that whole *communes* passed over to the Reformed worship, and that a number of Churches were firmly established. All this time the Brothers Courtois were unflagging in their zeal; the Paris Protestant and the French and Foreign Bible Societies distributed several hundreds of thousands of copies, and, as opportunity offered, the Committee gave encouragement, sympathy, and material aid. Versions of the New Testament in Basque and Breton were also published, and while the Gospel was spread among the pastures and vineyards of Béarn, depôts were opened at Brest, Morlaix, and Quimper, and colporteurs were traversing the *landes* of Brittany all littered with the standing-stones of

antiquity and the broken calvaries of the Middle Ages.

From the founding of the Paris Agency to the end of the Jubilee Year 3,112,233 copies of the Scriptures were circulated in France. Taking into account the number sent into the country between 1805 and 1820, by means of the prisoners of war and through various organisations beyond the borders, it may be affirmed that up to the close of its first half-century the Society distributed there not less than four million copies. As one of the results, it was estimated that in the Jubilee Year there were as many Protestants in France as there had been before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

In Central Europe, up to 1826, the Bible cause grew from strength to strength; Auxiliaries and Associations rapidly multiplied; and the great Bible Societies extended their operations with unrelaxing vigour. In Bavaria, it is true, repressive measures were enforced by the Government in 1817, and the Branch at Nuremberg—the seat of the first of the continental institutions—was suppressed; but in 1820 it was ascertained that, so far from the work being stopped, over 350,000 copies of Van Ess's translation had been printed at Sulzbach, nearly 80,000 of Gossner's at Munich, and more than 60,000 of Wittman's at Ratisbon. Even into the Austrian dominions, hedged round by civil edict and ecclesiastical anathema, the Word of God irresistibly made its way. Sitting on the hills above Herrnhut in 1825, Dr Pinkerton was gladdened, as he looked on the Giants'

Mountains, by the thought that upwards of 30,000 copies of the New Testament, sent out by the Moravian Bible Society, had penetrated the rocky passes to the Roman Catholic population of Bohemia.

Throughout Germany a lively interest in the societies was aroused by the celebration of the Tercentenary of the Reformation in 1817. Solemn services were held, collections were made on behalf of the funds, and in nearly all the Protestant churches Bibles were distributed to the young people, and especially to the children of the poor, as memorials of the festival of emancipated Germany. In the following summer Dr Pinkerton made a journey from St Petersburg to Basel, visiting on his way not only the Bible institutions, but the prisons and hospitals, into the hands of whose inmates no one had yet thought of placing the reproof and consolation of the Gospel. In connection with the Universities, he observed that the Scriptures had very considerably recovered their lost ascendancy over the minds of the learned. "We must at last return to the good old way," replied one of the leading opponents of the supernatural, when questioned as to his change of views regarding Christianity. In the same year Mr Owen made a round of the Swiss Bible Societies, encouraging them to increased exertions and promising them the financial assistance of the Committee. In 1820, and again in 1823, Dr Steinkopff travelled over Central Europe, and in 1825 Dr Pinkerton visited the Bible establishments in seven kingdoms.

All through this time, when the continental societies presented their fairest picture of prosperity, their connection with the great mother organisation was undisturbed in its affection and regard by any breath of controversy. The Netherlands Bible Society, founded in 1814, had not only grouped round itself some sixty Auxiliaries and Associations, but had become actively engaged in providing for the spiritual welfare of the Dutch settlements at Amboyna, in Sumatra, and other remote localities. Assistance had been sent to the societies in the East, and a Malay Bible in Arabic characters had been printed at Amsterdam. The Prussian Bible Society had forty-three Auxiliaries, the Würtemberg Society had forty-six Branches, the Saxon Society five Auxiliaries, the Hanover Society twenty-three Auxiliaries and Associations; and the Bible Societies of Central Europe had circulated 859,688 copies of the Scriptures in many languages at the close of 1825-6. In Switzerland, at the same date, the distribution of the twelve Bible Societies amounted to 253,676 Bibles and Testaments. In the wildest recesses of the mountains, in woodman's hut and shepherd's sheiling in the pastures above the zone of gentians, the Word of God had been made welcome. Even on the wintry height of the Great St Bernard the hospitable monks had taken charge of copies of De Sacy's New Testament, in order that the traveller, as he sought shelter on the spot where the Roman legionaries and the chapmen of the East presented their thank-offerings to Pennine Jove, might turn his thoughts to Him in whose

hand is "the strength of the hills." Who knows what winged seeds of truth were wafted from the loneliest of these places into the great world beyond? One reads how a stocking-hawker, lost on the high Alps, was guided by a light to a châlet in the snows, was welcomed by the mountaineers to their fire, and heard a pastor from one of the churches in the valleys read and expound a chapter. Years passed, but he frequently recollected that night on the mountains. When he had grown old a colporteur offered him the New Testament. He recognised it—"the very book the minister read to us"; and welcomed it as a special gift from God. It became his constant companion; it led him to seek out those who could join with him in prayer; it guided him to a neighbouring town where a colporteur was taking part in an important religious movement. "I am come with a view of joining you in serving the Lord in spirit and in truth."

In addition to the large distributions of the Bible Societies, Van Ess had brought into circulation 583,000 copies of his own version, besides 11,894 Bibles and several thousand New Testaments of Luther's, and a considerable number of the Scriptures in ancient and modern Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and other European and Oriental languages.

In February 1826, as the result of the Apocrypha controversy, an official circular was despatched to all the foreign Bible Societies, communicating the new laws and the strict conditions on which alone the Committee was authorised to offer them any assistance. The Apocrypha must find no place

in any volume printed at the expense or with the aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Five-and-twenty of the continental institutions replied. The most influential—the Prussian, Hanoverian, Saxon, Danish, and Swedish, together with those at Frankfort, Basel, Zürich, Lausanne, Geneva and Paris—while gratefully acknowledging their indebtedness, declared that they must continue to disseminate the sacred Scriptures in the form in which they had been handed down to the people and authorised by the Church. With a view of removing every ground of misconception and of arranging for the continuance of the work, Dr Pinkerton and the Rev. Richard Waldo Sibthorp visited the Continent on behalf of the Committee in 1827. Principles were explained, misunderstandings cleared up, and some ill-will was allayed. The Saxon and Würtemberg Societies, however, declined to receive Bibles without the Apocrypha; the Prussian Society empowered certain of its members to receive and distribute grants on the Committee's conditions; the largest concession was made at Leipzig and Nuremberg, Schaffhausen, St Gall, Aarau, and, after prolonged deliberation, at Basel,—to circulate the Society's versions on the terms specified. Some hope was at first entertained that the continental organisations might gradually accept the British view of the Apocrypha; but as time went by it became unmistakably clear that the attachment of the Reformed Churches to the Apocrypha as a portion of their traditional Bible was inflexible, and that a central agency under the control of the Committee was essential if the cause

was to be promoted on the lines laid down by the Society.

Dr Pinkerton was accordingly chosen to develop the new system on which thenceforth the operations of the Committee were to be conducted, and in October 1830 he entered on his duties at Frankfort-on-the-Main—a free city, which offered the advantages of a liberal government and extensive mercantile intercourse. Depôts were opened at Munich, Leipzig, and Halle, and the individual correspondents who took the place of the committees of the foreign societies were brought into close connection with the Agency. As the result, 154,898 copies of the Scriptures in seven languages were circulated in the first three years. Few of the societies received grants up to 1830, and none after 1832; but a friendly intercourse was maintained, and many of them purchased supplies from Frankfort.

On his appointment, Dr Pinkerton's jurisdiction extended from the French to the Russian frontier, and included Belgium and Holland, Switzerland and Northern Italy. "There were giants in the earth in those days," and many of them worked for the Bible Society. In addition to the routine duties of supervising the press, cheapening and improving paper and binding materials, despatching consignments of the Scriptures, corresponding at the rate of 628 letters a year, Pinkerton found time and energy for frequent and extensive tours. In 1835 the appointment of Mr William Pascoe Tiddy to the Belgian Agency somewhat lightened his burden. In that year he travelled through Prussian

Poland and Lithuania; in the next he visited Toulouse, where he met the Brothers Courtois, at that moment deeply interested in the French emigrants leaving for Monte Video and North Africa, in which last country the brothers had Bible agents of their own. In 1843 we find him at Buchwald in Silesia, the guest of the Countess of Reden, one of his earliest correspondents and first president of the Buchwald Bible Society. That society had been founded, the day after the Battle of Waterloo, by her husband, a Prussian Minister of State; and on his death the work, which he specially intrusted to her, became her world. At first, a narrow world of ten towns and about seventy villages, scattered in the green valleys and along the declivities of the Giants' Mountains, it had grown, until in 1837 the map showed nearly a hundred and thirty places connected with the centre at Buchwald. "What an inconsiderable speck our little Buchwald forms; yet from it 40,000 persons have been supplied with the sacred volume!"

It was at this date that the arrival of a colony of emigrants brought a new interest into the Countess's life. They came from Zillerthal in the Tyrol, a valley so endeared to its people that, if ever they leave it, they must either come back to it or die of home-sickness. A large number of the inhabitants had been converted to Protestantism by reading the Bible, which had been widely circulated amongst them; and for many years they had been bitterly persecuted by the priests. They had been denied the sacraments;

their children had been refused baptism; their young people marriage; their dead the rites of the grave. At length in 1837 an edict of the Estates of the Tyrol gave them the alternative of conforming, or of selling their property and quitting their native land for ever.

Sixty-three families, between four and five hundred souls, set forth on their sorrowful exodus. One of their number was sent to plead their cause with the King of Prussia, Frederick William III. Not in vain was the tale of their sufferings and destitution told. The good King generously allowed them to settle on part of his own estate at Erdmannsdorf, at the foot of the Giants' Mountains. One follows with a moved imagination that picturesque band of exiles for the faith, as they trudge—men, women, and little folk—along the weary frontier of Austria to their new home in Silesia. The King committed the care of their settlement to the Countess of Reden, and after many difficulties they were comfortably housed in their quaint Tyrolese cottages. When Dr Pinkerton went among the people during his visit of 1843, he found them "well read in the Bible," able to quote it with ease in justification of the hope that was in them. And he observed no signs of home-sickness. They had truly learned that here we have no abiding city.

Meanwhile, in Poland and Prussia the work was zealously advanced by the missionaries of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. As the year 1840 drew nigh there was observable in many places a strange air of unrest

and expectancy among the Children of Israel. Curious calculations, based on data furnished by the prophecies in the Old Testament, indicated that the Messiah was about to appear. One learned Talmudist even declared that if He did not appear in 1840, they were bound to believe that He must have already come, and that Jesus of Nazareth must have been He.

In Hungary Pinkerton secured an energetic coadjutor in one of the Reformed clergy. Some two hundred pastors gradually co-operated. Schools, hospitals, prisons, the poor were supplied gratis with the Scriptures. Several editions of the Bible and New Testament, in Hungarian, Bohemian, and German, were printed at Güns, and copies reached the remote shepherd in the Carpathians and his poor minister, who could seldom obtain within the twelve months his stipend of £3 or £4 a year. Nearly 338,000 copies had been circulated, and it was proposed to open depôts in Vienna itself, when "the year of unfulfilled revolutions"—1848—shook the thrones and capitals of Europe. Louis Philippe escaped to England; Pope Pius IX. fled from Rome in disguise; the King of Prussia issued a new constitution; Hungary, under the leadership of Kossuth, was independent; the Emperor of Austria abdicated. A great hope, which was not destined to be wholly realised, stimulated the friends of the Society. Liberty of the press had been secured in Italy and Austria; and a special fund was subscribed to enable the Committee to take the fullest advantage of these unexpected opportunities.

The chief benefit which Dr Pinkerton derived from the political changes that followed these upheavals was the removal of the Government restrictions which had hitherto rendered colportage impracticable. The Prussian Bible Society at Berlin called upon its ninety Auxiliaries to send out colporteurs. A Home Mission, one of the principal objects of which was the circulation of the Scriptures, was established, with branches in every part of Protestant Germany. Pinkerton himself, who started with fifteen picked men, circulated 26,699 copies of the Scriptures in the first year, and reached a total of 99,282 by the end of 1850. The colporteur seemed to be afoot in all directions. He had his difficulties and discouragements, but on the whole his labours were successful.

The issues from the Frankfort Agency from 1830, when Dr Pinkerton took charge, to the Jubilee Year amounted to 1,342,115 copies. The yearly distribution never fell short of 30,000 volumes; in six years only was it less than 50,000; and once it rose to 99,436. Between 1817 and 1854 the Committee voted £205,798 for the benefit of Central Europe.

In Mr Tiddy Dr Pinkerton had an enterprising and indefatigable colleague. Belgium, where the blood of Alva's martyrs had not proved to be the seed of the Church, was typically Roman Catholic. In many places the Bible was not only a sealed book—it was a book unknown. Tiddy could not find a copy in the shops of Bruges in 1836.

Where it was known, it was the joint possession of several persons who had subscribed and sent one of their number into Holland to purchase it. One such copy, which cost 42 francs, was presented to the Library of the Society. Another was seized by the priests. It was the only Bible in the village; the owners hid it by day; at night they took it with them into the woods, hung a lantern to the branch of a tree and read it. They also sang the Psalms of David to song tunes, to deceive any one who might overhear them. Great was the wrath of the priests, for all their search for the evil book had been fruitless. One day, however, accompanied by the *gendarmes*, they went to a house when the men were at work and the women at market. Only a child of ten was left to take care of the babe in the cradle. Again the search proved useless, and the inquisitors were departing when one of the *gendarmes* stayed them. "Let us go back; I noticed that the girl sat by the cradle and rocked it continually, whether the child was asleep or not." They returned; the babe was taken out of the cradle, and under its bed of straw the Bible was found—to the bitter grief of the little nurse, to the indignation and sorrow of the poor peasants when they reached home.

Happy contrast! At the end of five years there were few villages into which the Bible had not penetrated; at the end of seven, 102,840 copies had been sold—93,090 by colporteurs. The fulminations of the prelates, the clergy, the Cardinal Archbishop himself, rendered the work dangerous as well as difficult. The colporteurs were insulted,

threatened, hustled; their books were stolen, snatched, torn to fragments, burnt before their faces. On the other hand, the Belgian and Foreign Bible Society was revived; fresh zeal animated the societies at Antwerp, Ghent, Tournai, and Bruges; and new Branches and Associations were founded. Here too the evangelist followed the colporteur. An Evangelical Society, similar to those of France and Switzerland, was formed, and its annual meeting in 1852 was attended by two hundred and fifty persons from Brussels and neighbouring towns, and by pastors and representatives from sixteen congregations scattered over Belgium.

With the concurrence of the Netherlands Bible Society, Tiddy organised a scheme of colportage for Holland in 1843. In seven years 260,000 copies were circulated. In Belgium his operations were obstructed; in Holland they were in a measure superseded by the growing activity of the Netherlands Society. In the autumn of 1847 he found in the Rhine Provinces a third field for his activity. A depôt was opened in Cologne, and from that centre his company of colporteurs covered the country northward as far away as Oldenburg and Bremerhaven, Lübeck and Mecklenburg. At first their success among the Roman Catholics was remarkable, but in a year or two other influences prevailed, and in some instances Kistemaker's New Testament, which had been approved by the Bishop of Münster and had sold in thousands, was burned by the priests or in obedience to their orders. In the Jubilee Year Mr Tiddy, who

had accepted the ministry of a congregation near London, resigned his charge, and was succeeded by his assistants,—Mr Van der Bom at Amsterdam, Mr Kirkpatrick at Brussels, and Mr N. B. Millard at Cologne. The grants voted to this triple Agency had amounted to £55,000; and up to March 1854 Mr Tiddy had circulated 899,568 volumes.

In 1850, as the result of the political changes which had taken place, Mr Edward Millard—then assistant at Cologne—was commissioned as Agent in Austria. On his arrival at Vienna, he placed himself in communication with the authorities. They objected to his making any personal efforts, but allowed him to use the book trade and the ordinary methods of publication. He promptly issued editions of the Scriptures in German, Bohemian, and Magyar. The people seemed to be suddenly awakening to a sense of their spiritual freedom. Within eighteen months 36,328 volumes were in circulation, and 25,000 more were on the point of leaving the press when the Government interposed. The Bible was denounced from the Roman Catholic pulpits; the depôts at Güns, Pesth, Vienna, were put under the seal of the police. Notwithstanding diplomatic remonstrances, the Austrian Government steadily refused to do more than resign the depôts with their contents, and so much only on condition that the books were at once removed from Austrian territory. The intolerant power which drove hundreds of godly men from their homes in the Zillertal was little likely to scruple about deporting mere

books. Two hundred and four bales and one hundred and twenty-five cases containing 58,087 Bibles and Testaments were escorted beyond the frontier by a detachment of the *gendarmérie*, "amidst the unavailing tears and sighs of tens of thousands of the people." £3925 had been expended on the enterprise; 41,659 volumes had been distributed.

The banished books were conveyed to Breslau, where Mr Millard opened a depôt, and, in spite of active hostility, indifference, and contempt ("Oh, we have got a long way ahead of the Bible!" said some complacent sheriff or burgo-master), 34,750 copies were distributed, chiefly by colporteurs, up to March 1854.

In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the suppression of the Apocrypha was regarded from the same standpoint of ancient ecclesiastical custom. Dr Pinkerton spent the summer of 1828 in a tour of conciliation, but in a little time direct co-operation on the part of the Danish and Sleswick-Holstein Bible Societies ceased, and the efforts of the Committee were restricted to personal undertakings. In 1821 the Danish Society was supported by a hundred and twenty Auxiliaries and Associations. By 1826 it had issued the Gospel of St Matthew, the first book printed in the old Norse dialect of the Faroe Islands; and large portions of the Old Testament in Eskimo had been sent to Greenland. Every family in Iceland had been supplied with the Scriptures, which formed the chief reading in the long winter

evenings. Friendly relations with the Committee were still maintained, and at the Jubilee the Danish Bible Society, which had then distributed 203,262 volumes, sent its hearty congratulations to the parent institution.

In Norway and Sweden the action of the Society was not regarded with the same suspicion and resentment as in Germany. The Primate, Archbishop Rosenstein, did not stand alone when he said that he had "never considered the apocryphal books as forming any part of *his* Bible"; but the possibility of arousing popular dissatisfaction induced caution among influential persons. The Swedish Bible Society, whose aggregate circulation had amounted in 1825 to 204,645 copies, decided to adhere to the Apocrypha, but consented to supply the canonical Scriptures to those who desired to possess them; and several of its Auxiliaries adopted the same course. In a few years, however, the cessation of pecuniary assistance, the restriction of grants almost entirely to the New Testament, and the rarity of personal visitation so narrowed the operations of the Committee that in 1832 Dr Paterson visited the country for the purpose of introducing the Agency system. Everywhere he was received with open arms. At Stockholm he secured the warm approval of the Swedish Society for the appointments he made; authority was given for the printing of editions as they were required; and the Auxiliaries of Finland were included in the range of the Agency's work. At Christiania an Agency was established for Norway, with branches at Christiansand, Stavanger,

Bergen, and Trondhjem, and printing arrangements were put in train. In 1839 colportage was tried in Sweden, on a small scale, but with some remarkable results. Norway, with its wild tracts in which a house was not seen for leagues and the pastors sometimes lived fifty miles apart, required another method, and in 1851 the Christiania Agency obtained the good offices of the village school-masters as distributors in their own districts.

By the close of the Jubilee Year the Swedish Bible Society had distributed in all 676,922 Bibles and Testaments, and the Stockholm Agency 583,162 copies—a total of 1,260,084. The issues of the Norwegian Bible Society exceeded 54,000, and those of the Christiania Agency and its branches amounted to 66,040—in all 120,000 copies. From 1817 to 1854 the grants of the Committee to these societies of Northern Europe formed a total of £60,984. Of this sum £37,328 went to the Stockholm and £7977 to the Christiania Agency.

In 1849, when Bible distribution in Sweden completed (and exceeded) the first million copies, King Oscar and his four sons attended the anniversary meeting of the Swedish Bible Society, and the great hall, capable of holding nine hundred people, was completely filled. That indicated one direction in which the influence of the Word of Life was working. Another direction is suggested by an incident described in the correspondence of the Stockholm Agency:—"A beggar, known for his impiety and drunkenness, came to my house and claimed an alms, in an insolent manner, for himself and his daughter. . . . I asked him whether he

could read ; and, on my urging him, he read some verses from a New Testament which I laid open before him. His voice began to tremble, his hand shook, and a tear shone in his eye. On my asking him the reason of his emotion, he said that he had not held a Bible in his hand ever since he, thirty years before, had pledged at a brandy-shop, and never redeemed, the Bible he had inherited from his father. . . . From that time he had refrained from reading the Bible, in order not to awaken the wounds of his conscience. I asked him whether he would not like to take the book as a fellow-traveller along with him, and admonished him to read the chapter which I marked, Luke xv. The book was received, although the man believed it would now be too late. On my journey to another congregation, I met the same man on a sunny evening with his child, sitting by the wayside and reading his New Testament, the child listening with folded hands. When he perceived me, he thanked me with tears for the precious book. 'It is now the sixth time,' he said, 'that I have read this chapter. If there is such a Father still to be found, the Prodigal Son sits here by the wayside.' When I encouraged him to arise and go, through Jesus, to his Father, he took the book, looked up to heaven, and said, 'Then this fellow-traveller shall guide myself and my helpless child to that table which, even for beggars, is prepared in heaven. Pray for me. God bless you !' "

Writing, sixteen years after the event, of the effects of the Apocrypha decision, Dr Steinkopff and Dr Pinkerton agreed that the Scriptures had

been more widely distributed than they would have been if no separation had occurred. At that time the attitude of the clergy and of the laity towards the Bible of their fathers had not changed. The latest report of the Society (1903) shows that in East Prussia, Silesia, and Livonia, both pastors and people still resent the exclusion of the apocryphal books, and the same feeling prevails in many parts of the Continent.

CHAPTER XII

THE BIBLE IN RUSSIA

To the anxieties and discouragements of secession and division was added the trial of an incalculable loss in the suppression of the Russian Bible Society in 1826. Under the protection of the Czar it had in a few years attained extraordinary influence and prestige. Its sixth anniversary was attended by representatives of nearly thirty tribes and tongues, and the great hall of the Taurida Palace was crowded by a mingled throng of moujiks and craftsmen, Christians and Jews, naval and military officers of European reputation, Ministers of State, nobles, and dignitaries of all the Churches.

At that date the Russian Bible Society had 173 Auxiliaries—Auxiliaries in Finland, in Courland and Esthonia, in the eastern provinces, in Bessarabia and the Crimea, at Astrakhan and at Tiflis; and, beyond the Urals, yet others which had been founded at Tobolsk, Krasnoiarsk, and Irkutsk, on the routes of the Siberian fur-traders and the Chinese caravans. Its expenditure had amounted to £51,848; it had circulated the Scriptures in thirty-nine languages, and had itself printed them in twenty-six (including twelve new versions). Its

issues had been conveyed through the passes of the Caucasus in cart-loads; they were read by the Kirghese on the steppe; they had reached the prisoners in the silver mines at Nertchinsk; the ships which sailed from Kronstadt on a voyage round the globe had taken a stock of Slavonic Scriptures for Kamstchatka, and copies in English, French and German, Spanish and Portuguese, to supply the inhabitants of the different coasts at which they might touch.

A great change, it was stated, was observable in the country. In obedience to the will of the Czar, the New Testament had been introduced into schools and seminaries. In many villages the people gathered on Sundays and holy days to listen to the divine message, and the young were instructing their parents who had never been taught to read. Soldiers and sailors, too, had learned to value the Scriptures, and the use of them was becoming general.

Paterson, Henderson, and Pinkerton promoted the cause in extensive tours. In 1821 the former traversed two-and-twenty provinces of the colossal empire. With an escort of a hundred soldiers, a score of Cossacks, and two pieces of cannon—and even then stealing a march sometimes in the darkness, with no light but the match of the linstock burning on the gun-carriage—they passed through the dangerous region at the foot of the Caucasus, crossed the range, and travelled as far as Tiflis. On the 12th December in that year Prince Galitzin, president of the Russian Bible Society, presented to the Czar on his birthday the first complete copy

of the New Testament in Russ, which had been undertaken at his Majesty's desire.

At the close of 1823 powerful influences were converging towards the overthrow of the great Russian institution. Certain of the clergy began to take alarm at the effect which had been produced in the minds of the people by the reading of the Scriptures. The emissaries of the Jesuits, who attributed their recent expulsion to Prince Galitzin, industriously spread the accusation that the Bible Society was leagued with the Carbonari and other secret associations for the social and political disorganisation of Europe. The revolutionary movements in Spain, Piedmont, Naples, Sicily, had been discussed at a conference of the Powers, and the Czar had returned from Laybach depressed by Metternich's subtle warnings, doubtful of the wisdom of enlightening the people, and suspicious of all unions and combinations. The intricate story of intrigue cannot be told here. Prince Galitzin, following the advice of the Czar, resigned his position as president, and in April 1824 Seraphim, Metropolitan of St Petersburg, was appointed to succeed him.

Before his elevation to the primacy of the Russian Church, Seraphim had delivered a soul-stirring address at an anniversary meeting of the Moscow Auxiliary, in which he closed with an imprecation of *Woe, woe, woe*, on the man who should in any way impede the circulation of the Scriptures in Russia, or in the world at large. Indeed he appears to have owed his advancement, in no small measure, to that celebrated address. Now

the circulation of the Scriptures throughout the vast empire which extended from the Baltic to Alaska was committed to his charge. Alas, for the unhappy sequel! In the spring of 1825, at one of the rare meetings of the committee of the Russian Bible Society, he inveighed against the indiscriminate distribution of the Scriptures, which were being read without the guidance of the clergy and which would lead to all manner of disorders. In the winter of that year Alexander died of typhus at Taganrog. All persons of rank, all corporate bodies, the committees of all societies were ordered to attend his funeral, but the Russian Bible Society, the one society which owed more than all the rest to his patronage and personal favour, was overlooked. In April 1826 the Emperor Nicholas temporarily suspended all the operations of the society, except the sale of the Scriptures already printed. The final measure followed four months later. Seraphim represented to the Emperor that if the Russian Bible Society were placed under the management of the Holy Synod, the circulation of the Scriptures would be as efficient as heretofore, and less expensive, and the burden of his responsibility, as president of the one and head of the other, would be lightened for his aged shoulders. On the 15th of August appeared a ukase giving effect to this arrangement, and thus, in the prime of its activity, was annihilated the splendid organisation which had begun to bring within the pale of one vast brotherhood the Samoyede on the icy shores of the Arctic seas, the trader of the Okhotsk, the Mongolian tribes under the shadow of the Great

Wall, the sturgeon-fishers of Baikal, the horsemen of the Scythian steppes, the bark-eaters of Karelia, and the cavern-dwellers of Inkerman. Happily the ukase allowed the sale at the depôts as heretofore, and — thanks to Dr Paterson's forethought and energy — these were stocked with about 200,000 copies when he left Russia.

At its suppression, the Russian Bible Society had 289 Auxiliaries. The Scriptures had been circulated in forty-five languages. No fewer than 876,106 copies had been printed in thirty tongues, and some 600,000 had been distributed. During the fourteen years in which the British and Foreign Bible Society had conducted its operations in the dominions of the Czar its donations amounted to £22,949.

A curious light is thrown on the close of the episode by a remark of the Emperor Nicholas when he heard of Dr Paterson's intended departure. "Why should Dr Paterson leave Russia? He may still be usefully employed in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures." "The Holy Synod do not desire his services," replied Prince Galitzin. "Why?" "Because they look upon him as a heretic!" "A heretic! I cannot endure such bigotry!" Statecraft and priestcraft, however, carried the day.

The establishment of a Protestant Bible Society was indeed sanctioned, and it pursued its course silent and unmolested; but two years elapsed before one of those trifles men call "chances" led the Committee to hope that to some extent they might retrieve the disaster which had befallen the

Russian Empire. At that time the Rev. Richard Knill of the L.M.S. was minister of the Anglo-American congregation in St Petersburg. He was one day preparing for the departure of a young missionary when a peasant woman called at his house. "Can you read?" he asked, picking up one of the Bibles he was packing. "Yes, in my own language—in Finnish." He handed her a Finnish Bible, and bade her read. "Have you a Bible?" he asked, as she held out the book to return it. No; she had never had one; had always been too poor to buy one; at that moment she had but a rouble. To her great delight, he gave her the Bible for that sum. "Go and tell your neighbours that if any of them wish to have a Bible, they shall have one for a rouble." In six weeks he sold eight hundred. People travelled sixty versts (nearly forty miles), and arrived at daybreak, so as not to lose their opportunity. He became uneasy at the unexpectedly large expense he was incurring, but his wife encouraged him: "It is God's work!" And then, as he still hesitated, a funeral passed at the end of the street. No; "there *is* no work nor device in the grave."

In a little while he was distributing the Czar's Russ version of the New Testament and Psalter—at first with apprehension, for the Holy Synod had put its veto on it, but afterwards more boldly. Friends sent him assistance. Then the Committee heard of his work, and hastened to help him. By 1830 he had established small depôts in Finland, at Karass, Astrakhan, Tiflis, Shusha, and far

away at Selenginsk in the depths of Siberia, and up to 1834, when he was succeeded at St Petersburg by the Rev. J. C. Brown, he had circulated 30,000 copies in many languages.

Shortly afterwards a cry of dearth was heard from Finland. There were a hundred thousand families destitute of the Scriptures. Half of them were too poor to purchase at any price, and thirty thousand more could afford to pay only a small sum. Up to 1847 three editions of the New Testament (75,000 copies), printed at the expense of the Society, were distributed, for the most part gratis, and the Committee sanctioned a fourth edition; while for Swedish families in Finland similarly circumstanced, 15,000 copies of the Swedish New Testament were prepared by the Stockholm Agency. Let it not be supposed that the Finlanders, for all their poverty, were dependent wholly on the liberality of strangers. These large efforts were zealously seconded by the Finnish Bible Society at Åbo, which issued from its presses 18,000 Bibles and Testaments.

With a wonderful clearness the blessing of God seemed to rest on the distribution of His Word in this wild country. Finland had drunk deep of the cup of infidelity. In the first twenty years of the century, save in some remote parish with an aged pastor, the Gospel was not preached at all, and Bibles were so scarce that they could hardly be had at any price. Then came the Bible Society with its cheap editions, eagerly bought up by the poor, who abandoned the teaching of the unbelieving clergy, and sought refuge in

“the Rock of Salvation.” At length, in 1838, a few theological students at the University of Helsingfors received the doctrines of the divine Word, and a deep spiritual revival began. For ten years it continued; in the distant wilds of the poor land the peasant ate a little more birch bark, and stored his rye in a cask to exchange it for the Bread of Life; many of the unbelieving pastors themselves became new men.

A strange and beautiful picture of the religious life which existed in some of the wildest parts of the country is preserved in the story of a pious lady who travelled in the winter of 1850 from Tammerfors to Sordawala, on the most northerly shore of Lake Ladoga. She halted at various stages, sometimes in the depths of the immense forests, far from any town or hamlet, to meet with Christian peasants, who had come from distant places and were awaiting her arrival. Her route lay over frozen lakes, through dense woods, from one isolated spot to another; yet at some of her night quarters she found no fewer than two hundred persons, gathered from crofts and steadings many a verst away. She told them among other things of missionary labours in heathen lands—marvels they had never heard of before; and so keen was their interest that even out of their poverty they succeeded in collecting among themselves 140 silver roubles for the cause of missions. A poor, generous people; so isolated that they thought themselves “the only believers in our Lord in that part of Finland.” There was no one to preach to them, and they had preserved

the faith of their fathers by reading the Scriptures, and a few tracts which they bought on their rare visits to the nearest towns.

Besides these operations which it managed in Finland, the St Petersburg Agency was busy in many directions. Hospitals and prisons were cared for. The Word of Life accompanied each train of convicts and exiles on the long and cruel journey to Siberia. Supplies were sent to the German colonies on the Volga, and to the L.M.S. missionaries near Lake Baikal, where, until the mission was suppressed by the Russian Government in 1840, portions of the Mongolian version were printed and circulated among the Tartar hordes. In 1838, most generously aided by the spontaneous liberality of the American Bible Society, the Agency undertook a widespread distribution of the Scriptures in Esthonia and Livonia. From 1828 to the end of the Jubilee Year, the total issues of the St Petersburg Agency amounted to 349,986 copies, in languages spoken from the Rhine to the interior of China, and from the Kola Peninsula to the Greek Islands. In parts of the Muscovite Empire scarcely known to Englishmen at home, in places where no preacher could lift up his voice, the still small voice of the Gospel had spoken. And far beyond the limits of the Empire the printed Word had travelled. One copy sold in St Petersburg was found in a Thuringian village, where it had been a spring of consolation and peace to the heart of a widowed mother bereft of her only son. At the outbreak of the Crimean War, when the Anglo-American

congregation was scattered, the affairs of the Agency were committed to the care of Mr Mirrieles, an English merchant, who had long been interested in the work; and even in the midst of the excitement and anxieties of war he succeeded in effecting a considerable distribution.

Meanwhile the Protestant Bible Society of St Petersburg had so largely prospered in its labours that up to the Jubilee Year it had circulated over 250,000 copies.

In Southern Russia an unexpected coadjutor was found in Mr Melville of Odessa in 1838. Supporting himself by tuition, he employed a colporteur, sometimes two, to offer the books in the streets of Odessa. In the summer he visited the surrounding villages and towns, where he was often well received. When the undertaking exceeded the limits of his own resources, he was readily assisted by the Agency at St Petersburg and the American Bible Society. His operations extended through the Government of Kherson into Little Russia, and he travelled through the Crimea and along the Circassian coast of the Black Sea. Sometimes he was treated "as if he had the plague," but the Greeks wished to make him a priest, and the Tartars wanted him to be a mullah. The Committee arranged in 1848 that in future he should correspond direct with them, but his unwillingness to limit his chances of usefulness precluded a formal appointment as Agent. With their encouragement he penetrated Circassia and the Caucasus, wintered at Tiflis, and came into touch with Persia. The outbreak of the Crimean

War interrupted some of his projects, but even during its continuance he was able to pursue his labours to some extent.

The Committee's grants to Russia from the dissolution of the Russian Bible Society to the end of the Jubilee Year amounted to £12,546.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM THREE CONTINENTS

THROUGH all these busy years missionaries at Malta and Agents, stationed at Constantinople or Smyrna, at Syra or Athens, according to the political exigencies of the time, were bringing into the scope of the Society's operations the long coast of the Mediterranean and regions far inland. At first Bible Societies were established at Smyrna, in four of the Ionian Islands, and at Athens (with the Archbishop as president), but the need of direct agency speedily became apparent. The Rev. Henry Leeves and Mr Benjamin Barker, brother of the British Consul at Aleppo, were appointed in 1820, and when Mr Leeves died in 1845 at Beyrout on his way to Jerusalem, he was succeeded by Mr Lowndes of the L.M.S., who was invested with the double agency of Athens and Malta.

A few months after the appointment of Mr Leeves, the Greek War of Independence broke out. By a remarkable dispensation, the Scriptures had been circulated among the Hellenes at the very moment when their national extremity was God's opportunity. Of the three thousand copies distributed by the Ionian Bible Society, numbers

had been gladly welcomed on the mainland, and many a chapter was read in the patriot camps during the long struggle for liberty. Up to that time little was known of the Bible, except for those portions which were read in Ancient Greek in the churches, and which few understood; a copy of the Bible or the New Testament was rarely to be met with in a Christian household; and indeed the reading of such a book at home would have been considered prohibited. In a few years copies were scattered over the land in tens of thousands, and long before the Greek Government recognised (in 1834) the Holy Scriptures as a book the use of which was essential in all public schools, hundreds of volumes had been placed in the hands of school-children during the tours of the Agents. In one of his voyages Leeves met a young man, the son of a priest, who told him that his first reading-book as a child was a New Testament issued by the Bible Society; it was one of a consignment which he had himself sent many years before to a little mountain village on the northern frontier. Off one of the Greek islands, Mr Barker was "so beset with boats full of children who came for books, that he was obliged, though there was little wind, to order the captain to get under way," lest he should be induced to part with his whole stock in one place. Between 1810 and 1839, when the Old Testament in Modern Greek was completed, there had been distributed 177,363 New Testaments and Portions.

As early as 1833 the work had been checked by the hostility of the Greek Church, and the Patri-

arch had interdicted all "Protestant" versions of the Scriptures; but the inspired volume had taken hold of the hearts of many of its readers, and when the Exarch in Crete committed to the flames the copies he discovered in a monastery, one Bible was secreted by a priest, and the people in the neighbouring villages hid their books until the prelate had left the island. Notwithstanding ecclesiastical opposition, it was ascertained in 1853 that the schools in which the Word of God had found free course contained 40,257 scholars, so that one at least in every twenty-five of the whole population was in almost daily touch with the truths of the Gospel.

Greece was but a small district in the area of the Society's operations. Beyond the Balkans, beyond the Danube, the New Testament was dispersed in Servian, Bulgarian, and Roumanian. Editions were issued in Albanian, Armenian, Turkish, Arabic, Judeo-Spanish. On the northern shores of the Black Sea, Melville of Odessa and the German pastors co-operated in the work of Mr Barker at the Smyrna Agency. In the south he had the assistance of coadjutors at Jerusalem and Damascus, and at Jaffa, the port of Jewish and Christian pilgrims, of whom not less than ten thousand passed yearly on their way to the Holy Places. In the eastern provinces missionaries of the L.M.S. were distributing the Word of Life in Chinese and Syro-Chaldaic, Turkish, Syriac, and other tongues. Further away, in the north-east, the Basel missionaries had received consignments of the Gospel of St Matthew in Transcaucasian

Tartar for Tiflis among the arid yellow hills, and the villages around Shamaka and the naphtha wells of Baku.

About the year 1842 the Scriptures might be purchased in a dozen book-shops in Constantinople; they were sold without molestation at the corners of the streets; very rarely were the colporteurs interfered with by the Muslims. Indeed, there was probably not a city in Turkey in which the Scriptures, complete or in portions, were not to be found in some modern tongue. Among the Armenians in particular a spirit of serious inquiry appeared to have been awakened. In a score of towns there were those who daily searched the Word of God for light and guidance; and even in places where no missionary had ever been, meetings were held on the Sabbath for the study of the sacred volume.

It was in Asiatic Turkey, however, in the midst of cruel persecution, that the spiritual efficacy of the divine Book was most wonderfully manifested. In reading the record of this time, one seems indeed to be looking on a picture of the spread of Christianity in the days of the Apostles—with this difference, that it is not the voice of Paul or of Barnabas, but the power of the written Word alone, which moves the hearts and enlightens the minds of men. Here, in a village near Nicomedia, a congregation of Protestant Armenians—the “Bible Christians” and Gospel-readers are now anathematised as “Protestants”—has sprung up, without missionary aid, with no guide but the Scriptures. They are driven to worship in the

open fields; they are savagely attacked with stones; silently they gather up the missiles, take them and lay them at the Governor's feet with a request for protection. Here at Hasbeiya, among the vine-terraces and olive-gardens of the Anti-Lebanon, the volumes scattered abroad more than twenty years before have taught some of the Syrian Greeks that fasting, and offerings at shrines, and devotion to holy pictures, and prayers to the saints are not the true way of salvation. A number of them have declared their faith in the Gospel alone; their fellow-townsmen have risen against them and chased them into the mountains; it is only on the interposition of the American Consul that they are suffered to return to their homes.

Or take another incident which occurred at Nicomedia (Ismid), one of the cities to which St Peter addressed his first Epistle to suffering saints. An Armenian Testament fell into the hands of Vatenes, a priest. He read, and wondered, but knew not what steps to take. Then came an Armenian Bishop from Smyrna, exhorting the people to study the Scriptures; next twelve Jews, banished from Constantinople because they had embraced Christianity, passed through the city on their way into exile; in a little while, more Testaments arrived and were distributed; lastly, a rumour reached his ears that in Constantinople there were Christians, from the New World beyond the great seas of the West, who taught a faith very different from what he had hitherto believed. To them he went, and they made known to him the

way of the truth. On his return to Ismid he spoke to Harootun, another priest, and he too resolved to take the Bible for his guide, and to abide by its teachings at whatever cost. Others joined them, till their number increased to twelve. Then persecution was stirred up against them by the Patriarch, the Bishop, and the priests. Harootun was publicly degraded; his priestly robes were stripped off, his beard was shorn away, and these, with his cap, were carried in derision through the streets as trophies of the malice of his enemies. But persecution made bold those whom it was meant to daunt. Fresh adherents declared themselves; some were imprisoned, others expelled from their homes; still the rest stood undismayed, and still their numbers increased. They could meet only in secluded places, in the open air, beneath the trees, under cloud of night; and on some such occasions the American missionaries, crossing from Constantinople, met them, to converse with them, to preach to them, to strengthen their hearts in the days of trouble. Both Harootun and Vatenes afterwards became deacons of the Reformed faith.

The vast region stretching from the Bosphorus to the Persian border was dotted with places where the Scriptures had been distributed, where "Protestants" had suffered for the truth, where, in spite of excommunication and outrage, small groups were forming themselves into churches, and begging for missionaries to visit them. Kaisariyeh and Marash and Sivas, Erzeroum and Diarbekir, Mosul (within view of the mounds beyond the Tigris, where Layard had just unearthed the

winged bulls and crumbling battles-scenes of immemorial kings), Julamerk, and Urumiyeh, and a score of Nestorian villages between—as one traces them all on the map one marvels at the power which so swayed the souls of men grown old in the errors and superstitions of a corrupt creed. By 1852 there had grown out of these scattered groups of “Gospel-readers” twenty-one churches, superintended by sixteen American missionaries, six native pastors, and a licensed preacher.

At Constantinople five native places of Protestant worship were attended by congregations of men and women averaging eight hundred; and new churches were being so quickly formed in various parts of the country that the demands for teachers were too numerous to be complied with. In the Jubilee Year a Bible Society was founded in the Turkish capital, and its executive gave material assistance in the distribution of the Scriptures among the troops during the sanguinary struggle in the Crimea. But the marvel of marvels was reached, when, in 1856, the first Bible ever placed in the hands of an Ottoman sovereign was formally presented by the Agent of the Society to Abdul-Medjid.

The activity of the Malta Auxiliary was of short duration, and the establishment became a depôt which was managed by the missionaries of the C.M.S., the L.M.S., and the W.M.S., until the last of them withdrew from the island, and Mr Lowndes was appointed Agent. For many years a stock of about 12,000 copies of the Scriptures

in five-and-twenty languages was maintained. Versions in Greek and Arabic were circulated from Alexandria to the Cataracts; supplies in Amharic and Coptic and Arabic reached the missionaries in Abyssinia. During the labours of Gobat (afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem), it seemed as though the light of the pure Gospel were kindling in that ancient and decayed Church which dated back to the great Athanasius; but alas, ten years had not elapsed before the heroic Krapf and his young wife were driven out of Abyssinia and Shoa by the intrigues of French priests and travellers. In the Shoho wilderness, in the dry bed of a torrent among the rocky hills, his daughter Eneba ("a tear") was born, baptized, and, after a few hours of earthly life, buried under a tree by the wayside.

With more regularity and greater success as time went on, the work was pursued in Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, and thousands of copies in Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, French, and Spanish were distributed among the Mohammedans, the Jews, and the colonists from France and Spain.

In the Roman Catholic countries along the northern shore of the Mediterranean the results of the Society's operations were far from encouraging. The political upheaval in 1848 afforded a brief opportunity of which advantage was eagerly taken. At Milan, Turin, Genoa, and Nice, Lieut. Graydon disposed of 6770 copies. Small Auxiliaries were formed at Florence and Lucca. Editions of the New Testament were printed at Florence, Pisa, at Rome itself. Supplies were forwarded from Malta;

and at home the Committee hurried 20,000 Bibles and Testaments through the press. Comparatively little, however, could be accomplished before Pius IX. returned from his exile at Gaeta, and the Papal power was re-established by 45,000 French bayonets. The Society and its Scriptures were denounced. The Florentine edition was seized, the printers were prosecuted, and the reading of the Word of God was penalised. The edition produced at Rome, which had been placed in the custody of the United States consul on the arrival of the French, passed eventually, by purchase at cost price, into the possession of the Papal Government—an incident which will remind the reader of Bishop Tunstall's purchase of Tindale's New Testament. Still the work was not abandoned. In 1851 Graydon was enrolled as the regular Agent of the Society for Switzerland and Northern Italy. From 1848 to the Jubilee Year he circulated in the latter country 35,000 volumes. In Switzerland, from 1845 to the same date, his distributions, from his depôts or through his own sales as he passed from place to place, amounted to 67,863 copies.

Still less was effected in Spain and Portugal, though from the experience of the Gibraltar committee, which was formed in 1821, and which up to 1834 distributed grants to the value of £2310, it appeared that there were many earnest Christians desirous of obtaining the Scriptures, and that many copies had penetrated to places far in the interior. In 1835 two men of marked individuality and unbounded energy took up the Bible cause in Spain. One was George Borrow, who had recently returned

from editing the Manchu New Testament in St Petersburg and had been sent out as the Agent of the Society. The other, Lieut. Graydon, an unemployed officer in the Royal Navy, acted on his own responsibility. He selected for his operations the eastern coast of Spain, printed editions of the Spanish Bible and Catalan New Testament (16,000 copies in all), and circulated besides considerable supplies despatched to him from England. His success was great and his chances were unprecedented, but his interference in political questions and his attacks on the religious susceptibilities of the people brought both his own career and Borrow's to a premature close.

Borrow's work in Spain, his adventures, his journeys which carried him through the wildest as well as the most civilised regions of the Peninsula, have been described in the vivid pages of *The Bible in Spain*. He published an edition of the Spanish New Testament in Madrid, translated and printed the Gospel of St Luke in Gitano, and issued the same Gospel in a Cantabrian or Basque version. His agency in Spain lasted something over four years; he circulated nearly 14,000 copies of the Scriptures; twice he was illegally imprisoned. Years after he had left Spain the books which through his exertions had been so widely disseminated were found leading men to Christ. Whatever estimate may be formed of the man or of his mission, no other publication, before or since, had or has done so much as *The Bible in Spain* to make known the work and the claims of the Bible Society.

Bound for South Africa, we touch for a moment at Sierra Leone. In 1822 H.M.S. *Myrmidon* brought into Free Town a slaver captured off Lagos with a hundred and eighty-seven captives on board. Among them was a Yoruba lad of twelve years who had been four times sold or bartered, and at last had fallen into the hands of a Portuguese trader, who shipped him out to a life of servitude on the plantations of the New World. A bright, intelligent lad, Adjai by name, until he changed it in baptism for that of the venerated Vicar of Christ Church, Newgate Street—Samuel Crowther. In 1840 the anniversary meeting of the Sierra Leone Auxiliary was attended by as many as two thousand natives. The colony, which for years had been the free land of the thousands of victims rescued from the slave-ships by British cruisers, had gradually risen to a prosperous condition. Some of the more enterprising negroes from Yoruba Land had purchased a captured trader and had begun to traffic with Badagry on the Slave Coast, a thousand miles to the east. The hinterland was their own native country, where the remnants of their people, scattered by the Foulah slave-raids of 1820, had taken refuge under the huge granite blocks on the Ozun River, and had established a great town of over 50,000 inhabitants, which they called "Under-the-Rock"—Abeokuta. When these good tidings reached Sierra Leone hundreds of the Yoruba men were eager to return to their kinsfolk, and they took with them to their old homes the Scriptures, the memory of Christian worship, the knowledge of Redemption, and so

prepared the way for the missionary, who was not slow to follow. In 1843, "the slave-boy Adjai"—now the Rev. Samuel Crowther, an ordained minister of the Gospel—landed at Sierra Leone, and conducted the first Christian service ever held in the Yoruba tongue. In the following year he sailed to Badagry with Henry Townsend, to bear the light of the Gospel to the nation of his own blood, and in 1850 the Committee printed his translation of the Epistle to the Romans, the first version of any part of the Scriptures in Yoruba. From its establishment in 1816 down to 1854 the Auxiliary at Sierra Leone circulated 25,663 copies of the Word of God, and transmitted £2416 to the Society, but many other grants were voted during that period to the missionaries stationed on the West Coast.

In South Africa in 1801 there was but one Hottentot who was able to read. Hottentot and Bushman were regarded by many as of a type too near the brute to receive the rudiments of Christianity or civilisation. In 1817, at more than a score of mission stations, it was being demonstrated that even for man at his lowest Christ had died not in vain. Old and young were taught in the mission schools, and from the Scriptures placed in their hands the wild people, "whose days were formerly spent roaming over the mountains and deserts, learnt to assemble together to worship the true and living God." A few years later the Hottentot was seen poring over a tattered "portion" by the roadside, and the Kaffir shepherd on the

veldt carried in his skin wallet a Testament "which he valued more than gold or silver." The South African Bible Society was formed at Cape Town in 1820, and twelve years later the great South African versions—Moffat's Sechuana Bible and the Xosa or Kaffir Bible of the Wesleyan missionaries—were in progress.

Then the wild men of Africa spoke for themselves in memorable testimony of the power of God's Word. In 1836 a Christian Hottentot and Jan Tzatzoe, a Kaffir chief, visited England and attended a public meeting convened by the L.M.S. "When the Bible came to us," said the Hottentot, "we were naked; we lived in caves and on the tops of the mountains; we painted our bodies with red paint. The Bible charmed us out of the caves, and from the tops of the mountains. Now we know there is a God; now we know we are accountable creatures before God. . . . I have travelled with the missionaries in taking the Bible to the Bushmen and other nations. When the Word of God was preached, the Bushman threw away his bow and arrows, the Kaffir threw away his shield. I went to Lattakoo, and they threw away their evil works, they threw away their assegais, and became children of God."

The interest was deepened at the anniversary meeting of the Bible Society in May 1837, by Dr Philip, when, in pleading the cause of the native tribes and the eight hundred children in the schools beyond the Orange River, he spoke of his meeting with a Bushman chief, who but a few years before did not know that he had a soul,

had never heard that God made him. He was then about ninety, and had been blind for years. He was sitting on the floor as Dr Philip entered, and when he heard his name he burst into tears, grasped his hand, and thanked God for his coming to see him. Talking of his situation, he scraped up the dust with his hand and said, "In a little time I must mingle with that dust; but in this flesh I shall see God. I am blind; I shall not see the light of day; but by the light of faith, I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive my soul." And as he spoke his visitor was struck with the contrast between these words of a savage chief, to whom a child read the Bible every day, who had been taught by the Bible alone, and the perturbed musings of the Emperor Trajan shortly before his death: "This head shall no more wear the crown; these feet shall no more stand on the necks of princes; these hands no more sway a sceptre; this heart no longer be flattered by the praises of men; these ears no more be delighted with harmony, nor these eyes with fine sights; and my soul—oh, my soul—what is to become of thee?"

Then in 1840, at the anniversary meeting, Robert Moffat held the great audience in breathless attention, as, in vivid speech, he conjured up before them the land of interminable distances, and the strange people among whom his lot had been cast. One saw, as he spoke, a little cloud of dust on the veldt—and lo! it was sheep that were being driven a hundred miles to be exchanged for copies of St Luke. Or beside the running

water under a red granite kopje a family were resting at sunset. They were on a long journey—fifty miles or more; they carried their babes on their shoulders; when they had reached their journey's end they would return, but they would take back with them the Word of God. Or it was a kraal, in which a perplexed stranger of their own colour stopped to question, "What things are these that you are turning over and over? Is it food?" "No, it is the Word of God." "Why do you talk to it?" "We do not talk to the book; it is talking to us." "Does it speak?" "Yes; it speaks to the heart." Or it was a shepherd in a lonely spot; and a young man, weary with his long journey, sat down beside him to rest; and the shepherd was talking to something he could not understand. In answer to the young man's questions, the shepherd told him it was the Word of God, which was given to make their dark hearts light, to turn their foolishness into wisdom, to teach them that if they had lived well they should go to another world hereafter. "That young man," said Moffat, "came to me to obtain the knowledge of reading, and returned home with the Gospel of Luke."

The printing of the Sechuana New Testament was completed in 1841, and the first consignment was taken up to Lattakoo by David Livingstone, who was then entering on his long career of adventure and discovery. It was received with delight. The native teachers found in their hands a new and more powerful weapon. "What did we think of this book," asked one of them, "before

we were taught to read? Just the same as those think of it who are still in the state of darkness and death in which we ourselves were. We imagined it to be a charm of the White People to keep off sickness, or that it was a trap to catch us. We had never heard of such a thing; our fathers, who have all died in darkness, could not tell us about it. We thought it was a thing to be spoken to; but now we know *it* has a tongue. It speaks, and will speak, to the whole world." "You said the Teachers talked to the book," said another, "and made the book say what they wished. Here is the book, and it can talk where there are no Teachers. If a believer reads it, it tells the same news; if an unbeliever reads it, the news is still the same. This book will teach, preach, and tell news though there were no Teachers in the country."

On the upper branches of the Orange River on the western side of the great Quathlamba range, the missionaries of the French Protestant Church were at work among the Basutos. They had printed the Gospel of St Matthew and other portions of the New Testament in Sesuto, or Eastern Sechuana, and yet others were circulated in manuscript. The Basutos eagerly took possession of them. "They do not even wait till they are clearly written out, but seize upon the rough and almost illegible copy." "I cannot sleep," said one native, "when I get hold of a new chapter." "And I," rejoined his friend, "I light my fire, lie down beside it, and read by its light till I can hold out no longer for sleep." In 1840, when the French and Foreign Bible Society under-

took the publication of fifty chapters from the Old and New Testament, the seven French mission-posts were in a flourishing condition. "The towns and villages," wrote a visitor, "are on the sides or on the tops of the mountains: and nothing can equal the sight of these people pouring down the mountains at the ringing of the bell either for church or school, all with their books in their hands." In 1848 the Committee charged themselves with the expense of an edition of the Psalms.

A supply of paper was sent out in 1844 for the printing of the Xosa Testament; the translation of the entire Bible had also been completed, and £1000 was voted towards the expenses incurred in that notable undertaking.

As a "lasting memento"—and it still survives—of the day on which slavery was abolished in the Colony, the Grahamstown Auxiliary was founded, on the 1st December 1834, "in the midst of Kaffir incursions." That humane measure gave a wonderful impulse to education. Scores of apprentices travelled as far as five-and-twenty miles to attend the Sunday classes, and in several instances the sometime slaves left their old masters for no other reason than that they might enjoy the means of instruction for their children and themselves. Where they remained, and schoolmasters were provided, the only difference emancipation made was that "the spade dug deeper and the sickle cut sharper than the master ever saw before." From 1841 to 1844 over 10,000 Bibles and Testaments were consigned to South Africa, yet in the latter year the Colony was reported to be "suffer-

ing something like a famine of the Word of God." All the circumstances of South Africa,—the extent and rising importance of the Colony and of the numerous missionary stations beyond its limits,—called for action on an ample and effectual scale ; and in the summer of 1846, Mr T. J. Bourne, whose long experience at home and in the West Indies specially qualified him for the work, arrived at Cape Town with a supply of 20,000 copies of the Scriptures in Dutch and English.

He travelled considerably over three thousand miles on horseback, and learned to appreciate the great distances which rendered it impossible for many of the inhabitants to attend the House of God, except on the rare sacramental occasions in the course of the year, when the whole family travelled by waggon and took several days to go and return. He became acquainted with almost every town and village in the Colony, visited two mission stations in troubled Kaffirland, inspected schools, convict settlements and prisons, and delivered numerous lectures and addresses. He met everywhere with kindness and good-will, private and official, "except on the dry karroos [the South African steppes], where seven, eight, or ten hours' hard riding leave you without a house of any sort, or any refreshment for man or beast save the tufts of grass or the few and far-between fountains of water." He was present at the reorganisation of the important Auxiliaries at Cape Town and Grahamstown, and established a new Auxiliary at Port Elizabeth, and eleven Branches and twenty-one Associations in different

parts of the country. Further supplies were sent out to him by the Committee ; over 29,000 copies passed through his hands to Auxiliaries, Associations, schools, and private individuals ; and on his return 10,000 more copies were despatched, bringing the total issues in connection with his visit to something over 48,000 volumes.

Between 1846 and the Jubilee Year the South African Auxiliary circulated 29,756 copies, many of which were distributed in Basutoland, Natal, Griqualand, and the Damara country ; and at Grahamstown, despite a *levée en masse* to defend the frontier, the Jubilee Year was marked by the formation of three new Branches.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MYRIAD-PEOPLED EAST

IN Hindustan the great religious organisations — the S.P.C.K., the S.P.G., the C.M.S. — were busily diffusing the knowledge of the Gospel. Mission stations and churches and chapels were awakening the subtle intelligence of the Oriental mind to the contrast between the faith of the Cross and the revolting worship of the Five-faced, Kali, and Jagannath. In 1822 Miss Cook of the C.M.S. opened in Calcutta the first girls' school — the earliest step towards an entrance into the immense world of secluded womanhood, which caste and custom kept zealously closed against the missionary. The burning of widows was abolished in 1829; and in 1840 effect was tardily given to the despatch of the East India Company ordering the withdrawal of Government from all connection with the religious rites and festivals of the Hindus.

The Bengal Corresponding Committee was merged in the Calcutta Auxiliary in 1820; and in the course of a couple of years important branch societies were founded at Benares, Cawnpore, and Meerut, with well-stocked depôts, from which supplies of the Scriptures in Persian and Armenian

were despatched as far afield as Bushire and Shiraz. A Bible Association, on the familiar English lines, was formed for the city of Calcutta, which was mapped out into nineteen districts for regular visitation, and a Board of Revision was appointed for the ever-increasing work of versions.

The need for constant touch between themselves and the Auxiliaries was strongly felt by the Committee at home, and in 1839 Dr Haeberlin of the C.M.S. returned to Bengal in the double capacity of the Society's Agent and secretary to the Auxiliary. The annual circulation of the latter, which in 1837 had amounted to nearly 19,000 copies, leaped up to 43,000, and in 1841 there passed from the press 147,700 New Testaments and Portions, in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, and Oriya—a number which exceeded the issues of all the preceding thirty years together. At the close of 1842, scarcely recovered from a series of illnesses, Haeberlin set out with 60,000 volumes on an extensive tour along the great rivers and into the north-west. From Simla he made an excursion over the mountains to Kanum, the great trading centre between India and Ladakh, Lhasa, and Gerhope, and pointed out the facilities for a vast distribution in the heart of Asia, if there were but a Tibetan version. That, however, was a task reserved for a distant future.

With the hearty concurrence of the Calcutta Auxiliary, which afterwards transferred to it some 57,000 copies of the Scriptures in Hindustani, Hindi, and Persian, the North India Bible Society was established at Agra in 1845, for the promotion

of the work in the North-Western Provinces. In the following year the Bishop of Calcutta—Dr Wilson, the beloved vicar of Islington—appeared at the anniversary meeting at Exeter Hall. In few but stirring words he traced the expansion of the Society's operations, from Poona to the Sutlej, from Singapore—scarcely more than a degree north of the equator—to the snow-capped ranges of the Himalayas; flashed upon his hearers a picture of the Ganges with benighted multitudes crowding the *ghats* to substitute its rolling waters for the blood of the Lamb; and indignantly rebuked the attempts that were made to undervalue the power of the Word of God. As far as means and men permitted, human instruments, he said, were used for the accomplishment of the divine purpose; “but still it is on the Bible we depend—the one book God has vouchsafed to inspire for man's guidance, for man's instruction, for man's illumination, for man's comfort, for man's hope.”

During these and later years the Committee aided every effort with unwearied liberality. The range of the Auxiliary's activity was enlarged by a system of missionary tours, in which the brethren of the various denominations co-operated. The one special need which could not at once be satisfied was a standard Bengali version.

At the Jubilee the total distribution of the Calcutta Auxiliary had reached 779,280 volumes, in at least forty languages. The Calcutta Bible Association, which for over thirty years had supplied the wants of Sunday and day schools, of soldiers and sailors, of hospitals and prisons,

had circulated 109,148 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions. Still the work to be done was enormous. Of the thirty-five millions in Behar and Bengal two millions could read, and for those two millions the yearly issue was about 50,000 copies.

Operating on a less important scale, the Bombay Auxiliary dispersed the French and Portuguese Scriptures along the Malabar coast, supplied the Dutch and Syrian Christians of Cochin, and extended its distribution over sea to Bassorah in Asiatic Turkey and to the Coptic churches in Abyssinia. Its total circulation in 1834 was over 64,000 copies in twenty or thirty languages; and in 1836, and again in 1839, large grants in money, printing-paper, and books, enabled it to give effect to more important measures. Signs were not wanting that the influence of the Scriptures was silently pervading the minds of many of the people. In sequestered villages missionaries came upon groups of natives listening under the shadow of the pippul-tree to a Brahmin reading some portion of the Marathi Testament, and officers returning from beyond the Indus told of repeated inquiries for the Word of God. A more certain token of the spiritual awakening was the hostility displayed in the native press, in 1845, by the younger generation of Hindus and Parsis, who endeavoured to repel the claims of Christianity by arguments drawn from the Bible itself.

The great literary undertakings with which the Auxiliary was associated were the versions in Gujarati and Marathi. A Gujarati Bible was completed in 1823, and a Marathi New Testament

was issued in portions in 1826. The Marathi Old Testament was finished ten years later and printed at the expense of the Committee, and portions of a new version of the Testament in Gujarati were committed to the press. The work of revision was continually going on, and among those who took part in it was the Rev. Hormusji Pestonji. About the year 1834 a copy of the Gospel of St Matthew in Gujarati had been placed in his hands by a missionary. His father had read and re-read it, and had occasionally recommended his mischievous sons to ponder over the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters. This son obeyed, and, as time passed, his family began to suspect that the book, however good in itself, might destroy his faith in Parsiism and "prove the ruin and reproach of his father's house." A few years later he bought an English Bible and the four Gospels in Gujarati, and often read in both together—not for light from above, but solely for human knowledge; but a power beyond man's convinced him that "this was not the language of literature, but the matter and mode of divine instruction." From that date, "having been first blessed," he had endeavoured to make the Bible a blessing to others.

The Bombay Auxiliary's aggregate distribution up to 1854 exceeded 190,000 volumes.

Though much good Bible work was done, and liberal contributions were sent yearly from Madras to Calcutta, it was not till 1820 that the Madras Bible Society was formed. The task of supplying native schools both in Southern India and Ceylon was then vigorously taken up, and

missionaries of all denominations combined in the preparation and publication of versions or portions of versions in the four dominant languages of the Presidency—Tamil and Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese. By 1835 the annual issue exceeded 22,000 copies, and the total distribution amounted to 173,836 copies, of which some twelve thousand were in European tongues, and the rest in the languages of the East. In Travancore “the natives were constantly renouncing their idols, and inquiring their way to Zion”; from beyond Vizagapatam in the north the cry rose, “We want more of those books of wisdom”; and for miles round Bellary, in the very heart of the country, there was scarcely a hamlet in which some part of the Word of Life had not been received.

In 1838 the Committee concurred in a project for distributing “portions” throughout the Tamil region, at the rate of one copy to every thirty readers in all towns and villages of two or three hundred inhabitants; and between that year and 1845 no less than £5500 was voted, together with 10,500 reams of printing-paper and many thousands of volumes in various languages. The Bible cause was now making steady progress. The Madras Society had Auxiliaries and Associations at Bellary, Bangalore, Salem, Nagercoil, Neyoor, and Tinnevely; but here, as in the Bombay Presidency, if many of the villagers hung the sacred volume—often their only book—from the rafters in a box of palmyra leaves, there were manifestations of that fierce hostility which is born of hatred of the truth. Villages were plundered and burned

down, meetings were held for the denunciation of Christianity, and in Madras one vast gathering of six or seven thousand Hindus was held "to petition the Court of Directors to release them from the fangs of the missionaries." Still the Word wrought with power, and the natives continued to present themselves for baptism. In 1849 the Madras executive was authorised to draw £1500 for another large scheme of distribution, in connection with which the employment of Indian col-porteurs was first adopted, with no small success.

With regard to translation work, the Bible in Malayalam was completed in 1841; the Tamil Bible in 1842; the "Union" version—a revision of the Tamil text, for the execution of which the Madras and Jaffna Societies co-operated—in 1850; various revised portions of the Telugu Scriptures were current, though the Old Testament was not issued till 1855; the Kanarese Bible was finished in 1832, and a revision of the New Testament was printed at Bellary in 1853. At the close of the Jubilee Year the Madras Bible Society had distributed 858,784 copies of the Scriptures in many languages.

For many years the Baptist missionaries at Serampore had devoted themselves to the translation of the Scriptures. Before the close of 1820 the whole Bible had appeared in Bengali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Oriya, and Marathi, and the New Testament in Chinese and nine other Oriental tongues. At the anniversary meeting of the Society in 1823, the eldest son of Dr Marshman laid on the table a copy of the entire Bible in Chinese. In 1827

the Scriptures, in whole or in part, were accessible in twenty-three languages to an enormous population. Before this date Mr Hughes had drawn the attention of the translators to the restrictive meaning given in the Serampore versions to the Greek word for *Baptism*, but in 1827 the subject was formally brought under the consideration of the Committee in a Memorial signed by many missionaries of different denominations in Bengal, who complained of "the injury done among their converts by this limitation of the sense of a Greek term which they, and the large majority of the Christian world, believed to be capable of a much wider interpretation." This representation led to a correspondence with Dr Carey and his colleagues, and subsequently to a series of discussions with the Baptist Missionary Society, which gave its approval to the principle adopted by the translators. The Committee endeavoured to suggest terms of agreement, but were unable to withdraw from their position of neutrality, and, in 1840, the controversy ended in the formation of the Bible Translation Society, which emphatically adopted the use of the exclusive interpretation. From that time forward the versions that retained the rendering to which objection had been taken ceased to receive the sanction and pecuniary aid of the Society, though in regard to the Old Testament the Committee were still in a position to offer occasional assistance.

This unhappy division was long deplored; attempts were made to effect a reunion, and general satisfaction was felt when at length in the report of 1883 the Committee announced the hope that a

solution had been found in the adoption, where needed, of an alternative marginal rendering, to the effect that the Greek word *baptizo* was by some translated "immerse." The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Benson), who was present at the anniversary meeting, gave his hearty approval to this measure of conciliation, which, he had no doubt, would have its effect. The pleasing anticipation of a renewed co-operation in the circulation of the same versions, and of an accession of strength in carrying on a work which ought to combine all the Churches of Christ, was not realised.

At the anniversary meeting in May 1820 Dr Adam Clarke introduced two interesting converts from Ceylon. Reared from childhood in the temple of Buddha, they had reached the rank of high-priests when copies of the New Testament in their native tongue were given them to read. They were filled with astonishment. The Lord Jesus Christ had made friends of fishermen! "*They* were of the fishermen's caste in Ceylon, and it struck them that if the Author of this religion did associate with persons of that profession who became the means of spreading the knowledge of His Gospel through almost the whole world, perhaps it might please Him to use *them*, who were fishermen also, to make known His Gospel to their countrymen." When Chief-Justice Sir Alexander Johnston sailed for England in 1817, they left their temple, their friends, and their country, put off in a boat, reached the ship (already under way beneath its swelling canvas), and were taken on board and brought to England.

These were among the first-fruits of the large distribution of the Scriptures in Tamil, Dutch, Portuguese, and English, which had been made both from Calcutta and Colombo.

In 1823 the whole Sinhalese Bible was in circulation. An Indo-Portuguese version of the New Testament was prepared in 1825 for the numerous descendants of the Old Dutch and Portuguese rulers. Two years later the Gospel of St Mark was printed in Pali, the sacred tongue of Buddha himself, and the whole of the New Testament was current in 1835. By this time the effects of Scripture-reading were so apparent that the priests of Sakya had taken alarm, but their opposition came too late; in the southern districts of the island there were, in the schools alone, thirty thousand native Christian readers.

In 1834 the missionaries of the C.M.S. completed another Sinhalese version of the Bible,—free from the honorific forms of speech common in Oriental tongues, and simpler in diction than the Colombo version of the Wesleyan translators. The first attempt, in 1846, to secure a single uniform translation failed, but in 1852 all disagreements were adjusted, the local secretary of the C.M.S. was appointed joint-secretary of the Colombo Bible Society, and the Committee undertook to provide £9000, over a thousand reams of paper, and binding materials for the uniform edition.

Meanwhile the Jaffna branch society declared itself an independent Auxiliary in 1836, and applied its energy to the distribution of the Scriptures in the northern districts of the island,

where Tamil was spoken. It co-operated with Madras, as we have seen, in producing the "Union" version, and the new Tamil Bible, on its publication in 1850, appeared in one volume selling at 3s. Twenty years earlier the complete Scriptures consisted of six volumes, and cost 16s., which was as much as an ordinary labourer earned in two months. In connection with the Tamil Scriptures it is interesting to recall an incident which takes us back to yet earlier days, and which is a striking instance of the efficacy of the written Word. In 1847 the Rev. Samuel W. Flavel, for many years the devoted pastor of the Tamil Church at Bellary, died of cholera, on the 17th April. Some sixty years before, a child who was not christened Samuel but named Shunkuru-lingam, was born at Quilon, on the coast of Travancore. His parents were of the cultivator caste, heathen in belief and practice, and the lad grew up in the darkness of the old idolatry. In his youth he left his home, and after many changes in a wandering life, entered the employment of a civil official under the Ceylon Government. On what strange accidents our lives turn! Under a tree in the forest Shunkuru-lingam espied a small packet, forgotten, it is conjectured, by some camp-follower from Tranquebar, for it was in the days when the British avenged the treachery of the Adigar of Kandy, and took possession of the island. He opened it, and found a copy of the Gospels in Tamil; read with delight and wonder, and so was led to the knowledge and love of the Redeemer. In due time he was

called to devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel.

In the report of the Jaffna Auxiliary for 1853 the aggregate issues of all the Indian Bible Societies during the half century were stated at about two million copies. Calcutta had circulated 851,105, and Agra 46,574. From Madras there had been issued 701,409, and from Bombay 185,632; while the distribution from Colombo amounted to 39,263, and that of Jaffna to 62,323. To these figures there must be added the aggregate of Serampore, 200,000,—thus raising the total to two millions one hundred and twenty-six thousand copies.

From the British Factory at Canton Dr Morrison seemed to complete the great circuits which the Society was extending around the globe. Through the travellers to whom he intrusted the Scriptures in English and Portuguese he came into touch, as it were, with the ports of Chili. Sea-captains, attempting new trade connections between India and Siberia, scattered copies of his Chinese Testament in the Loo-choo Islands and on the Japanese coast, and put him in contact with Okhotsk. The Governor of that province wrote to express his gratitude for the sacred volumes. Through Okhotsk there was a line of communication with Irkutsk, where there was a flourishing institution—this was in the palmy days of the Russian Bible Society—and less than two hundred miles away, William Swan and Edward Stallybrass, labouring among the Buriats, were busy with their Mongolian translation. Through all this region the Chinese

caravans were streaming along the great trade routes, and all seemed prepared for the rapid diffusion of the Gospel. In the providence of God other courses were appointed.

The revision of the Chinese Bible was drawing to completion in 1822 when William Milne, Morrison's beloved colleague, was called to his reward. Mrs Milne and Mrs Morrison died soon afterwards. Once more the solitary Protestant missionary in China, Morrison saw the unfinished books through the press, and presented the whole version at the anniversary meeting of the Society in 1824. Liberal grants were voted for the prosecution of the work. The junks, prahus, and ships from all parts of the world were visited at Singapore. Excursions were undertaken to Borneo and to Siam, where the ancient Pali writings had long foretold that out of the West should come a religion which would overthrow the worship of Buddha. Two conspicuous figures at that time were Gützlaff, a Prussian agent of the Netherlands Bible Society, and William Medhurst of the L.M.S. Acting as surgeon or interpreter, traveling in ship or junk as occasion offered, Gützlaff made seven journeys up and down the Chinese coast between 1831 and 1835. He ascended the rivers, landed at the risk of his life, was stoned by the mob, was haled before the police, was pursued by pirates; but no danger deterred him from ministering to the crowds of sick people and scattering the Scriptures in thousands of portions. Many Bibles and tracts were distributed in the Loo-choo Islands, and though the King of Korea

refused the Bible offered him, his officers accepted the sacred writings.

At the age of fifty-three, Morrison died at Macao on the 31st July 1834. On the evening of that day the negroes on the West Indian plantations were gathering for the midnight services which were to usher in their emancipation. Morrison had left behind him the charter of a truer freedom for hundreds of millions in a more hopeless house of bondage.

In August persecution broke out at Canton. The Chinese Government had prohibited the Bible, and denounced the Christian religion as "the ruin of morals and of the human heart." Native Christians were beaten on the mouth, imprisoned, deprived of their possessions, but suffered with great constancy. Notwithstanding the disturbed condition of affairs in 1836, Dr Medhurst and the Rev. E. Stevens circulated 6000 volumes in adventurous runs inland from different points on the coast; and in the same year Mr G. Tradescant Lay took up his work in the Eastern seas as the Society's first Agent to China. Ill health and adverse circumstances prevented the extension of his commission, but before his return he founded an Auxiliary at Singapore, with Branches at Penang and Malacca, and a Ladies' Association for the Straits Settlement. During the Opium War progress in China was suspended, but on the establishment of peace the Treaty Ports were thrown open, and imperial sanction was given to all men, yellow or white, to embrace "the religion of the Lord of Heaven." The missionaries ventured

further and further inland. Converted Chinese were engaged as colporteurs, and, travelling into the depths of the country whither no stranger could hope to penetrate, they distributed New Testaments and Portions in fifteen of the eighteen provinces of the colossal empire. Next, with unrivalled pains and scholarship, the famous "Delegates' Version" was prepared, though when it was finished in 1850 a blank in the text summed up the prolonged controversy whether the word *God* should be translated *Shin* or *Shang-ti*. As the Society's first half-century closed, earnest men who watched the strange incidents of the Tai-ping struggle, who examined the portions of Scripture issued from the press of the insurgents, who were told of the destruction of ancient temples or beheld the débris of monstrous Buddhas drifting down the rivers to the sea, hoped, and perhaps for a time even expected, that in the near future a Christian emperor might sit upon the dragon throne.

Here we can only touch on the most important of the Society's operations. During these years the swarming Malay population received the message of salvation in their own tongue. The head-hunters of Borneo learned to read it in their native Dyak. Mr Bourne met Mr Hardeland, the principal Dyak translator in South Africa, and reported the matter to the Committee; a grant of £300 was voted; and thus, by a strange interweaving of contingencies, a version of the New Testament, translated by Germans, printed in Cape Colony, and paid for out of English subscriptions,

was issued for cannibal tribes in the Eastern Archipelago. Versions in many languages were sent out too for the benefit of seafarers and adventurers, the flotsam and jetsam of the West, who gathered in these remote waters.

CHAPTER XV

THE AMERICAS

LET us now bring the New World into context with the Old.

Though the operations of the American Bible Society do not belong to this sketch, the origin of the great institution of the West, and the sympathetic helpfulness which for so many years has marked the relations between it and the parent Society, invest its story with a special interest. We left it in 1824 with 396 Auxiliaries. A few years later it adopted the principle of the B.F.B.S. in regard to the uncanonical books. In 1834 its receipts were £17,720; the circulation for the year was 110,832, the aggregate from the beginning, 1,644,500 copies. In 1854 its Auxiliaries exceeded 2800; the year's revenue was about £78,868; the distribution for the year, 815,399; and the total issue since 1816 amounted to 9,903,751 copies. In the year ending 31st March 1900 its receipts were £49,780; the issues exceeded one and a quarter millions, and the total distribution, in eighty-four years, was over sixty-seven million volumes, in at least one hundred different forms of speech.

In 1829, when it undertook the first of its

splendid efforts to supply with the Scriptures every destitute family in the Union, it also extended its labours to Mexico, South America, Greece, Ceylon, India, and Burma. As the years rolled on and thousands of immigrants swelled the population of the States, it printed editions in French, German, Italian, with the English text in parallel columns, in order to meet their needs. For the Red Tribes versions were published in Mohawk, Delaware, Ojibwa, Dakota, Cherokee, and other aboriginal tongues; and the Blind were enfranchised in their dark world by means of books in embossed type.

Its first foreign agent took up his post in the Levant in 1836; its second in La Plata in 1864. In the course of time its representatives were stationed in China, Japan, Siam and Lagos, in Mexico and Central America, Cuba, Porto Rico, Venezuela and Colombia, Brazil and the Philippines. "More than one half of its annual issues," wrote Dr Gilman, one of its secretaries, in 1900, "go into the hands of pagan, Mohammedan, or nominally Christian people outside of the United States. In one year not less than 447,858 copies were sold in China alone, and more than seven and a quarter million volumes in the various dialects of that empire have been printed during the last fifty years."

Except in the sea-board cities, where the people were brought into intercourse with European activity, a profound mental lethargy weighed upon South America. While exploring La Plata in 1825-30, Edmond Temple, an observant traveller, noted that after leaving Buenos Ayres he had not

found, in a journey of six hundred miles, "a single book in the house of any private person." At Cordova, the ancient seat of the Jesuits, books of all kinds, except missals and breviaries, were rigorously prohibited by the Holy Inquisition. At Pernambuco, Rio, Buenos Ayres, at Lima and Valparaiso too on the west coast, the condition of things was more hopeful. The spirit of a new epoch had awakened, and the minds of men were beginning to free themselves from mediæval traditions. There at least a wide-spread desire for the Word of Life was apparent. At Pernambuco the Scriptures were admitted free of duty, and distributed "to crowds of applicants." At Lima 1000 Bibles and Testaments were sold in two days. A consignment of 300 copies was received in 1824 with an urgent request for larger supplies. Three thousand five hundred were despatched, and in response to a demand first for five and then for ten thousand more, a new edition of 15,000 was put to press.

In the same year Mr James Thomson—an agent of the British and Foreign School Society, who was afterwards drawn into permanent relations with the B.F.B.S.—travelled from Lima to Santa Fé de Bogotá with a considerable stock of Bibles and Testaments. Before he reached his destination it was exhausted. Everywhere he met with friendly co-operation and kindly offices. Governors and ecclesiastics assisted him; at Tacunga the friars and their superior not only gave him hospitality, but aided him in the sale of the Scriptures within their walls; and the Governors of Guaranda,

Riobamba, and Ambato undertook to dispose of future supplies. Success more remarkable still awaited him at Bogotá. On the 24th March 1825, at a meeting attended by the Roman Catholic clergy and laity, a Bible Society was founded for the printing and circulation of the Scriptures "in Colombia, in South America, throughout the world, so far as its means would reach." Meanwhile the Rev. John Armstrong was sent out as Agent to Buenos Ayres. He succeeded in distributing, through friends and correspondents, considerable quantities at Monte Video, Rio, and Pernambuco, at Cordova and Mendoza in the interior, and in various towns along the west coast, but as his acceptance of a chaplaincy prevented him from travelling far, Mr Luke Matthews was also engaged.

Setting out from Buenos Ayres in October 1826, Matthews crossed the continent to Valparaiso, threaded the grim passes of the Andes five times in fourteen months, and visited Lima, Guayaquil, and Panamá. He had much to contend with in the apathy of the people, the spread of infidel views, the disturbed state of the country, and the hostility of the clergy, who, with some pleasing exceptions, took advantage of the omission of the apocryphal books and the absence of notes to prohibit his work. From Guayaquil he travelled to Santa Fé de Bogotá. His experience was in strange contrast with that of Mr Thomson four years earlier. Everywhere he was opposed. The sale of half a dozen copies was much to be thankful for. At Bogotá the Colombian Bible Society had vanished. He

reported his arrival to the Committee on the 14th December 1828. That was the last letter received from him. He was not heard of again, and his disappearance remained a mystery.

Early in 1827 Mr Thomson made his first experiment in Mexico. He found friends among the priests and friars ; journeyed into the north-west as far as Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi ; received in one place, "not to mention others," about seventy pounds' weight of silver from the Guanajuato miners in exchange for the Scriptures ; secured the co-operation of the Bishop of Puebla for a version of the New Testament in Aztec ; attended the formation of a Bible Society at Orizaba ; appeared, in a word, to be on the eve of a marvellous success, when a storm of clerical hostility burst upon him. Then revolution broke out, Mexico became a theatre of bloodshed and pillage, and crisis followed crisis till the party for the moment in the ascendant sided with the clergy and confirmed their edicts. To prevent the total exclusion of the Scriptures, Thomson withdrew in 1830. The Gospel of St Luke in Aztec reached the Bible House in 1832, but his other projects for versions in the languages of Central America came to nothing. Through the intervention of one of his Roman Catholic friends several cases of the Scriptures were released from the Custom House and the contents circulated, though at a great loss to the Society. About the time Thomson left Mexico, political convulsions and direct clerical hostility all but suspended Mr Armstrong's work in the Argentine States, and for the next eleven

years, with the exception of a fruitless attempt at Cartagena in 1837, the Society's operations in South and Central America were once more dependent on the good offices of private friends. In 1842 Thomson (now M.D.) returned to Mexico, but he found the country in so unsettled a political condition and the ecclesiastical powers so vigilantly hostile, that he provided for the safe custody and sale of the cases of Scriptures which had been sent out, and proceeded to Yucatan. For a brief interval the prospect was bright, but in the peace with Mexico which Yucatan signed during his visit she surrendered her liberty of conscience, and the priesthood was again in power. Supplies, however, were despatched to the friends he left behind him, but for twelve years this proved to be the last direct effort made by the Society. The early casual system of distribution was resumed, and that it was by no means insignificant in its action may be gathered from the fact that between 1834 and the end of the half century the grants voted to Central and South America amounted to 20,975 volumes in Spanish and Portuguese, English, German, Italian, and French.

Scattered in a crescent from Florida to Venezuela, the islands of the Spanish Main lie before us; and in these fruitful groups the dark race, in hundreds of thousands, wore out a life of slavery beneath the British flag. To us, who can look back on the day of its emancipation, does there not appear to be a providential element in the operations of the Society, which was unconsciously preparing the bondsman for the wise use of his liberty?

Negro Bible Societies were formed in Barbados and Bermuda in 1818, and in the next six years other Auxiliaries were founded in Honduras, Jamaica, and Montserrat. Government officials, merchants, officers, and other friends aided in the work, but it was chiefly to the missionaries that the beginning of a distinct moral change was due. Thousands of children were drawn into the mission schools, which, year by year, were sending out troops of scholars to spread the tidings of the Gospel. From Berbice and Demerara, from Trinidad and Barbados, St Kitt's, Antigua, and Jamaica news came of encouraging progress. The influence of the Bible broke down the evil power of Obeah, the curse of the African imagination. When the work of the day was done many of the slaves looked forward no longer to the revels and music of the summer night, or to the wicked ritual of their heathen superstition. It was "the children's hour." The children went from house to house by appointment, to read a chapter or two of the Bible or New Testament to the groups of men and women who had met together to hear the Word of Life; and gladly did the eager listeners requite their services with a payment of from 5d. to 10d. a week. Or some old Uncle Remus, who could afford to pay a higher fee, pored through his horn spectacles over the abstruse page, and learned to spell his way verse by verse with the help of a little black "man of letters." At sixty, at seventy, they discovered it was not yet too late to learn. And no trouble seemed too great when these objects were in view. An old grey-

headed slave walked fifty miles to obtain a Bible for the purpose of its being read to others, and at the end of three months returned, as he had promised, with the price of it, which had been collected among the slaves.

In 1829 an edition of the New Testament in Negro-English was consigned to the Moravian missionaries in Surinam. The children learned to read, and in course of time carried their Testaments with them to many of the plantations which the missionaries were not allowed to visit. In England this version was attacked by smart reviewers as a degraded travesty of divine revelation—it was thought, too, that the language would die out—but an edition left the press as late as 1889, and even to this day it is able to lead souls to Christ.

At the close of 1831 Mr Thomson, whom we have already met in Mexico and South America, was engaged as Agent in the West Indies. He cruised among the eastern islands, forming negro Associations and arranging for the distribution of the Scriptures as he passed from place to place, made a rapid tour through the most populous parts of Venezuela, established Auxiliaries at Demerara, Grenada, St Lucia and Nevis, called at Hayti, where he settled with the President of the Republic for the supply of the troops and the schools, and arrived in Jamaica in June 1834, in time to witness the rejoicings on the great day of emancipation.

The Act came into force on the 1st of August, and to the advent of that supreme moment many of the friends of the oppressed race looked forward

with some anxiety and uneasiness. "Fowell Buxton," says Mrs Geldart in her interesting volume, *The Man in Earnest*, "was at Northrepps Hall when, on the 10th September, a large packet of letters came from the Colonies. He felt that he must open them alone; so he carried them with him into one of the shady retreats of those solemn and beautiful woods, and, with no other sound in his ears than the melody of the wood birds, and no other witness of his emotions than the eye that seeth in secret, he opened his sealed papers and read. He read how, on the evening of 31st July, the churches and chapels of the islands were thrown open, and the slaves crowded in to await the hour of midnight. When that hour drew nigh, they fell on their knees, and listened for the stroke of the clock; and when twelve sounded from the church-tower they sprang to their feet, for they were all free—all free. No confusion, no intoxication, no bloodshed; and on the following Monday they all returned to their work—to work as free men, and thenceforth to be paid for their labour."

That eventful day had also engaged the thought of the Society. The Rev. Hugh Stowell of Manchester had suggested that a separate fund should be raised in order to put a copy of the Word of God, in his own language, into the hand of every emancipated slave, as the one boon that could console him for the wrongs he had sustained. The Committee adopted the suggestion, subscriptions poured in from all sides, and when the fund was closed the total amounted to £16,250. Nearly 100,000 copies of the New Testament with

the Psalms were consigned to the West Indies—freight-free, thanks to the generosity of shipowners and others—as a national gift, and were distributed for the most part at the Christmas following “transition-day.” The number eventually required absorbed £13,657, and the balance of the fund was reserved for the benefit of the negroes at the Cape and in the Mauritius. Granville Sharp, to whom the world owed the charter of liberty expressed in the popular phrase, “As soon as a slave sets his foot on English ground he is free,” had been twenty years in his grave. William Wilberforce, who had consecrated his powers to the abolition of slavery, died a month before the measure for which he had so long fought received the royal assent. Members of the Society may well be proud to-day that the names of both are inscribed in the list of its first Committee.

Mr Thomson founded numerous Auxiliaries and Associations in Jamaica, visited Cuba (where the Archbishop warned the people that his object was to incite the slaves to rise and massacre their masters), and in October 1838 left the West Indies for a tour of inspection among the Bible Societies in British North America. Meanwhile Mr Joseph Wheeler, who had been engaged in 1835, had twice made the circuit of the eastern archipelago. He established an Auxiliary in Hayti, revived that at Santa Cruz, visited towns, villages, and plantations in the different islands, won the hearts of the dusky multitudes on the estates, and made many friends among the Jews. “Though many a nominal Christian refused to help him, no Jew

ever slighted his application." Of the extent to which the Scriptures were circulated we have an indication in the fact that, exclusive of the Negro Gift Testament, of which over 100,000 copies were distributed, the Committee had sent out between January 1830 and March 1837 no fewer than 60,000 Bibles and Testaments, and 2360 Portions in Spanish.

On the departure of Mr Thomson, Wheeler took up his work in Jamaica, but he found time to visit the Colombian coast, and to run once more through the Little Antilles to Demerara. At Barbados he fell seriously ill. The Committee urged him to return to England, but he would not hear of it; "personal satisfaction was not a sufficient reason for returning home." He went on to Jamaica, resumed his tours of visitation, and "was never better apparently in health and spirits," when suddenly the end came in November 1840. Of such mettle were the Agents of the Society. He was succeeded by Mr McMurray in 1842, but in the interval difficulties had obstructed the progress of the work. In too many places the catholic spirit, which was the very life of the Society, had suffered some abatement, and devout and zealous men were ready to assist in every way save that of united action. The new Agent established three central depôts—in Jamaica, Barbados, and Antigua—so as to provide a system of distribution independent of the Auxiliaries, and then proceeded with the usual labours of construction and organisation. A few years later the liberation of slaves in the French and Dutch

islands opened new vistas of usefulness; but, unhappily, a commercial depression which seemed beyond hope of remedy had fallen on Jamaica. Since the passing of the Emancipation Act, it was averred, property had steadily depreciated, and hundreds of coffee plantations and sugar estates had been abandoned. The change had so materially affected the operations of the Society that, in 1850, the Committee decided that Mr McMurray should spend £1850 in putting the Auxiliaries and depôts in efficient order and make a farewell voyage through the archipelago. A circular was afterwards addressed to the Auxiliaries and all friends of the cause in the West Indies, and notwithstanding the ravages of cholera and the embarrassments of trade, the call to duty was promptly obeyed.

During the twenty years closing with the Jubilee there were circulated in the West Indies, in addition to the Negro Gift Testament, 183,900 copies of the Scriptures, chiefly Bibles; and during that period the remittances, whether free contributions or on sale account, amounted to £14,754. Jamaica contributed £3955, Barbados £3347, and Antigua £1075.

For several years the cause made encouraging progress in British North America. Bible Societies arose in the seaboard provinces and islands, and in the growing cities of the two Canadas. An institution was founded at York Factory—the settlement of the factors or traders—in Rupert's Land, and its first anniversary was attended by Captain (after-

wards Sir John) Franklin, who had just returned from his terrible journey of five thousand miles in exploration of the northern coasts. These societies threw out Branches and Associations; the Committee despatched supplies for Sunday schools at Montreal, Kingston, York (Toronto), and Niagara, and large distributions of the Scriptures took place; but as time went on there were signs that various elements of disintegration had begun to work. In 1828 the Rev. John West, sometime chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, was sent out on a special commission. Serious mischief, he discovered, had been caused by prejudiced accounts of the Apocrypha controversy and Scottish pamphlets impeaching the Society. The old misrepresentation that the Society had usurped the functions of the S.P.C.K. had been revived, and in one instance an Auxiliary had been dissolved and the funds and stock of Bibles had been transferred. In addition to all this, a strange feeling of apathy had in some places fallen on the people. With little encouragement from bishop or missionary, Mr West refuted groundless charges and wicked rumours; Auxiliaries were reorganised or replaced; steadfast friends were encouraged, and new institutions were established.

In 1830, on his way home from Mexico, Mr Thomson contributed to the consolidation of the work in Canada. He strongly urged that Quebec and Montreal should divide Lower Canada between them and confirm their position by a network of Associations, while Upper Canada should be similarly partitioned between Kingston and Toronto.

He also advocated the opening of large depôts, and supplies of Bibles and Testaments were consigned by the Committee to each of the four societies for this purpose.

A wonderful revival of energy and efficiency repaid the labour and expense of these tours of inspection. Indeed, the skill, tact, and enthusiasm of the Agent were specially suited to the conditions in which Bible work had to be promoted in British North America. In the rapid development of the country, men and things were in a state of flux and change which threatened the stability of the strongest Auxiliaries and Associations. In Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, Roman Catholicism had long been predominant. Then there were the Indian Tribes, both in the settled districts and in the forest, for whom portions of the Scriptures in Mohawk and Ojibwa had been produced. Finally there was the problem of the immigrants, who streamed out, ship after ship, from the Highlands and Ireland and the southwestern English counties. Scattered over the vast country, thousands of settlers had for weeks, for months, no intercourse except with their own families; they were afraid to wander far from their huts lest they should be lost in the trackless woods; and perhaps once in five years they were visited by a minister of the Gospel. In Cape Breton alone there were, in 1837, 28,000 Highlanders, who, until shortly before that date, had not had a single minister, and scarcely a schoolmaster among them. Partly to reach these remote colonists, the

Committee engaged the services of a local agent in 1836, but though good work was done, the arrangement was not satisfactory, and in the winter of 1838 Mr Thomson arrived on his second visit. Fresh from the heat of the tropics, he set out in an open boat up the Ottawa River, with an icy wind blowing and the thermometer eight degrees below zero ; founded three Auxiliaries and addressed three others before the year closed ; started on a second tour in January ; proceeded to Upper Canada in the spring, and established in May the first Red Indian Bible Society at a village on the River Credit. The eighth he formed near Quebec in the following winter. A special meeting of the Montreal Bible Society was called to wish him Godspeed on his departure to the eastern provinces, where he spent the spring, summer, and early autumn of 1840 in inspecting the Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Early in 1841 he resumed the visitation of these provinces, canoeing up the St John River to the French forest settlements above the Grand Falls, making a rapid survey of Cape Breton, and forming in the course of the year forty-one new societies. In November he returned to Montreal, *en route* for another attempt in Mexico.

In the course of his journeys he found that, in these territories as elsewhere, the Roman Catholic clergy were of two minds—some angrily opposing the circulation of the Scriptures, others invoking the blessing of heaven on the noble work of the Society. In certain of the old French Canadian settlements along the shores of Lake St Clair,

where numerous wayside crosses and shrines carried one back to the Middle Ages, the Bible had made little impression upon the traditions, prejudices, and customs handed down through many generations. At Toronto (where the Auxiliary now assumed the title of the Upper Canada Bible Society) a spirit of inquiry had been awakened. Among the French Catholics round Ottawa experience proved that there was a possibility of distributing the Scriptures, while, at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Mr Thomson was well received by the aged Abbé Sigogne, who ordered some Bibles and a hundred of De Sacy's New Testament, and at Antigonish the Catholic Bishop readily consented to one of his flock acting as depositary for the sale of the Word of God.

In 1844 there were — great and small — two hundred and forty-six Bible Societies and Associations in British North America, and effective work was being done among the immigrants, the Red Tribes of the Forest, and the older French and English inhabitants. Some had adopted the plan of house to house visitation, others had engaged colporteurs or a special agent to travel among the French part of the population. At the close of the half century the Toronto Auxiliary, with its 115 Branches, had circulated altogether 187,019 copies, and its total receipts had amounted to £20,950. At least two thousand persons were present at the Jubilee meeting, and it transmitted £1162 to the special funds at home. Liberal contributions were also received from Montreal, where the aggregate distribution had been 154,273

copies; from Quebec, where the Auxiliary, which had lapsed into inactivity, was revived in the Jubilee Year; from Kingston, which had thirteen Branches and six depôts and employed two colporteurs; and from Nova Scotia; and warm tributes of affection were paid to the parent Society by the other organisations.

On the arrival of Dr Anderson as first Bishop of Rupert's Land, the Auxiliary at York Factory — long fallen into decay — was revived; and depôts which he formed at York, Red River, and Cumberland House north of the Saskatchewan, were stocked by the Committee, who in 1853 printed an edition of the Gospel of St John in the dialect of the Crees.

Year by year the *Harmony* had cast anchor in the Bay of Okkak. On the 9th August 1821, when it brought the Eskimo version of the Epistles, its arrival was greeted with a white flag on which the figure 50 was embroidered; on that very day of the month half a century before, the Brethren of the first Moravian settlement had landed at Nain. In 1825, the translation of the Book of Revelation—long delayed through the difficulty of finding words in so rude a language for its marvellous imagery—made the New Testament complete. Between that date and 1849 the Psalms, Genesis, Isaiah, the Pentateuch, and the other prophetic books and Proverbs were printed. The poor Eskimo were glad and thankful, but on that bleak and hungry coast there was little they could spare in token of their gratitude—at the best a few gallons of seal-oil, a seal, half a seal,

chunks of blubber. One winter when the sea was niggardly, and the kindly missionaries sent the people away with sad faces because the times were too hard for the acceptance of such offerings, a woman brought twenty eider-ducks' eggs and pressed her donation on them with tears. Thus were 2s. more added to the funds.

During the twenty years ending with the Jubilee, 85,128 Bibles and Testaments (exclusive of the Eskimo consignments) were distributed in British North America on behalf of the Committee. On their part, the Auxiliaries transmitted no less than £36,783, of which £29,694 was on purchase account, and £7089 in free contribution.

CHAPTER XVI

WEST AND EAST—GOLD

IN the report for the year 1849 the following grant is recorded with the usual official brevity:—"783 copies in English and Spanish have been supplied to parties proceeding to California, well recommended to the Committee." That simple entry may be regarded as the first sentence in the story of a new epoch. The old order had been gradually passing away; in the events to which we are about to refer it may be said to have passed.

A year before—on the 24th January 1848—at the Coloma saw-mill in the Sierra foot-hills, J. W. Marshall had exhibited on the crown of his old white hat, "knocked in a little," about half an ounce of gold in flakes and grains; and already in the wild and desperate rush for wealth thousands of adventurers were swarming over land and sea. Across the prairies mule-trains, groups of men on foot, companies of horsemen, waggons drawn by long files of cattle (with "*Ho for the diggings!*" painted on the canvas covers) were streaming westward. "From the Missouri River to the Sierra Nevada there was an almost unbroken line from the camp-fires at night." Crowded steamers

were running on the short routes *viâ* Nicaragua, *viâ* Panamá; crazy schooners and rotten barques were joining in the mad race; reckless gold-seekers, maddened by the delay caused by the congestion of traffic, ventured to sea in the log canoes of the Indians, and were frequently heard of no more; others set off on foot along the coast, and tramped their 1200 miles from Agua Dulce to San Francisco.

The American Bible Society had already taken measures for supplying their newly-acquired territories with the Scriptures. "An agent," wrote their secretary, "is engaged for California, who starts in a few days *viâ* Panamá; his books are already shipped, and on the way by Cape Horn. Some half-dozen American missionaries are now preaching near the region of gold, and are well received. Many of that newly gathered population at San Francisco are the best of men, Bible men,"—a view of the Argonauts in pleasant contrast with what Bancroft terms "the great and gaudy pictures of the Californian Inferno" usually regarded as historical.

Auxiliaries for Oregon Territory and the Sandwich Islands had already been founded by the American Society; in 1852 it announced Auxiliaries of great promise at San Francisco, San José, Sacramento City, and Stockton, by all of which depositories of the Scriptures were kept. Among the Chinese, too, the Gospels and Acts, shipped eastward from the depôts in China, had been very extensively distributed.

A marvellous piece of history, when one pauses

to think of it! In 1816 the "Far West" was well east of the Mississippi; in 1850 the great Republic stretched across to the Pacific—a distance so vast that to-day the clocks of the continent keep four different kinds of time. The Bible Society crossed the Mississippi in the wake of the first settlers; it appeared on the shores of the Pacific in the train of the first gold-seekers.

Within four years the world was again ringing with the cry of Gold, and the rush to New South Wales and Victoria had begun. It is curious that the Australian should have been contingent on the American discovery,—that a sheep-farmer from Sydney should have learned in California the secret of the rocks in the Turon and Macquarie regions which he had just left. But for that chance, black shepherds might for another century have sat watching their flocks on the block of quartz which contained "the cwt. nugget." Few things in history are stranger than this sudden and simultaneous dispersion—by means so simple, yet so far beyond human device—of thousands of the white race to the extremities of the earth. Was it all merely accidental; and was it no more than a coincidence that both in the far west and at the antipodes the Bible agent and the colporteur were familiar figures among the tents and bark huts at the diggings?

The Bible cause had made considerable progress before gold was discovered at Bathurst in 1851. The New South Wales Bible Society at Port Jackson dated back to 1817, and an Association had been formed at Paramatta, an Auxiliary at

Liverpool, and a depôt had been opened in the Macquarie River district. In 1840 a Ladies' Association had begun operations in Sydney, at that time a city of about 29,000 inhabitants; and four years later, when the question of education caused much excitement in the colony, large supplies were sent out for the Sunday schools. In Van Diemen's Land a Bible Society had been formed as early as 1819, and in course of time the work was extended by an Auxiliary at Launceston and an Association at Norfolk Plains. Between 1841 and 1846 as many as 23,846 convicts were poured into the Tasmanian settlements, and in March 1847 the total prisoner population was 30,846. Happily the Word of God was there to enlighten the darkened mind and to touch the hardened heart. Colporteurs travelled through the rural districts; and on the farms where the evenings used to be spent in idleness or vice and the Sundays in riotous amusements, numbers now met to have the Scriptures read by one of their fellows,—“perhaps the only one among them able to read.” Even for the desperate felons of the chain-gang at Perth a school had been formed, “the teachers some of their own class, and the school-book the Bible.” The Melbourne Bible Society was founded in 1840, when the population of the capital was five thousand, and that of the whole of Australia Felix (Victoria) was estimated at ten or twelve thousand; and in 1847 an Auxiliary was established at Geelong. Depôts were opened for the benefit of the settlers in the Bush, and a colporteur was engaged to travel

among them. In 1845 the South Australian Bible Society was inaugurated at Adelaide, which had itself been only nine years in existence. A colporteur was employed, depôts were opened at Burra-Burra, Kapunda, Houghton, Mount Barker, Port Adelaide, and Port Lincoln, and a canvass of the outlying districts revealed an unusual absence of dearth—a state of things which was attributed to the “care of the parent Society in visiting and providing emigrant ships before their departure.” In Western Australia even as late as 1842 the white population was computed at considerably less than four thousand. No institution had been formed, but various grants had been voted by the Committee for the colonists and their schools. During these years the aborigines had not been forgotten. In 1830 the Gospel of St Luke had been issued by the Sydney Auxiliary in the dialect of the Lake Macquarie blacks, but no further progress appears to have been made in the speech of these tribes.

The discoveries of 1851 changed the whole future of Australia. Gold-seeking is not an angelic occupation, but as in California, so here on the Turon, at Ballarat and at Mount Alexander, there were many of “the best of men, Bible men.” Indeed, what was most striking in these mining camps was not the lurid godlessness of the swarming desperadoes of the world, but the remarkable display of seamliness, order, and Christian upbringing. Sunday trading went on, it is true, but there was no gold-digging or cradle-rocking. At Sofala, Ophir, Araluen, preaching stations were

established, and large congregations assembled. Standing under a tree, which threw a scanty shade upon the face of the hill, the Rev. Dr Lang of Sydney addressed on one Sabbath day about 3000 people at Sofala. Sitting "on the green grass" in a bow, or standing on the declivity of the hill, they listened throughout with the deepest attention. "The whole scene," he wrote, "naturally suggested to the mind the sermons that were delivered to thousands of hearers on the shores of the Sea of Galilee by the divine Teacher Himself; while the numerous white tents in view, on hill and in valley, afforded no unapt representation of the ancient Feast of Tabernacles."

As soon as the gold rush began, considerable supplies of the Scriptures were ordered from Earl Street, and the Committee added a consignment of Chinese Testaments, for here also the Celestial had made his appearance. In the course of the period of which we are now speaking, many liberal grants were made by the Committee, and the Auxiliaries themselves transmitted on purchase account and in free contributions between £19,000 and £20,000.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

TO such magnitude had the operations of the Bible Society grown when, in its Jubilee Year, it crossed the threshold of a new epoch. We have traced the providential developments by which it was enabled to maintain in its first thirteen years an expenditure far beyond its dreams of blessing. Had its outlay been maintained at the same rate during the rest of the half century, it would have reached the large total of £2,082,700; but, in a wonderful manner, its means were multiplied as its obligations increased, and at the close of its fiftieth year the aggregate expenditure exceeded £4,070,000. During those fifty years invention and discovery had initiated a complete change in the conditions of life. Realise the leagues of gas-lit streets, the speed of the electric wire, the whirl of machinery in mill and factory, the thunder of trains over some thirty-seven thousand miles of iron roads in various countries, the rush of Atlantic or P. and O. liners, the patrol of British war-steamers in Chinese waters. Marvellous as these things were, none of them was so marvellous as the diffusion of the Scriptures in the course of

that half century. It has been computed that when the century began the number of all the Bibles in the world did not greatly exceed four millions. During the first fifty years of its existence the Society issued 27,938,631 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions; and of these it had printed 9,925,444 Bibles and 16,057,358 Testaments, in thirty and sixty-one languages respectively. Through its influence, or from its example, and in either case aided by its liberality, there had sprung up numerous other societies, the issues of which were set down at 20,103,670 copies. Had the Bible Society done nothing more than originate these institutions, it would have conferred an incalculable benefaction on mankind. The simple fact, however, that after the labours of nine-and-forty years the annual demand for the Scriptures had increased to 1,367,000 copies in the fiftieth, showed how far from fulfilment was the great mission to which it had devoted itself.

Of one service which it rendered to all the Churches something must now be said. In the pursuit of its single object it accumulated evidence of what, as Bishop Sumner of Chester observed, it was most strange that men should ever have doubted or denied — that the unaided Word of God is able to make men “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” It went far beyond that. Hostile critics had exposed the futility of attempting to translate the Scriptures into the semi-articulate jargon of uncivilised tribes, had ridiculed the idea of putting them into the hands of cannibals and head-hunters, had caricatured the

Society as stealthily dropping cases of books on some convenient sea-beach and skurrying out of range of poisoned arrows and fish-bone spears. Even good men had questioned—as indeed some still question—whether the Bible was of much practical value without the missionary to expound it. The experience of the Society furnished the answer to all that was implied in these objections. It proved that in the rudest forms of speech and among the most savage races, the Scriptures of themselves are sufficient, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, to lead to everlasting life. In New Zealand, in Madagascar, in the South Sea Islands, the efficacy of the written Word was demonstrated beyond cavil.

The first portions of the Maori Scriptures were circulated in 1832. Long before the New Testament had been completed in 1839, hundreds of the islanders had been taught to read, and hundreds more, grown men and children, were under instruction. Of the whole population of about 180,000, not more than 45,000 had had any intercourse with the missionaries; but fierce and warlike as they were, the Maoris seemed born for Christianity. Without teacher or missionary, a solitary page of the Catechism, containing the Ten Commandments, led one tribe to turn to the true God, to cast their idols into the flames, and to sanctify the Day of Rest. Along the coast of the South Island, and across the strait to Stewart Island, their own chiefs had gone in an open boat to bear the tidings of the Gospel. They christianised themselves. Who that has once

read it can ever forget the beauty and pathos of the story of the Maori Gospel of St Luke?

The small volume belonged to Wiremu Ngakuku, a converted Maori, and was always carried by his daughter Tarore, a child of about eleven years, who had learned to read, and who conducted the simple worship of the tent. As Ngakuku and his party were travelling with an Englishman across country to Tauranga, on the Bay of Plenty, whither the missionary station was to be removed, they halted for the night at the foot of the beautiful fall, the Wairere ("flying water"), where the Englishman pitched his tent and the natives betook themselves to the shelter huts of previous wayfarers. The smoke of their fire was observed far up the valley by a war party from Roturoa, who stole down in time to surprise the travellers before the break of day. The noise made in capturing the tent alarmed the Maoris. They fled up the hill, Ngakuku carrying his little son on his shoulder; but in the confusion Tarore, sunk in deep sleep, was left behind. She awoke no more on earth; and her murderers carried off her Gospel with the rest of the plunder.

Tarore's book had its mission. In a little while the Roturoa chief awoke to a sense of his evil life, and desired to join the Christians. His first step was the last that one would have expected from a barbarian. He wrote to Ngakuku, asking permission to enter the chapel — not the chapel Ngakuku frequented, but that in his own village. Without that man's goodwill, how could he enter *any* Christian place of worship? Ngakuku was

rejoiced to hear of his change, and in a subsequent account we are told that the Maori Christian and the murderer of his child "were worshipping God together in the same place."

A year or two later, before any missionary had reached Otaki on the south-west coast of the North Island, Matahau, an Otaki Maori, who had been a captive at the Bay of Islands, and had been taught to read by the missionaries, returned with Tarore's Gospel in his possession. When the young chief Te Rauparaha, son of the fierce and cruel warrior of the same name, heard of Matahau, he sent for him, for he desired to learn more of the white missionaries "who had told him about the Great God in the heavens." But Matahau refused to come; so Te Rauparaha and his cousin Te Whiwhi went to him, and found that he had parted with the Gospel; "it was a bad book; it told people not to have two wives, not to drink rum, not to fight, but to live in peace, and to pray to God"; he had given it to a man who wanted it for cartridges. Te Rauparaha saved it before many leaves had been torn away, bought it with mats and tobacco; and persuaded Matahau, sadly loth, to teach them to read it. "My heart and Te Whiwhi's, and the other young men's, longed to hear the 'new talk.'" Then Te Rauparaha and his cousin sailed to the C.M.S. station in the Bay of Islands, and begged for a missionary; and in answer to their request Mr O. Hadfield, who had just arrived from England (1838), was sent to Otaki, the scene of his life-long labours. The young chief was baptized as

Wiremu Tamihana (William Thompson), and in 1851 he was brought over on a visit to this country by the Rev. William Williams. Such was the fruit of a single copy of a single Gospel.

In later years, when the New Testament (*Taonga Nui*, the Great Treasure) had been completed, and the light of the Gospel had been shed over the three islands, it is told that a missionary, holding a farewell service before his return to England, observed a Maori suddenly withdraw from the semicircle before the Lord's table and go back the whole length of the church to his seat, and then, after some time, return and partake of the Holy Communion. Questioned as to his strange behaviour, the islander replied: "When I approached the table I did not know beside whom I should have to kneel. Then I suddenly saw that I was beside a man who some years ago slew my father and drank his blood, and whom I then swore I would kill the first time that I should see him. . . . So I went back to my seat. Arrived there, I saw in the spirit the upper sanctuary, and seemed to hear a voice: 'Thereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' That made a deep impression on me; and at the same time I thought I saw another sight—a Cross and a Man nailed thereon—and I heard Him say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then I went back to the altar."

These were "savages,"—but what a splendid, great-hearted, nimble-witted race! And how wonderfully gifted with perception of spiritual

things! "What is the mouse?" asked Bishop Selwyn, after he had told them the fable of the cat, changed into a princess, that leaped out of bed when she saw a mouse. "*Te ritenga Maori*—Old Maori customs," replied the young chief Henare Taratoa. "What is the princess?" continued the Bishop. "The Maori heart." Chivalrous, too, almost beyond belief! In the chapel of the Bishop's Palace at Lichfield there is a window of stained glass, representing David as he poured out the water which the "three mightiest" had brought him from the well of Bethlehem: Bishop Selwyn placed it there in memory of this Henare, who crept in the dark through the English lines to get water for his dying foes—some of these same English—returned wounded, and fell at daybreak when the *pah* was stormed. On his body were found the orders of the day; they began with a prayer, and closed with the Maori text, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."

Within seven years of its publication, the Maori New Testament was found everywhere. Over sixty thousand copies had been bought with the sweat of the brow, with the fruits of the soil, with ornaments and household treasure. It was read everywhere—twice daily in public, when it was discussed and explained; in private continually. For tens of thousands it became the standard of personal virtue and public morality, and the final appeal on the battlefield. As the Jubilee Year approached, many of the warrior chiefs who had clung to the worship of the sky-god, and the earth-

mother, and the guardian of the forests, publicly renounced their heathenism; and men who had refused to listen to the white missionary when visited in their own villages now travelled between twenty and thirty miles to learn the truths of the Gospel.

In another way the Book fulfilled its mission in Madagascar. Ages ago Arab and Persian merchants had discovered the value of that great island, and their long low ships, with a huge eye at the prow, entered its harbours to traffic in slaves. Like Sindbad, the mariners of those vessels carried back to Persia and Arabia wonderful stories of strange plants, mighty birds, and big eggs such as had never been heard of before. It was seventeen years after the beginning of last century that the terrible slave trade was abolished, and the people have not forgotten that it was to England they owed the cessation of that cruel wrong. In May 1831 twenty converts—the first-fruits of eleven years of labour and prayer in Madagascar—were admitted to baptism. There were only some two hundred professed Christians and about a thousand adherents when in 1835 the idolatrous Queen Ránaválona proscribed Christianity under the severest penalties. The missionaries were expelled, but not before they had distributed copies of the complete Bible in Malagasy. Of the little band of believers, some possessed the Bible, others Testaments or portions, others carried the Gospel in their hearts. Neither defying the edict nor shrinking into entire concealment, a few met on

the Sabbath for prayer and praise and reading of the Scriptures on a mountain at some distance from the capital. When they were detected, measures were taken to enforce the law with greater rigour. In 1836 Rafaravavy, an early female convert of some distinction, was betrayed. To the threats of the Queen and the supplications of her pagan father, her only answer was, "I know in whom I have believed, and though my blood be shed and my body left for the dogs, the Word of God must prosper in this country." For once she was spared the worst, but in the following year she was again arrested. Laden with heavy chains, she resisted for more than a week the attempts that were made to cajole or extort from her the names of her companions. Her lips were sealed to all but prayer and the profession of her trust in Christ. The Queen forbade her to pray, but she prayed in her chains, and preached to the guards, and, when she was condemned to death, to the crowd which followed her nearly a mile to the place of execution. Here still she prayed, exhorting all who heard her to believe in the Lord Jesus, till the doomsman's spear pierced her through, and her spirit passed to her Saviour. Thus, on the 14th of August 1837, Rafaravavy, the proto-martyr of Madagascar, suffered for the faith.

For five-and-twenty years the persecution raged with varying fierceness. The Christians fled to caves and deserts, pursued by the Queen's executioners; but no vigilance or severity availed to check the spread of Christianity. Among those who suffered in 1849 there were four nobles, whose

blood it was not lawful to shed. They were condemned to be burnt alive. The place selected was Faravohitra, at the northern end of the mountain ridge on which Tananarivo stands. It was a day of flying showers and bursts of sunshine. On the way to execution, says the native account, "the Christians sang the hymn beginning, 'When our hearts are troubled,' each verse ending with, 'Then remember us.' Thus they sang on the road." Two of the four were husband and wife, and the woman was near the hour of motherhood. "And when they came to Faravohitra, there they burned them, fixed between split spars," with more wood heaped about them. As the faggots kindled, the woman's child was born. No hand of pity was stretched out to save it. "And there was a rainbow in the heavens at the time, close to the place of burning"—so close, indeed, that the end of the bow seemed to rest on the martyrs, a marvellous sight, at which some of the spectators fled in terror. "They sang again, even while in the fire. Then they prayed, saying, 'O Lord, receive our spirits, for Thy love to us has caused this to come to us; and lay not this sin to their charge.' Thus they prayed, as long as they had any life. Then they died, but softly, gently; indeed, gentle was the going forth of their life. And astonished were all the people around who beheld the burning of them there."

In those terrible years, during which it is said that ten thousand persons were condemned to cruel penalties, including torture and death, the Malagasy had no spiritual teacher but the

Scriptures, no friend or counsellor but the Scriptures, no strength in weakness, no consolation in trouble, no hope in death but the Scriptures. They read them in secret, buried them in the earth for safety, treasured them more jealously than gold. In the Library at the Bible House may be seen one of these Bibles, rebound in rough leather, injured by damp from long concealment, the broken leaves patched and mended, and many of them almost as fragile as tinder. As the sacred volumes became scarce, passages were circulated in writing, and prized as precious seed for the sowing of fresh harvests. But in all the years of their need the Word of God never failed them. When Ránaváloná's death brought the reign of terror to an end in 1861, the little band of Christians had grown to several thousands, and when the first consignment of Bibles arrived so vast a crowd pressed forward to purchase, that the doors of the depôt had to be closed and the books were passed out through the window.

To complete the evidence let us turn to the South Seas. The earliest Polynesian Scriptures date from 1818. While "the Word of Luke" was printing at Eimeo, canoes came from the neighbouring islands, bringing plantain-leaf letters begging for copies of the Gospel, and bamboo canes filled with cocoa-nut oil to pay for them. Thirty and forty at a time, the boats were drawn up on the beach, and the islanders waited patiently for days, for weeks, till the sheets had passed through the press. The other Gospels

followed, the Acts, portions of the Old Testament. In the shadow of the cocoa palms or the hibiscus trees the Tahitians delighted to sit in circles, listening to the Word of Life; they lingered till midnight teaching each other; they read in their leaf-thatched huts by the light of a lamp of coconut shell; in some of the islands where no missionary had ever resided they had become familiar with the use of book and pen. Wherever they were met they had their books with them, carefully wrapped in native cloth or concealed in a little basket made to contain them. Had these wild creatures any real care or reverence for the Scriptures which had been prepared for them with so much labour and at so great a cost? Let William Ellis the missionary tell his own experience. On a day of howling tempest and raging surf, he saw a canoe in distress two miles off the shore, and sent out help to it. The canoe was found swamped, and the men were in the sea supporting themselves on their paddles. "When they landed I met them and asked them if they had been in danger. They said, Yes; they were afraid of the sharks, and fearful lest their canoe should sink. I asked them what they thought when the sea began to fill their canoe. They said they thought of their books, and were only concerned to keep them dry—pointing at the same time to their canoe, where the Gospels, carefully wrapped in native cloth, were tied to the top of the mast, in order to secure them from the spray of the sea."

In 1839 the venerable Henry Nott, for forty

years an unwearied evangelist in these remote islands, had the honour of presenting to the young Queen Victoria a Tahitian Bible, the first complete version of the Scriptures in any of the tongues of Polynesia. The edition was bought up with avidity. Many of the people had paid for their books long before they arrived; others came flocking with the money in their hands, and would not leave till they had been satisfied; others again who were penniless ran about borrowing from their friends, or put out to sea, caught fish, and sold it in the market in order that they might obtain the price (\$2). During the struggle which followed the French seizure of Tahiti the natives took their Bibles with them into the mountains, and there, though they were deprived of the guidance of their teachers, every ordinance of religion, with the exception of the Lord's Supper, was as regularly observed as when they were at home in their peaceful villages. These were the people in whose language the missionaries could find no words for *faith* and *conscience*, just as in Maori the translators had to coin equivalents for *hope* and *law*.

But reverence for the Scriptures, it may be objected, cannot be trusted as a proof of a religious conviction. Suppose these primeval savages have but exchanged one fetich for another. Indeed, what *can* they be expected to understand of a book which, after so many generations, still engages the devout scholarship of Christendom? Let us take the testimony of John Williams, who translated the New Testament for the Raratongans. He tells how the captain of one of his Majesty's ships, believing

that the islanders were merely trained like parrots to repeat the words of the missionaries, met a number of them and discussed with them the doctrine of the Resurrection. “‘Do you believe in it?’ asked the Captain. They replied, ‘Yes, most certainly.’ ‘In what body shall we rise?’ They answered: ‘In a chapter in the Corinthians it is said, *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*’ The Captain would not be satisfied: he required to know the identical nature of the body which shall be raised. The natives hesitated some time; and, at last, one said, ‘I have it! *We shall see Him as He is, and shall be like Him.*’ The Captain said again: ‘I want to know the precise body with which we shall be raised.’ This occasioned a considerable consultation among them. At length one said: ‘It cannot be like the body of Christ when it hung on the cross; it will be like His glorious body when He was transfigured on the Mount.’”

When John Williams returned in 1838 to the South Seas after his visit to England, his chief object was a version of the Scriptures in Samoan. That work he was not permitted to accomplish. In the November of the following year, while on his first voyage among the islands, he was murdered by the cannibals of Erromanga. But the spirit of John Williams was not slain. His name was given to the mission ship purchased, chiefly by the subscriptions of children, as successor to the *Camden*. For more than twenty years that barque sailed the vast seas of the South, bearing at its prow the half-length figure of the martyr of

Erromanga, with the open Bible in his hand. When it struck on the coral reef of Danger Island, another children's ship rose out of the wreck. The first offering came from the little brown children of that island. In the Samoan group, at Raratonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki, in all the Christian isles, in the Australian colonies, at home—everywhere—the children eagerly brought their gifts, till the total subscription exceeded £12,000. The second *John Williams*, launched in 1865, was wrecked on the reefs at Niué in 1866. In 1868 the third *John Williams* took its place, and is still in service, but to meet the requirements of the mission, the fourth *John Williams*, a steamship, was sent out in 1894. And the spirit of John Williams lived in his successors. Book by book the Old Testament was completed in Raratongan, and in 1847 Mr Buzacott, accompanied by his assistant Kiro, a native Christian teacher, arrived in England to revise and see the Bible through the press.

In Raratonga the result was awaited half in hope, half in doubt. "Alas!" said one of the natives, "two years have fled behind us since Barokoti (Buzacott) left us, and many have died; now two years still are remaining. I don't like to think about it. The generation who may be favoured to see his return with the Word of God will indeed be a blessed generation. My thought is, that we do not talk much about it. Let us go on, day by day, doing our duty and looking to God: if it be His will, we shall see the great book." The return of Kiro filled them with a glad assurance. In the early morning voices raced

through the village, "Kiro! Kiro! from Baretane (Britain)!" Long before he could land, the beach round the haven was thronged with men, women, and children, who gave him a wild welcome, shaking hands, rubbing noses, pulling his arms, clapping his body, and exclaiming: "Alas, are you indeed returned from that distant land? How wonderful the love of God! Where is Barokoti? Where are the Scriptures?" Then came a great island feast, and after singing and prayer the native senior Deacon rose and spoke, "Kiro, my son, blessing on you! You are to us as one returned from the dead. Twice twenty moons have passed away since you left us. We have prayed for you by night and by day. God has magnified His love towards you, and this day we have kissed each other. We will sit here till the shades of night cover us. You must expect no sleep till you have told us the wonders you have seen in that far-distant land of love, England." A scene not unworthy of the Christians of the early Church.

Mr Buzacott returned to the island in 1852. As the vessel hove up in the offing the delight of the islanders was unbounded. A rush was made for the boat when it approached the shore; the crew jumped out, and the boat, with all on board, was lifted on to the shoulders of the people, and carried up the shore towards the house—the men shouting, the women weeping for joy, and "with this was mingled the voice of prayer and praise to God, who had permitted them to see each other's faces again in the flesh." The heavy packages were brought through the surf over the reef, and the happy

“Sons of the Word” lightened their labour with a song in their own tongue :—

“The Word has come,
 One volume complete !
 Let us learn the good Word !
 Our joy is great !
 The whole Word has come !
 The whole Word has come !”

“It is enough,” said Papehia, when the books were distributed—Papehia, the old native teacher, who first landed on Raratonga thirty years before, when the people were savages and cannibals—“my eyes have seen what my heart has so long desired. I say with Simiona, ‘Now, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace !’”

At the close of the half century of the Society’s work the Scriptures were in circulation in eight Polynesian languages, the very existence of which was unknown to all but a few philologists and geographers fifty years before. In addition to the Maori, Tahiti, and Raratongan versions, the New Testament was current in Samoan, Tongan, and Fijian, and the Gospel of St Mark had been issued in Aneityum. The Hawaiian Bible had been completed by the American missionaries in 1839, when only fourteen years had elapsed since the Princess Kapiolani descended into the crater of Kilauea, walked on the brink of the boiling lava, ate the berries sacred to the fire-goddess Pelé, and flung the stones into the abyss, exclaiming, “Jehovah is my God ; He kindled these fires.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

SPECIMEN DAYS

ON the 7th March 1853, the day on which the Society entered on its fiftieth year, the first of the Jubilee celebrations took place in the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. In the self-same room in which Granville Sharp had presided at its foundation,—in which John Owen, inspired by “an impulse he had neither the inclination nor the power to disobey,” moved the adoption of the resolutions by which it was constituted,—the Society met to express its “deep and thankful sense of the good providence of God” which had safeguarded it for half a century. As “the many holy and illustrious men who had passed away” were called to solemn remembrance, it was observed that of the small assemblage of 1804 only one survivor was present, the venerable Steinkopff, who had so earnestly pleaded on behalf of his fellow-countrymen. Granville Sharp had been nearly forty years in his grave; for thirty Owen had lain by his side in the churchyard at Fulham; for twenty Joseph Hughes had rested beneath his mouldering epitaph in Bunhill Fields.

But if “God buries His workmen, He carries

on His work." As founders and early supporters were withdrawn, successors no less devoted filled their places, and in its fiftieth year, under its third President (Lord Shaftesbury), the Society was in the prime of its strength. Instead of the "three hundred persons of various religious denominations" who gathered in the Pillar Room in 1804, there were representatives from Auxiliaries and Associations which now numbered 3315 in England, 511 in Ireland, and 575 in the Colonies; officials from the continental Agencies through which the operations of the Society ranged from the North Cape to Abyssinia and from the Euphrates to the Straits of Gibraltar; secretaries of Missionary Societies whose work had been lightened and extended and consolidated by the liberal grants of its versions. Instead of the £700 subscribed before that first meeting dispersed, the income of the Jubilee Year amounted to £125,665, and special funds had been opened—one, which eventually exceeded £70,000, in commemoration of fifty years of blessing; the other, which realised £40,900, for the immediate distribution of a million New Testaments among the Chinese.

It was with a profound feeling of gratitude and responsibility that the Society applied itself to the duties which lay before it. At home the broad lines on which the work had been conducted remained unchanged in character, though they were developed and improved in accordance with the conditions of the time and the circumstances of a population which was expanding at the rate of over a million every five years. The number of

annual meetings steadily augmented, and notwithstanding an inevitable percentage of annual losses, the aggregate of Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations grew larger year by year. To the district secretaries this tendency to disintegration was—and in the nature of things must always be—a matter for constant solicitude. Yet even these failures resulted in gain. So long as the institutions were active, the object of the Society was in some measure fulfilled; their extinction necessitated a numerically increasing accession of organisations. In 1863, for instance, 77 societies lapsed, but 121 were formed; 43 lapsed in 1869, but 87 were formed; as many as 126 dropped from the roll in 1874, but 134 were added; in the following year 87 disappeared, but 140 were founded; and in 1877 the extinct institutions numbered 143, and the new ones reached the large total of 160. Such figures would be astonishing if one were not aware that to district secretaries, born indefatigable and gifted with ubiquity, nothing that was requisite could be impossible. In 1862 their chief, Charles S. Dudley—the originator of the system, as we have seen—may be said to have died in harness in his eighty-third year. “No single individual,” the Committee frankly acknowledged, “had ever done so much to extend and strengthen and maintain the cause of the Society, at least within the limits of the British community.” During seven years of gratuitous work and forty-two of regular service, he travelled little less than three hundred thousand miles, addressed between seven and eight thousand public meetings, conducted an extensive correspondence,

and took the leading part in establishing fifteen hundred Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations.

As the fiftieth year of the various Auxiliaries came round, the local Jubilees were celebrated with enthusiasm. The happy retrospect to which these occasions gave rise quickened the people to livelier interest and more strenuous exertion. It brought home to them the change which had taken place, within living memory, in the religious life around them, and the extent to which even their little spot of England or Wales was indebted to the Bible. The share, too, which they or their predecessors had taken in the operations of the Society both at home and abroad aroused a determination that the great cause should not suffer as it passed from them to a younger generation. Take one or two of these Auxiliaries as examples of what was going on in all parts of the country. At Bristol the Jubilee was observed in 1860. During its fifty years the Bristol Auxiliary had transmitted £75,000 to the Society, about half in free gift, and the rest in payment for the Scriptures, of which it had distributed 330,916 copies. In 1861 the Manchester and Liverpool Auxiliaries combined to commemorate their half century. These two organisations had raised over £60,000 in free, and £4,000 in special, contributions, and they had circulated 1,368,390 copies of the Scriptures. The East Suffolk Auxiliary held its celebration at Ipswich in the same year. Owen, Hughes, and Steinkopff had all been present at its foundation; and, like them, four of its presidents—Bishops of the diocese—

and nearly all its original committee and officials had passed away. It had contributed over £56,000, and its distribution of the Scriptures had amounted to 188,236 copies, comparatively few of which would probably have been put into circulation but for its co-operation.

On the 11th June 1866, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of the new Bible House in Queen Victoria Street. That spacious thoroughfare from the Thames Embankment was to sweep over the site of the old house which the Society had occupied since 1816, and from which fifty-one million copies of Scripture had been issued in a hundred and seventy-eight languages. Within its memorable walls a farewell service was held on the 5th February 1868, and in the following year, on the 2nd August, the handsome new edifice, the site and erection of which had cost £61,000, was dedicated with prayer and praise to the divine service. To the special building fund which was raised by the friends of the Society, her Majesty Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, and the King of Prussia each contributed £100.

In the opening months of 1870 the whole Auxiliary system was in a flourishing condition. There were now ten district secretaries and an assistant in charge of the divisions of England and Wales, though the district map did not include the area of the Norfolk Auxiliary, which was still under the supervision of its own local agent. The meetings of the year had attained the number of 2621, and in all there were 4256

Auxiliaries, Branches and Associations. The prevalence of the colporteur was indicated by the distribution during the year of 45,000 copies. These were sold in the Metropolis and a dozen counties, but for the most part they were dispersed in Lancashire, the Staffordshire Potteries, and South Wales. A large and efficient measure of colportage during the Jubilee Year was one of the objects to which the Jubilee Fund was appropriated. The work was afterwards continued in various localities which lay outside the range of the Auxiliaries and Associations, and though it was regarded as an expensive method of distribution which could only be justified by special circumstances, it was the only effective means of reaching the great dock and shipping population in London and at Southampton, or on the busy rivers, the Mersey, Tyne, and Wear. Curiously enough, in 1892 the number of copies circulated was the same as in 1870—45,000; but at the later date, in addition to the agents whose expenses and salaries were partly or wholly paid by the Society, the Committee gave assistance through many channels to colportage on land, river, and sea.

It was in 1870 that the Society lost its second great district secretary, the Rev. Dr Phillips, one of Dudley's picked men, and a worker after his heart. We have seen with what hospitable kindness he was received throughout the Principality on his appointment in 1835. For five-and-thirty years he carried with him the sunshine of his own disposition, and the magical tones of the Welsh language. When he began his circuits

the affiliated institutions in the whole of Wales did not greatly exceed a hundred ; in 1870 there were four hundred and thirty-eight Auxiliaries and Branches ; and the annual free contributions had increased from £2023 to £6680, while the outlay on purchase account, which had risen from £2224 to £2671, showed that the desire for the Word of God had suffered no abatement. One arduous and delicate task he accomplished for his countrymen and the Society. After a complete and laborious collation of the various editions of the Welsh Bible, he succeeded with the aid of the best Welsh scholars in securing a standard text in the language of the Principality. He, too, had the privilege of dying in harness. On the 12th October 1870 he completed his record of attendances at public meetings with the words, "The End"; the end came on the 28th at his home at Hereford. He was laid to rest in the churchyard at Tupsley, and "devout men carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him."

At the anniversary meeting in the following year good tidings of progress in distant lands were delivered by two distinguished missionaries, who had finally returned home after long service. Twenty years had gone by since Dr Duff last appeared on the Society's platform ; thirty since Moffat held his audience spell-bound as he told of the immeasurable distances of the veldt, and the little cloud of dust which was sheep being driven a hundred miles in exchange for a Gospel. It was still a story of seeking which he had to tell. Shortly before he left his station, a woman

with her boy had travelled fifteen miles in quest of the New Testament. She had had a borrowed copy; "but the owner has come and taken it away, and now I sit with my family sorrowful, because we have no book to talk to us. My boy can read, and he is teaching me to read. He reads and I pray. Now we are far from any one else. We are living at a cattle outpost, and we have no one to teach us but the Book. Oh, go and seek a book! Oh, father, oh, mother; oh, my elder brother, do go and seek a book for me; surely there is one to be found; do not let me go back empty!" And it was for these poor creatures, who came far and gave what they could, that Moffat was then engaged in carrying through the press a new edition of his Sechuana Bible. Another incident which he used to relate vividly summed up the native estimate of the influence of the Scriptures. "I met an elderly man who looked very downcast. I said to him, 'My friend, what is the matter? Who is dead?' 'Oh,' said he, 'there is no one dead.' 'Well, what is the matter? You seem to be mourning.' The man then scratched his head, and said: 'My son tells me that my dog has eaten a leaf of the Bible.' 'Well,' I said, 'perhaps I can replace it.' 'Oh,' said the man, 'the dog will never do any good; he will never bite anybody; he will never catch any jackals; he will be as tame as I see the people become who believe in that book. All our warriors become as gentle as women,—and my dog is done for.'"

There was yet another speaker, and he still

survives, a staunch friend and valued counsellor of the Society—the Bishop of Gloucester. That meeting was the first he ever attended. Until a little time before that date the Society had seemed to him to be too inclusive, and he had had doubts as to the breadth and the nature of the co-operation which united its members. His experience, however, as one of the eminent scholars of various denominations appointed for the revision of the Authorised Version had dissipated his difficulties and misgivings. He had felt it his duty to reconsider his whole position, and he now appeared not simply as a supporter but as a Vice-President of the Bible Society. Long afterwards, when in scrupulous loyalty to its constitution many of the Committee resisted the tendency to adopt the combined results of modern scholarship, the wise and sympathetic action of the Bishop went far to prepare the way for the necessary change, and to secure the all but unanimous vote by which the first law was widened, in October 1901, so as to include the Revised Version in the operations of the Society.

Both at home and abroad 1878 was a year of commercial depression. The summer which followed was cold and wet; corn and fruit crops failed, and winter set in early and severe. From all parts of Europe one heard of distress and bitter poverty. In Finland one colporteur, who lost heart at the sight of the misery he met with, abandoned his work. In Norway such things as a pair of wooden skates and a beehive stand were exchanged for copies of the New Testament. In

Lithuania a colporteur was paid in potatoes. In some districts of Austria the Government had to interpose to keep the people alive; and in Poland men even committed suicide in order that they might awaken compassion for their wives and children. Yet the Society was strangely prospered. An appeal, which had been issued in consequence of the normal expenditure having exceeded the income in three successive years, was promptly answered by the subscription of £10,000 in less than three months. The old struggle with unstable organisations still continued; 123 had fallen extinct, but 2944 meetings had been held, 210 new institutions had been founded, and at the close of 1879-80 there was an aggregate of 4826 Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations. And there were now twelve district secretaries.

At the anniversary meeting in 1880 Dr Manning of the R.T.S bore testimony to the vastness and efficiency of the Society's operations. He had gone out on a tour of investigation,—“resolved to believe nothing he was told, and to look at everything which he was not wanted to see.” Throughout the provinces of Italy he found the Society's colporteurs everywhere at work, and at the Appian Gate, by which St Paul entered Rome, he surprised the sentry reading the Epistle to the Romans. At Alexandria, and again at Siout, whither the caravans came in from the great desert, the depôt was in active operation, and some seventy or eighty fellaheen converts spent their leisure time in colportage throughout Central Egypt. Even above the Cataracts, a Coptic priest on the island sacred

to the memory of the mysterious Osiris showed him with pride and joy a Bible which had been procured from the depôt at Cairo. Joppa and Jerusalem and Damascus he visited, and he learned that right away among the columns and arches of Palmyra, among the colossal ruins of Baalbec, in the giant cities of Bashan, the Scriptures were being scattered broadcast. Returning by Constantinople, where the depôt in the heart of old Stamboul was "a hive of Christian industry," he passed up the Black Sea and along the Danube, constantly meeting the colporteurs employed under the control of the Agent at Vienna. Then he travelled in America, and there, "amidst the lumber-men of the primeval forests and the *voyageurs* of the great rivers and lakes of British North America, always and everywhere the ubiquitous Society was at work." The operations of the Society were not faultless or flawless—he could scarcely say that even for the operations of the R.T.S.—but the work, divine and noble as it was in its conception, was wisely administered, and well and vigorously conducted, and wherever he had been, the Society had a staff of which any organisation might be proud.

With the encouragement of this impartial estimate, the Society entered on the latest stage of its history, for 1880 was one of those divisional years which are marked by the advent of a new generation, and the official lists are sprinkled with the names of men who are still honoured workers in the great cause. Both Secretaries had resigned—Mr Bergne after twenty-six, and Mr Charles

Jackson after eighteen years of service. The Rev. C. E. B. Reed succeeded the former, and was third Secretary in succession to Joseph Hughes. For some months the Rev. W. J. Edmonds filled the second vacancy, and in July the choice of the Committee fell on the Rev. John Sharp, whom Mr Edmonds had known as an able and devoted missionary in India, and who at that moment was lecturer on Telugu and Tamil in the University of Cambridge. Relieved of the more exacting duties of Secretary, Mr Sharp still renders the Society invaluable assistance as the editor of its versions, and Canon Edmonds, who from 1869 to 1878 was a district secretary, has for the last eleven years been a Vice-President. On the financial side of the house Mr Wakelin, who was appointed in 1878, still fulfils the responsible duties of accountant. Among the district secretaries of the time the Rev. W. Major Paull, who afterwards occupied the post of Secretary, is, in his retirement, an active friend, but the Rev. F. D. Thompson, appointed in 1876, the Rev. James Thomas, appointed in 1878, and the Rev. Jelinger E. Symons, appointed in 1880, continue to be "eyes among the wheels" of the Auxiliary system.

In 1881 that system was, in a certain sense, brought to completeness. From 1838 the area of the Norwich and Norfolk Auxiliary had flourished apart under the care of an experienced local secretary, Mr Wiseman. It was now added to the districts into which the whole country was partitioned. It brought with it 227 Branches and Associations; after the deduction of all expenses,

its last independent contribution to the exchequer of the Society was a free gift of £1402; and it is pleasant to know that the spirit of the old days still survives, for last year (1902-3) its Branches and Associations numbered 237, and its free contributions amounted to £1264, while on Bible Sunday about eighty sermons were preached on behalf of the Society in the city of Norwich.

At that date, too, we catch a glimpse of another of the great district secretaries—George T. Edwards, who for over thirty years had had charge of the Northern District, which extended from Lindisfarne to the Isle of Man, and included parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. In an interesting retrospect addressed to the Committee in 1881, he touched on the changes which had taken place since he joined the Society in 1850: "I have seen eight Secretaries depart, while of the five district secretaries who, in addition to myself, composed the staff thirty years ago, only one remains, and he has long since retired from service. In 1850 almost half of Europe was closed against the Society; to-day every country is open, and Rome is the centre of operations for Italy. In 1850 the free income of the Society was £46,000; last year it was £110,000, while the issues for the contrasted years were respectively 1,136,000 and 2,780,000 copies. Thirty years ago the district under my care sent in free contributions £1822; last year the amount was £4,187. I have been permitted to attend 4,658 meetings; to commence those which are now annually held among the English on the Continent; and to attend the first meeting ever held

for the Society in the city of Rome. I have travelled nearly 200,000 miles, in all kinds of weather, and have never had any accident." For yet fourteen years he was privileged to continue his work. Then health and strength declined, and the veteran made way for younger men. In 1900 he sent to the Bible House his "Jubilee thank-offering," accompanied by a letter of interesting reminiscences. His period of district service had been the longest on record. He had known four Presidents, more than a dozen General Secretaries, about forty district secretaries, and six editorial superintendents, and had been brought in contact with many of the most distinguished men of his time. "For some years," he wrote, "I corresponded with Cardinal Newman, and on one of his birthdays, towards the close of his long life, I sent him a copy of the Society's New Testament in very large type, bound in four thin volumes, as he confessed that big, heavy books were very trying to him in the feebleness of old age. His letter of thanks showed how he valued it, and he told me that in his early Oxford days he had been a subscriber to the Bible Society." On the 1st August in the following year, Mr Edwards passed peacefully to his rest, at the little town of Thusis in Switzerland. Strange that two names—Edwards and Dudley—suffice to span the interval between ourselves and the pious women of the Ban de la Roche, who suggested the possibilities of Ladies' Associations; more curious still that the first Chairman of the Society should have been Granville Sharp, and that its present Editorial

Superintendent should be a descendant of the Archbishop of York, who was Granville Sharp's grandfather.

Notice must now be taken of the new and important method of work introduced by the founding of the London Bible and Domestic Female Mission through the influence of Mrs Ranyard. The project was started in the crowded courts and alleys of St Giles's, and the first Biblewoman was one who had been born, brought up, and married amid the squalor, poverty, and vice of the parish. Attracted by the singing at a religious service, she had entered, and at the close had asked the missionary for the loan of a Bible. From the reading of that book she rose up a new creature; and when she learned that a visitor was needed for the work of the Society in those evil places, and that the visitor must be a woman, she offered herself for the duty. In that lawless district, where people respectably dressed did not care to venture even in broad daylight, and where no ordinary colporteur would probably have sold a copy, she knew every nook and corner, almost every house; the people and their ways were familiar to her; she had no fear of hindrance or molestation. Before six months were over she had sold 207 Testaments and 147 Bibles among the lowest of the low. Of this number 192 Testaments and 60 Bibles were paid for on delivery, the rest in small instalments. Other visitors were found. Six were employed in the first year; thirty-six in the second; one hundred and thirty-seven in the third; and a hundred and sixty in the fourth, when the number

of Bibles and Testaments sold amounted to nearly 27,000. The grants of the Committee up to that time came to £2090, and, ever since, the work has been aided by the Society. During the Cotton Famine, when the loss of the working-classes was estimated at twelve millions sterling a year, some of Mrs Ranyard's best women were sent to Lancashire, "not to act as almoners, and not so much to sell the Scriptures in this case, for the starving cannot buy them, but to be loving, humble Bible-readers, and to comfort the people in their trouble." In 1863 there was scarcely a city or town in England which had not its Biblewoman; they were busy in France and Germany; and in Syria, Bombay, and Calcutta they had taken up that section of evangelistic work on which, by the curious irony of circumstance, "the Christian fair" alone was permitted by Oriental custom to venture. During the thirteen years ending 1870 the Biblewomen had distributed 90,630 Bibles among the London poor, and collected in weekly payments £10,220. Up to 1891 the institution had distributed 278,000 copies of the Scriptures and collected £32,000. Last year (1902-3) these figures had increased to 323,877 copies and £34,778. How clamant is the need for the Biblewoman at this moment is sadly evidenced by experience. In a wretched tenement one was recently telling a poor woman the story of Jesus and His love. At last the listener said: "I've never heard of Him before. I've heard of Mr B. and Mr C."—naming two well-known local ministers—"but who is this One?" Now and again the Biblewoman may be repulsed,

but sickness and sorrow are never far away, and then the cry is heard—"My child is dying. Oh, do come in and pray with me, or I shall go mad." Nor is it only in the extremities of anguish that the Biblewoman brings strength and comfort. "What would be the use of a Bible to me?" asked a poor woman who answered the visitor's knock; "I am blind." For four years she had not been out of doors, except on a call at the hospital, and she was "very dark and despondent." "Shall I come and take you to the Mothers' Meeting?" asked the visitor. From that time a light broke in on the poor creature's life, and to-day she is "just trusting God, and waiting for the light of the world to come."

CHAPTER XIX

THE PILLAR AND THE CHAIN

A WORD as to the broad results of the operations sketched in the preceding chapter. In the fifty years which closed with the Jubilee, the Society issued nearly twenty-eight million copies of the Scriptures. In the first fifteen that followed the Jubilee that large aggregate was exceeded by considerably over a million and a quarter copies. Up to 1854 the annual average had been 558,772 copies; in 1869 it had grown to 1,951,456. By a curious paradox, the Society which had originated in the scarcity of the Scriptures was becoming more and more indispensable in proportion to their abundance. These figures, indeed, which tell of enlarged civilisation, of increased facilities of intercourse by land and sea, of expanding missionary enterprise, contain as in a nutshell the story of fifteen years of national development.

From 1854 to 1861 the circulation of the Scriptures steadily increased. In that and the following year there was a decline of some hundreds of thousands; but in 1863 the yearly issues exceeded, and from that time forward they never fell short of, two million copies. In 1871, 1879, and 1884 they

were considerably more than three millions. In 1885—the year of the Penny Testament, of which 955,000 copies were sold in less than nine months—they rose beyond four millions. Subsequently they fluctuated between 3,677,000 and 4,479,000, until 1900, when they exceeded five millions. In 1903 they reached the unprecedented yearly total of 5,943,775.

Necessarily this remarkable increment in the diffusion of the Scriptures was closely correlated with the growth of revenue. Between the Jubilee and March 1862 the receipts rose from £136,000 to £168,443 a year. In 1863 they dropped to £158,750, but in 1864 they sprang up to £169,703. From 1867 to 1873 they were never less than £180,000. Between 1874 and 1881 they exceeded £200,000. In 1882 there was a fall to £199,785, but the report of 1883 showed a notable recovery—£210,600; and since that date, through twenty years of varying prosperity, the lowest annual income has always been in excess of that figure, though it has never again reached the splendid revenue of £253,766 attained in 1885.

Through all this time, as religious life deepened, new institutions were founded, absorbing projects engaged the interest of the Churches, denominational activity assumed more exigent forms; in a word, Christian benevolence was divided and subdivided by claims which increased continually in urgency and number. Let it serve to indicate the difficulties with which the Society had to contend in its appeal for financial support, that in 1871-7 British contributions to foreign missions

alone exceeded £6,977,000. Deep down in the heart of the people, however, the simple love of the Bible safeguarded the Society amid the pressure of competing organisations and denominational preferences. At no time was there any dearth of those beautiful and touching incidents in which attachment to the Bible Society manifested itself in the earlier years. The story of Witchampton, with its gold and silver trees, is still being told. In 1901 the contributions of that little village amounted to £4828 — which gives an average of £71 per annum over the period of sixty-eight years that had elapsed since the formation of the Auxiliary in 1833. Happily even the idyllic Witchampton days were not without a parallel. As far back as 1847 Mr Joseph Stratton, then a young man of three-and-twenty, started the Pewsey Vale Branch of the Devizes Auxiliary. In 1855 he threw open his large rose-gardens at Manningford Bruce for the first of those delightful yearly gatherings which came to be known as the Rose Meetings. On Coronation Day if possible—or some day sooner or later at the sweet will of the roses—the winding roads among the Wiltshire Downs were busy with holiday traffic. For miles around, the Society's friends—rich and poor—arrived on foot or in vehicles of all sorts, gigs, traps, dog-carts, carriages, with here and there a kindly farmer's waggon, "the Ship of the Downs," manned with a crew of rosy-cheeked maidens and school children. Sometimes a hundred vehicles were counted near the thatched and quaintly-gabled country house

of the host, and the three hundred good folk of the valley were outnumbered, two or three to one, by their visitors. At first the meetings had been held in the village school-room. That was in the days of Mr Dudley, and perchance some old shepherd, who has long been too frail to follow the tracks to the dew-ponds, still remembers the prince of district secretaries. Then a great barn, garnished with nosegays and green branches, was used for the increasing numbers; next, a large tent—afterwards two large tents were pitched on the lawn. On the days of these Rose Meetings, according to tradition, the weather of Pewsey Vale was the weather of Avilion; no rain fell, “nor ever wind blew loudly”; but there were pleasant rambles among the roses, marvellous in their beauty and bewildering in their names; bounteous tables were spread for tea; there was perhaps a bazaar, or “Bible boxes” were opened; the children sang hymns, in which their elders took part; addresses were delivered; a “deputation,” it may be, exhibited some treasured Bible borrowed from the Library of the Bible House, and told the story of suffering or sorrow or regeneration by which it was consecrated; a missionary spoke of his labours in the East or in an isle of the South Seas, and of the progress of the Society’s work. Then came the cordial leave-taking; and all along the valley the summer twilight was enlivened with the sound of voices and the roll of wheels, until the last of what seemed a swarm of fire-flies disappeared, and the beat of the horses’ hoofs died away in the windings of the Downs. Years afterwards, under

strange skies and among dusky faces, the heart of more than one missionary has been stirred and strengthened by the recollection of those Rose Meetings in the Vale of Pewsey. In 1883 Mr Stratton was enrolled among the Honorary Life Governors of the Society. Ten years later the rose-gardens were at their brightest on Coronation Day, but the long series of these flower-festivals was drawing to a close. During the forty years he had organised them they realised some £3000 for the benefit of the Society. The place of meeting was transferred to the rectory at Manningford Abbas, and there in 1900, wheeled round in his chair, the founder of the Association took part for the last time in the celebration of Bible Day. On the 27th May 1902, at the age of seventy-eight, he was released from the infirmity and pain which he had long borne with calm and patient submission.

Wrabness, on the Stour, between Manningtree and Harwich, had neither rose-gardens nor gold and silver trees, but it is an Auxiliary which one is glad to remember. It dated back to 1837, when the Rev. Patrick Fenn became rector of the little parish of two hundred and sixty inhabitants; and for half a century it laboured under his guidance for the good of the cause. In 1889, when Mr Fenn was in his eighty-ninth year, the Committee recognised his long period of service by appointing him an Honorary Life Governor. The distinction was not long enjoyed. In 1890, as Bible Day drew nigh, the venerable pastor was stricken down with paralysis. Out of sympathy it was suggested that

the date of Bible Day should be postponed, but even before he recovered his speech he wrote on a slate, "Whether I am dead or living, hold the Bible meeting." A little later he sent a second message, urging that nothing should be allowed to shadow the brightness of their gathering: "If I am living I shall not be present, but if I am dead I am not so sure that I shall not." So the meeting was held on the 1st July—it was the second in fifty-three years at which he had *not* been present—and from his sick-bed he dictated a special greeting: "A lost sinner—chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world—found by mercy—saved by grace—plucked as a brand from the fire—Hallelujah!" Up to that date the free contributions of the Auxiliary amounted to £981. To cheer the old man's heart it was resolved to raise sufficient to make that sum an even £1000. The kindly intention was carried out, and on Bible Day in June 1891, when the Rev. Anthony Fenn, the new rector, succeeded as president of the Association, it was announced that the free gifts from Wrabness during his father's time exceeded £1007.

Consider that in all parts of the country Auxiliary gatherings such as these have been the familiar meeting-ground, during a hundred years, for ministers and missionaries of every church, for people of all classes and parties and of every religious denomination. Long ago, when Mr Whitbread and Lord Castlereagh stood on one platform at the formation of the Westminster Auxiliary, Hannah More wrote of the inspiring sight presented by hostile statesmen who,

renouncing every interfering interest, thought only of that on which they were agreed, and, leaving each his gift at the altar, offered up every resentment at the foot of the Cross. Half way through the century Mr Phillips dwelt on the fact that, though a church-rate contest, an election, the establishment of rival schools threw difficulties in the way of Bible work, the annual meeting of Auxiliaries and Associations had often been the occasion for the forgiveness of injuries and the reconciliation of differences. In Waltham Abbey there is an old Norman pillar which shows on the broad surface of the stone the curves and furrows scored by the iron chain as it was drawn to and fro by the old readers of the chained Bible. Each Auxiliary has been such a chain fastening the Bible to the pillars of England's strength, and every movement of the chain has deepened the grooves of tolerance, and good-will, and mutual Christian helpfulness.

If we would understand the story of the Bible Society, however, we must get close to the people and to the lives of individual men and women. We shall learn best the "true inwardness" of things from such facts as the following. In 1838 an Association was started at the Chester Lead Works. The labours of the day began at six o'clock, but half an hour earlier, alike in the dark winter months and on the summer mornings when the lark was in his heaven, the men assembled to read a chapter of the Bible and to join in prayer for the blessing of God on themselves, their mates, and their employers. By the year 1874 they had raised

£864 in weekly contributions for the benefit of the Society. Bishop Graham of Chester frequently presided at their annual meetings, and on one occasion, to their pride and delight, Lord Shaftesbury himself took the chair. In 1879 Mr Edwards, the district secretary, was present at their anniversary; at that date the total of their free subscriptions exceeded £900.

Very exceptional labouring men? No; their like were to be found in all parts of the country. "Out of a crew of nine," wrote the mate of one to "the floating lights" on the east coast in 1850, "seven of us engage in religious worship, and we seldom have an angry word, for the Bible has taught us to bear one another's burdens." In 1856 the crews of the large fishing boats of Cromer used to take out their Bibles with them; in many cases some portion of Scripture was read morning and evening. In those days the Cromer people took a great interest in the Bible work in Iceland—Iceland was one of their outlying districts—it was a Cromer man who had re-discovered it! At Colne in East Lancashire, in the same year, Mr Bourne found all the shops shut some hours before the usual time, in honour of the local annual meeting. Through Mr Bourne, too, we hear of the men of a colliery in the Midlands, to whom the Society had sent a grant of the Scriptures, and who were visited twice a week by a clergyman in their workings far underground. They were fain to possess each a volume of his own, but for many *qd.* was more than could well be afforded. The difficulty was solved by the

masters, who willingly engaged to pay one-third of the cost. Not a large sum, but the action brought capital and labour into friendly relationship. "I find from their wives and others," wrote the pastor of this "inland" parish, "that the men much value my instructions, and that the Bibles are really read, and oftentimes in the middle of the night. On one occasion they all knelt down, while one man offered up an earnest and beautiful prayer—'Bless, O Lord, Thy servant, whom Thou hast sent amongst us; protect him when he comes into the bowels of the earth: keep its tottering pillars from falling on his head. Oh, preserve him, that he may be a useful minister to us, and own his labours by bringing souls to Thyself by his means!'" One might tell of the little Association, with its free contribution of £40, among the picturesque and interesting race of quarrymen in the Isle of Portland in 1859, and indeed of many another group of working-men; but here we must be content to suggest that the devout spirit of the past is still alive. In 1890 a Branch was formed at the "Otto" Gas Engine Works at Openshaw, near Manchester, at a meeting which was attended by between eight and nine hundred workmen with their wives and children. Addresses, lantern lectures, missionary exhibitions brought an unwonted brightness into these laborious lives, and in the course of 1892 over £22 was by these means contributed to the funds of the Society.

How often—and more closely than was ever supposed—the Book of books came home to the

business and bosoms of these sons of toil! In 1856 a poor cripple who earned 6s. a week as night-watchman at an iron foundry offered 10s. as his annual subscription. It seemed too large a gift from one in his circumstances; could he afford so much? "Ah, yes!" was the reply; "the Bible can do for others what it has done for me!" In 1857 we read of a journeyman baker—a regular subscriber of 5s. a year—who had been led to the daily study of the Scriptures. Winter and summer, but chiefly in the long nights of darkness and cold, he pondered over the sacred volume. In the course of eleven years he read it carefully from cover to cover one hundred and seven times. When he died, at the age of sixty-three, he was in the midst of his hundred and eighth perusal. The ingenuity of affection never failed to find a pretext for helping on the cause. Did a splendid turbot find its way into the trawl of an old fisherman of Penzance—why, naturally it was sent out of the deep sea to be sold for the Society. Did a sudden death in a neighbour's family necessitate Sunday labour—why, of course, the worthy carpenter of Marazion transmitted his payment as a contribution.

The moral of "little drops of water, little grains of sand" was curiously illustrated by a young man at Vronheulog, near Bala. In 1862 he planted a single potato for the benefit of the Society. In the first year it produced thirteen others. In the next year the thirteen produced a peck. Twelve months later the peck produced three "hobbets," or seven and a half bushels; and these,

in the fourth season, produced seventy bushels—market price £5, 12s. While the potatoes were growing, Bible hens were clucking, Bible flowers were sweetening to posies, fruit was plumping on Bible trees, and a threshing-machine, hired out for Bible service, was passing like a good-natured troll from one barn to another on the Welsh farms. On his visit to Carnarvon in 1863 Mr Phillips received £27, 16s., the earnings of the troll, whose master made a secret of his name. But this was not a poor man's gift. Had Mr Phillips been at Hook Norton that year, he would have seen a little bag of farthings—the second of the kind—which had been saved weekly for the Society by a poor woman, the mother of ten children, and presented at the annual meeting. Oh, those little coins of the poor, hallowed by sacrifice, consecrated by love! Who knows what mystic influences, what “invisible rays” of blessing they may carry with them through the world! From among the poor folk of a Norfolk village, some ten years ago, a humble but most zealous friend of the Society sent in a yearly collection amounting almost to £5. Black care overshadowed the village when the principal subscriber died—they could count no longer on the 6d. which had been given regularly every month. It was not until four other poor subscribers agreed to make up the deficiency, so far as their means would allow, that anxiety was relieved. To collect those extra pence fifty house-to-house visits had to be made during the twelve months. The entire subscription of that something under £5 involved the time and trouble of six

hundred visits a year. But time and trouble, cheerful effort, and self-denial are part of the gifts of the poor. Last year (1902-3) the old borough of Godmanchester, with its population of 2300, contributed £80. Of this, £62 came from the boxes of sixty-six collectors. Nearly all the boxes are in the hands of labouring people, and one contained no less than £3, 1s. It belonged to a good woman whose husband works on the roads, and she is accustomed to sell flowers and other produce from her garden to add to the contents of her treasury. One remembers the seventy ploughs and teams of horses with which the Godmancastrians met James I. as he passed through their town on his way from Scotland, and so won from him their charter. Surely these sixty-six boxes and all they represent are a more pleasing spectacle in the eyes of the King of kings.

Open the records of the Society at what year you may, you shall not fail to find some small thank-offering or donation from the people—for the blessing of the Bible, for unspeakable mercies in bereavement or in prosperity, for recovery from sickness, for length of years, for good harvests, and in the case of these last the gift often came from the entire parish. Out of their poverty the poor gave generously, but it is well to remember that there are the poor and the poor. A few months ago £50 was presented to the Centenary Fund by a lady whose whole income is an annuity of less than £250. That gracious offering may have represented the margin between comfort and pinching.

If through all these hundred years the people

have proved their affection for the Society, the Society on its part has never forgotten the people. From the day on which it voted three hundred copies of the Scriptures to the sufferers from the fire at Chudleigh, in 1808, down to the present, it has ever shown its desire to help in the hour of need and affliction, disaster and war. Nor has its ready sympathy been confined to our own land. When the dunes gave way in the winter of 1872, and the Baltic burst for leagues over the lowlands of Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and Holstein; when great floods ravaged Italy in 1873 and 1882, the south of France in 1876, and vast tracts of the Rhine country in 1883; when earthquake desolated Chios in 1881, and thousands perished in the catastrophe of Ischia in 1883—the Committee hastened to bestow the consolation of God's sure promises to the children of men. Of the many kind and thoughtful actions performed at home, in the name of the Society, only two shall be mentioned here.

Who that can look back to the year 1877 has forgotten the flooding of the Tynewydd pit in the Rhondda Valley near Pontypridd? It was the 10th of April; the day's work was done, and the men were making their way to the shaft, when suddenly every narrow lane and alley of the pit became a rushing stream. After those who had been able to struggle through the maze of water had been drawn to the surface, it was found that fourteen were missing. Strong men and true offered themselves for the work of rescue; yet what help could they give? The shaft was clear,

but each roadway into the depths of the workings was choked with water to the crown of the arch. Then a sound was heard which filled their hearts with joy and hope. It was a faint knocking that came from behind a wall of coal thirty feet thick. All through the night, man after man, they hewed a passage through that dense barrier. When morning came a loud explosion told that the task had been completed—it was the air, condensed by the pressure of water behind, which had burst forth when the wall was pierced. At that moment one poor fellow who was about to escape was flung towards the opening with such force by the blast that he died from his injuries. Four other men were saved from the “heading” and taken to the surface. For two days all was silence, desperation, and sorrow. On the evening of the second day a knocking was heard, faint, from an almost hopeless distance. Attempts were made to pump out the mine, to send divers through the flooded roadways. These failed, and it was determined to cut a passage forty yards through the solid. England seemed to hold its breath as that toil of giants was urged forward without ceasing. On the tenth day of their imprisonment five more men were rescued, and as the last was brought to bank a message was received—“The Queen is very anxious. Are they saved? Pray telegraph.” Her Majesty conferred on the rescuers the Albert Medal, which had hitherto been bestowed for gallantry in saving life at sea; it was now for the first time granted for heroism on land. Of the four miners who perished, one was a boy; he had been struck down by a large stone

which held him fast until he was drowned. Bibles were prepared for presentation to the men who had been rescued, to those who had laboured to save them, and to the widows of those who lost their lives. They contained the following inscription, signed by Lord Shaftesbury, the President of the Society :—

“ Presented by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society to —— to perpetuate the remembrance of the solemn events and wonderful rescue connected with the flooding of the Tynwydd Colliery, April 1877.

‘ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ’—Psalm xli. 1.”

The books were presented at the annual meeting of the Pontypridd Auxiliary on the 13th June. In the open air, on the hill overlooking the town and the river, three thousand persons gathered near the Maen Chwyf, the grey rocking-stone, beside which, from time immemorial, bards and minstrels had held their sessions. The speakers thanked God that the people of Wales still loved their Bible, and that the truths of the divine Book had proved their power in the pit. It was told how, in the hour of their dread distress, the buried miners had known where to seek for help, and instead of yielding to dumb despair, had found comfort in singing the old Welsh hymn—

“ Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonau ”—
“ In the great and surging waters.”

Then every man bared his head, and in the last light of the summer sunset there rose from that large

assemblage the thrilling music which had been sung in the darkness of the flooded mine. When the Bibles had been presented, and David Jenkins, one of the colliers last rescued, had come forward, and in a voice trembling with emotion thanked "the old Society" on behalf of his comrades and himself, there fell a silence "which was something awful in its effect upon the minds of those present."

On the 16th June 1883 occurred the heart-breaking tragedy at the Victoria Hall, Sunderland, when a crowd of children, rushing down from a gallery to share in the toys given away by Fay, the conjurer, crushed each other to death. One hundred and eighty-one Bibles were sent to the Sunderland Auxiliary for distribution among the bereaved families. Each contained the following inscription:—

"T —— and Family, as a token of sympathy with them in their bereavement, caused by the calamity in the Victoria Hall, Sunderland, on June 16th, 1883, by which nearly two hundred children were crushed to death.

'Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'—Matt. xix. 14.

'Is it well with thee? . . . Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.'—2 Kings iv. 26."

"The Bibles," wrote a member of the Sunderland Ladies' Bible Association, "were gratefully appreciated by Protestants and Roman Catholics; and one Jewish parent, though at first demurring to its acceptance, touched by words of Christian love and pleading, cordially took the volume with thanks." "After reading the inscription and the

two beautiful texts at the bottom," wrote another, "some of the poor mothers, even through blinding tears, said, 'Yes, it *is* well!'"

The recollection of this great sorrow diverts our thoughts to the hundreds of children who have taken part in the work of the Society. Of these we shall briefly speak in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XX

THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN.

ALL through the century one catches glimpses of children in the story of the Society—children of every nationality; rosy little English folk, Swiss lasses and Russian lads, laughing-eyed Greek urchins, small African woolly-heads, quaint little countrywomen of Confucius. Some have already appeared in these pages, but one may not treat too summarily the multitudinous race which holds in its hands the future of the world.

We read of the youngest adherent of the Society—surely no other institution was ever supported by one more youthful!—in the *Reporter* of 1878, where a proud kinsman announces his accession. “I made my boy put a penny into the Bible-box when he was exactly *twelve minutes* old. I think we may safely claim for him the honour of being the youngest subscriber to the Bible Society. When he grows up and makes a speech on our behalf——” It was a quarter of a century ago, and that “when” of a happy father’s dream leaves us wondering.

But our record of Bible children must begin a long way further back. In the winter of 1818

we see the figures of Hieland bairns crossing the frozen lakes in Cape Breton. It is five or six miles over the ice, and they are going to some poor old widow so that they may be taught to read the Bible to their parents, who have never learned. In 1819 it is Ivàn, aged twelve, the grandson of the blind Stephen, who writes to one of the Russian Bible Societies, and gives a touching picture of poverty and piety. "My father serves the Emperor. My grandfather, with whom I live, is blind. My two grandmothers are both of them old and infirm. My mother alone, by the labour of her hands, supports us all; she herself taught me to read. I have a desire to read the Word of God; but I have no books, except the Psalter in a very tattered state. My blind grandfather has, by ear alone, acquired a great knowledge of divine things, and likes very much that I should repeat something to him by heart. Confer on me, I pray you, a holy book. I hear you have it, and that you distribute it—to those who have money, for money, and to the poor, for nothing. I will read it, and I shall pray to God for you." Seven years later, it is the Hindu children of the mission school at Bellary who are begging for portions of the Scriptures to take home with them for a similar purpose. In 1830 we meet with a nameless little fellow in Travancore, who in reading the Gospel at one of the mission schools has received the light of a better knowledge. His father took him to an idol-feast, and when he refused to bow to "the wooden image that could not be a god," chastised

him severely. On the way home the father again reproached him, and the boy, renewing the argument against the gods made by men's hands, said : " You made me bow to that idol by beating me, but *I did not bow in my heart* ; and if you cut me to pieces you shall never again make me bow to an idol." The angry father removed him from the school, but the boy found means to continue his search for truth, and sat up in the quiet of the night to read the Scriptures. Now we are on the Gold Coast, and it is in " the forties." Two of the Gospels—St Matthew and St John—have been translated into Gâ, and they are the delight of the small negro scholars, who are seen in the cool of the early mornings reading in companies of twos and threes. In the evenings, when school is over, they go down to the sea-shore and write the alphabet on the sand for the benefit of those who cannot read : " even old people are not ashamed to learn in this way ; men and women have all a desire to learn to read the Word of God." None are more eager than the children to pay the full price of the Scripture portions, to hoard their cowrie shells for the purpose, and to make up any deficiency by working in the mission garden. Like their dusky little kinsfolk on the West Indian plantations, they are missionaries and men of letters. " This little boy," said the people of a village which had forsaken the Fetich, " constantly instructs us in the Word of God." He was a lad of twelve who had been taught in the mission school.

Again the scene changes. The siege guns are

thundering at Sebastopol, and the French reserve—from twenty to twenty-four thousand men—are encamped on the heights overlooking the Bosphorus. Most of them have come direct from Africa, and have had no opportunity of obtaining the Scriptures. Two lads, one fifteen, the other much younger, visit the camp when their studies permit, and distribute copies of the New Testament among both officers and men. Protestants and Roman Catholics alike are anxious to possess the book, and those who come too late crowd round to give in their names so that they may be remembered at the next visit. In all, 907 copies, besides religious tracts, are distributed before the troops leave for the front. Here in 1860 we have a dear English child, who lived at Peterchurch in the Golden Valley, Herefordshire. She was blind, and when the gleaners went into the harvest fields they took her with them. Working busily, this little Ruth gathered many small sheaves of wheat, which she succeeded in selling for 10s. By making a special bargain for the straw she obtained another 6d., and then she went cheerily about with her Bible-box until she collected 10s. more. When her contribution was announced at the annual meeting of the Ladies' Auxiliary, her face "brightened up with a pleasant smile," and many a heart was deeply touched. Only a year or two after this there were two German children, who, in their way, were also gleaners. Their father, the Rev. J. Zimmermann of the Basel Missionary Society, was engaged in preparing the Scriptures for the natives of the Gold Coast, and he wrote to the Committee of the

pleasure he had in the assistance of his young people, a girl of ten and a boy of eight, "in the final reading and comparing of my Gâ translation with the original Hebrew and the English,—the boy having just managed the Hebrew, through reading slowly enough, and both being very much interested in the progress of the work as book after book is prepared."

Is it too trivial to tell of the school-boy in Tasmania, who wanted to do something for the Society, and, having no money, parted with his four chickens at 1s. a-piece? Read, then, this story of a colliery village. Just before the annual meeting in 1895 a little girl, a collector, arrived with 15s. "Surprised at the amount," writes the teller of the story, "I said, 'Wherever did you get all this money?' She replied, 'I got a pin-card first, and got that full.' 'Yes, I have that card here, with sixty holes in it, and that of course means 5s.' 'Then,' said my little visitor, 'I got another pin-card, and got that half full.' 'Yes; that is here too. But that makes only seven-and-sixpence; I want to know how you got the other seven-and-sixpence.' 'Oh, I work for the Society,' was the reply. 'Work!' I said; 'don't you go to school?' 'Yes, of course I go to school, but I find time to work as well.' 'Then you get no fun?' 'Oh yes, I do; I get plenty of time for fun.' 'What do you work at, may I ask, and how do you do it?' 'I do knitting,' was the answer; 'I make mittens, and comforters, and mufflers for the colliers. They know I just buy the wool, and then put all there is over into the Bible-box, and they keep me going all the

year.' 'How old are you?' I asked. 'Eleven.' 'And did you do anything for the Bible Society last year?' 'Yes, I got 14s. last year.'"

And here is a pitiful story, which, if it had been told in the Middle Ages, would have been penned in letters of gold, with white lilies and red roses in the margin. During the ruthless Boxer massacres in China in 1900, the mob discovered a little girl hiding in a field of millet. She was the daughter of a Chinese Christian whom they had already murdered, and they now tried to discover where he had hidden his Bible, so that they might destroy it. She refused to tell, and though they threatened and even tortured her, the heroic child kept her secret. Then the fury of the mob burst forth, and another blossom was added to the "flowers of the martyrs."

It would be easy to crowd these pages with incidents, and to bring the record down to the little Sussex girl of eleven, whose sale of work realised £20 in November 1902, and the four hundred school-children at Allahabad who collected in pice and two-anna pieces enough to print 12,000 copies of the Gospel of St John in Hindu. We must leave space, however, for some word of the dear dead children whose ministry did not cease with their departure.

Long before Elizabeth gave her daughter's keepsake, a similar gift reached the Society from the wilds of Siberia. In December, 1835, the Rev. William Swan forwarded from Selenginsk the translation of a letter which he had received from one of his Buriat converts. These were the words

of Shagdūr, son of Kemuah : “ It pleased God to give me a little son ; and it has now pleased Him to remove the child from me. Every day I think that one member of my body has been taken to Heaven ; and this thought is like a sweet savour in my breast. . . . Now, when my little William was born, the neighbours came in, bearing gifts ; some gave one copeck (about one-tenth of a penny), some two ; in all, forty copecks. When the child died, I did not know what to do with this money ; but at length a thought came to me which gave joy to my heart ; and about this I write these few lines.” Among the many words which went to make up the New Testament, the Saviour’s name (“Tonilgakshi”), was, he said, often repeated, and although forty copecks might not suffice to pay for more than the dot over the *i* in the word Tonilgakshi, he begged that his little William’s money might be accepted for that purpose. “ Dear sir, do not refuse it. I have not given it to *you*, but I have given it to print a dot over a letter in the name of my Saviour, and may this be a little memorial of my infant, for the benefit of my dear friends who are yet without Christ.” That letter was read in an English vicarage where a boy of thirteen lay dying. Before he passed away, fearless and full of trust, he bequeathed to the Society his savings—thirteen shillings—made up chiefly of small sums given in exchange for marks gained for diligence and success at school. The legacy was forwarded to the Bible House with an additional £50, a father’s thank-offering for the happy death of his child.

On a winter evening in 1837, a family in Belfast

were sitting round the fire. The weather was stormy, and the rain beat against the window. Suddenly a little man of five who was playing on the rug looked up gravely into his mother's face. "Mamma, this is a bad night for the poor." She assented. "But, mamma, this is a bad night for the rich." "Why so, my dear?" "If they are like that rich man that we were reading about to-day, who pulled down his barns to build larger ones, and that night his soul was required of him." After a pause he again spoke: "This is a worse night for the heathen." "What makes you say so?" "Oh, mamma, they have nobody to tell them about Jesus." Next day he got a little box, and during a year of suffering in which he was seldom able to go out of doors, he pleaded with all who came to the house for some contribution to help to buy Bibles for the heathen who had no one to tell them about Jesus. He died at the age of six, but before his gentle spirit was called home, he had collected nearly eleven shillings. For a little while his mother kept his small store beside her, and then giving it to the Society as the most effectual means of carrying out the child's intention, she became herself a generous subscriber.

In the Jubilee Year of the C.M.S. (1848-9) a babe was born at the vicarage of St Erth, Cornwall. From his cradle he was dedicated to the service of God in the mission-field, and the little son grew up a child of gracious promise, till he had reached his ninth year. Then sorrow fell on the house at St Erth; within three weeks the boy and a little sister were carried off by diphtheria. Yet even in

that grievous loss and in the trials that followed, the parents were so sustained and comforted that they longed to make some thank-offering. The mission-child was gone, but his work remained, and they could help others to do it in his stead. They determined to collect a million pence, to be divided between the C.M.S. and the Bible Society. Rich and poor were invited to contribute; year by year the collecting went quietly on, and part of the proceeds was sent in to the Bible House. The vicar died, but in her new home near Falmouth his widow continued the work. In the Census years 1861, 1871, and 1881, special appeals were made, and the subscriptions were increased to the extent of some hundreds of pounds. In 1891 Mrs Punnett made her fourth Census appeal. The little missionary had been forty-three years in his grave, but who can tell how many souls the living memory of him may have helped to lead to Christ in the fields he never saw with earthly eyes?

The lifeless hand which helped the missionary helped the Bible-woman too. In 1893 a cheque for £1000 was left at the Bible House. It was a share of a portion saved up for a beloved daughter—a portion which the father regarded as sacred to the Lord who had provided for his child. In compliance with his wishes it was made the nucleus of a special fund for maintaining and enlarging the grants of the Committee for Bible-women in the East. A few weeks later a gift of £300, “in memory of a beloved daughter,” was added to the fund.

Of the most recent gift in this kind one almost

shrinks from speaking. On 21st March 1903, at Hampstead, died little Harold Olliver, of the after-effects of diphtheria. He was only twelve years old, but he too had devoted his life to God's service as a missionary. In loving memory of him his parents have undertaken to defray the cost of sending out and maintaining a Bible-woman to labour in connection with the Agency in Brazil. The pocket-money, which in his eager outlook into the future he had already saved for his journey to some heathen land, has gone to pay the passage of another messenger.

CHAPTER XXI

CROWNS AND CANNON

THE Society took thought for all ages, all classes, all ranks. It was led by its mission to the towers of kings as well as to the poor man's cot. Its relations with our own Royal House, marked on the one side by gracious kindness, on the other by affectionate loyalty, form a pleasing retrospect. Little more than a month after her coronation the young Queen Victoria consented to become patroness of the Windsor Ladies' Bible Association, and in 1850 the Prince Consort constituted himself a Life Governor of the Society by a generous donation of £50. Nine times the Committee presented the Bible to her sons and daughters as a bridal gift—an old custom revived on the Continent during her own girlhood by several of the foreign Bible Societies. The first of these occasions was the marriage of the Princess Royal and the Crown Prince of Germany. Lord Shaftesbury was then President, and the Princess

Beatrice was a baby in arms. Twenty-seven years later his lordship signed the volume presented to that Princess on her marriage in 1885; it was the last of his official acts as President. In 1883 the Committee were permitted to offer the congratulations and good wishes of the Society to the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, at Berlin, on their silver wedding. Their Imperial Highnesses cordially accepted a handsomely bound Bible as a memorial of the event, and in conversation, after some inquiries as to the progress of Bible work throughout the world, the Crown Prince mentioned that at the Paris Exhibition in 1867 he had been presented with a copy of the Bible. It had been his companion throughout the Franco-German war, and he had given it to his second son, Prince Henry, who, on first going to sea, had begged that he might take it with him. In 1887, the Society commemorated the Queen's Jubilee by the publication of a special "Jubilee Bible" in four volumes, a copy of which was accepted and prized by her Majesty. Long afterwards, when the Jubilee presents were exhibited, that copy found no place among them. Its absence was noticed. "Oh," an inquirer was informed, "her Majesty has retained that for her own use." It was in the same year (1887) that the Queen graciously selected and wrote with her own hand a text for insertion in facsimile in each of the 300,000 New Testaments presented by the Society, through the local Auxiliaries, to the pupils of the secular State schools in Australia. The autograph, which is

framed and preserved in the Bible House Library,
reads :

" On Earth peace,
" Good will toward Men.
Victoria S.
Windsor Castle. March 8. 1887

The last act of homage to her Majesty on the part of the Society was the presentation, at the Diamond Jubilee, of a collection of specially bound copies of the versions of Holy Scripture, which it had produced in fresh languages during her reign. These are preserved in the royal Library at Windsor.

On the accession of Edward VII. the Committee presented a loyal address to the King, expressing sympathy on the death of his royal mother, and praying that his Majesty might ever receive true comfort in sorrow, and divine counsel and support in the great responsibilities which he had been called upon to assume. Queen Alexandra graciously consented to become patroness of the Windsor Auxiliary, a position which her august predecessor had occupied for more than sixty-two years. On the night of the Coronation the Bible House was brilliantly illuminated;¹ and on the

¹ The cost of the illuminations was defrayed by private contributions from members of the Committee.

24th October the King was presented with a magnificently bound Bible in commemoration of the auspicious event; and in the course of his acknowledgment, he spoke of his interest in the Society, and of his knowledge of the excellent work it is doing. His Majesty when as Prince of Wales he laid the foundation stone of the present Bible House, referred to his "hereditary claim" to be there. His grandfather, the Duke of Kent, had spoken on the platform of the Society at three anniversaries. His great-grandfather, George III., had wished that there might not be a cottage in the country without a Bible, or a child that could not read it. Luther's translation had been executed under the protection of the Elector of Saxony, the collateral ancestor of his father the Prince Consort, and William Tindale's "was introduced with the sanction of that royal predecessor of my mother the Queen, who first desired that the Bible 'should have free course through all Christendom, but especially in his own realm.'" The retrospect reaches a fitting close in the promise of their Majesties to be present at the special service in St Paul's Cathedral on Bible Sunday—the first Sunday in March 1904.

Were we to explore the curiosities and memorials of the Bible House, or to glean from the annals of the Society, we might fill many pages with the story of crowned heads. We should tell of Kings or Queens of the Netherlands, Würtemberg, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Italy, Roumania; of three Kings of Prussia and two of Greece; of two Czars, two

Kaisers, an Emperor of the French, an Emperor of Abyssinia; of two Sultans of Turkey, and one of Zanzibar; of two Shahs of Persia, and of the sovereigns and chiefs of dusky nations or of their ambassadors and envoys. In that narrative not the least interesting event would be the presentation of the Bible to the Emperor and Empress of Austria on their silver wedding in 1879, and their Majesties' acceptance of the sacred volume as a "suitable and costly gift." We must pass, however, to other matters, with the brief note that among the friends and supporters of the Society who stood in the high places of power there have been three Prime Ministers of Great Britain — Mr Perceval, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Palmerston, and that a fourth, the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, advocated the furtherance of its work at the inaugural meeting of its Centenary in March 1903.

From the Great Exhibition in 1851, at which it was assigned a place not in the name of religion but on the ground of its services to science, down to the Durbar at Delhi in 1903, the Society has let slip but few public events which afforded an opportunity of making known its purpose or of promoting its object. During the Shakespeare Centenary in 1864, while the pageant of the poet's *dramatis personæ* paraded the gay streets of Stratford-on-Avon, colporteurs held up for sale the sacred volume which few men of his time knew so well as he. At Worms in 1868, when, in the presence of kings and princes and twenty thousand people, the canvas fell from the Luther Memorial and showed the Reformer towering over the colossal bronze

figures of Waldus and Wycliffe, Huss and Savonarola, the Society's Agent exhibited on his stall in the great square a tiny "pearl" Bible of to-day on the open folio which Luther printed at Wittenberg in 1541. Over the Exhibitions at Naples, Vienna, Düsseldorf, Melbourne, Buenos Ayres, Amsterdam, Zürich, Brussels, and elsewhere, we cannot linger. At the Paris Exhibition of 1867 there were distributed 169,376 copies of Scripture; 408,380 copies at that of 1878; 400,000, all free, at that of 1900.

Of the fruit of these sowings we shall learn little on this side of time, but now and again some evidence of God's good providence is permitted to emerge for the encouragement of the work. In the autumn of 1885 a minister while passing through a French village saw a woman in tears at her cottage door. Approaching, he asked her the cause of her trouble, and she led him in to her husband, who lay on his death-bed. The pastor spoke to him of Christ. "Ah yes," replied the dying man, "I know that Christ is my Saviour," and showed a Bible from which he had learned the saving truth. It was one of those which had been distributed by the Society among the porters at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. More recently a colporteur met a woman who had been given a gospel at the Exhibition of 1900. "You can have no idea," she said, "of the blessing that little book has been to me. I was very unhappy. I had doubts of my salvation. Often at nights I could not sleep. I made many pilgrimages; I went to Lourdes; but my heart was always empty and restless. How I bless God

for leading me to Paris, where I received a treasure when I received that book. What did me most good were the words: 'Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.' When I read that saying I understood how they deceive us when they tell us we must be saved by works. I believe that Jesus has saved me as He saved that woman."

Among the books given away during the first Paris Exhibition, there was one to which a special interest attaches. The Emperor of Russia, Alexander II., was in the French capital in 1867, and during his visit an attempt was made on his life. A deputation from the Society obtained permission to present an address of congratulation on his Majesty's merciful preservation from the bullet of the assassin, and they were received by the Emperor at the Elysée. In replying to the address, the Emperor expressed in a faltering voice his thanks for the words of congratulation, and laying his hand on his breast, said, "I have always greatly valued the good opinion of England." Mr G. T. Edwards, who had charge of the Society's work at the Exhibition, then presented the Emperor with a copy of *The Bible of Every Land*, containing specimens of the various versions, and drew his special attention to those prepared in the languages of Russia, offering to him also a Chinese New Testament, as China was conterminous with the frontier of his vast Empire. Both seemed to interest his Majesty, who asked a number of questions respecting them. Shortly after the Emperor's return to Russia various difficulties in the way of the Society's work were removed, and

such facilities were afforded that in 1869 the Rev. W. Nicolson was appointed Agent at St Petersburg. In the first year of his Majesty's reign the Society could not distribute a single Russian Testament in his dominions; during the last, which was closed by his deplorable assassination in 1881, a quarter of a million copies were put into circulation.

We have seen something of the Society's work during warfare. Before we return to that branch of its operations we must refer to a remarkable instance of its care for the soldier in time of peace. In 1830, when Dr Pinkerton entered on his Frankfort Agency, a project was started for supplying the Prussian troops with the Scriptures. The soldiers paid a quarter of the price, the Prussian Bible Society, and afterwards the Crown Prince (Frederick William IV.), paid another quarter, the British and Foreign Bible Society provided the rest. Regularly and unobtrusively the scheme worked from year to year. In 1854 the total number of Bibles and Testaments distributed in German, Polish, Lithuanian, and other languages, was 366,000. In 1880 it had grown to 707,969. In 1901 over a million copies had been circulated.

Similar work on a smaller scale was going on elsewhere, and that it was appreciated is touchingly proved by an unusual gift which is still preserved at the Bible House as a memorial of the gratitude of French soldiers. In the summer of 1853 a case was received by the Secretaries. It was found to contain a vase of artificial flowers made of coloured beads; and this was its story. In a

French garrison town—the name was kept a secret—a good woman, whose husband had been in the army, was so deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of all soldiers that she began an evening service for the benefit of any of the garrison who cared to attend. Numbers came, and many happy hours were spent in reading the Bible, in prayer, and edifying conversation. The meetings were prolonged in the winter months, and it was during these dark, long evenings, while listening to the reading of a tract or some religious book, that the most skilful of the men worked at the flowers. Slowly leaf and petal grew into colour and shape. One winter passed, a second, a third, and yet the task of preparing the Bouquet of Gratitude, as it was called, had not been completed. The garrison was relieved; one regiment succeeded another, and as the hearts of the new-comers were won for the Bible, the work was resumed, till at length the vase of flowers was ready to be sent to England. The soldiers are sleeping sound in their last bivouac; the Bouquet of Gratitude still exists—like the Witchampton parrot, “not very beautiful,” but strangely touching to think of.

When hostilities broke out the Society did all that lay in its power to mitigate the horrors of the battlefield, and to make the armies of kings colporteurs of the Gospel of Peace. During the Crimean war 204,569 copies of the Scriptures were distributed among the Allies and the Russians—soldiers and sailors, prisoners of war, and the sick and wounded in hospital. The Scriptures were read among the French regiments “till one in the

morning." "You should see the Sardinian camp after tattoo," said a young corporal; "most nights after the retreat is sounded, the men kindle a light—three or four candles to a hut—settle themselves the best way they can, take their Testament, and read till all hours. It's a regular church!" The night before the battle of the Alma a young English officer called his men about him, and read them the ninety-first Psalm. A few hours later he fell mortally wounded under the fire of the enemy, and when he was brought in his Bible was found hidden over his breast. To what remote places the Scriptures must have been carried by the combatants after peace had been proclaimed! In the fortress in the Island of Aix, off the western coast of France, where a detachment of Russian prisoners was quartered, 740 copies in Russ and Finnish, Polish, Swedish, and German, were received with hearty thankfulness by officers and men as the gift of the Society. Strange to think how far, and through what suffering and danger, some of these exiles from country and from home may have been brought to a knowledge of the Word of Life.

In the terrible struggle between North and South the resources of the American Bible Society were taxed to the uttermost. Although its steam-presses were capable of printing twelve copies every working minute, there were times when the demand from the army could not be satisfied. Throughout the war the issue never fell below nine copies per minute. During the four years two million Bibles, Testaments, and Portions were circulated among

the army and navy of the North. Supplies were sent under flag of truce into the Confederate lines, and the Scriptures distributed among the troops of the South, in the field or in hospital and prison, amounted to three million volumes. In 1862 the Committee offered the American Bible Society a contribution of £2000. The assistance was thankfully declined, but there were other ways in which they could show their solicitude for both sides. Fifteen thousand volumes were despatched for the North; in the South, where the limited stocks in the depôts had been speedily exhausted, exceptional facilities were afforded to the new society which had been formed at Augusta for the whole Confederacy, and in addition to other grants, 310,000 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions were placed at the disposal of the Virginia Bible Society. There appears to have been at the time a grudging murmur against waste. "Wilful waste," declared one who had laboured in camp and on battlefield, "was, I believe, entirely unknown." "I have never seen a copy of the Scriptures wantonly destroyed or thrown away," wrote another. "I have seen a torn Bible on the battlefield sprinkled with blood; *that* no soldier would take—it seemed too sacred, and it was buried with him who once possessed it. I have been astonished to find in field hospitals so many copies of the sacred Scriptures hidden away in the bosoms of poor wounded fellows, when everything else had been sacrificed to the Moloch of war." After the bloody battle of Stone River a lad of nineteen was found against the stump of a tree. His eyes were open,

but fixed in death; his face was lit up with a smile; his well-worn Bible was open, and his cold hand touched the passage: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." At the anniversary meeting in Exeter Hall in 1866, two war Testaments were exhibited. One had been thrown away in the streets of Memphis, "but that Testament was picked up by another soldier, himself also careless and wicked, who was led, from the reading of it, to the foot of the Cross, where he found peace and joy. It was sent to the American Bible Society, who treasure it as a memento of the war." The other was an English book. It had run the blockade; it had found its way to a Confederate, who had put it in his breast. A bullet had struck it, had passed through from the last chapter of the Revelation to the first of Matthew, and glancing off the second cover, had left the man unscathed. "In many families in America there were such copies preserved, and money could not buy them."

In the war between Prussia and Austria in 1866 there were issued 109,764 volumes from the depôts at Frankfort, Cologne, Berlin, and Vienna, for sale at very low prices or free distribution among the Prussian and the Federal troops.

Four years later, during the Franco-German war, the distribution among the contending armies considerably exceeded a million copies, and cost the Society over £20,000. M. de Pressensé at Paris and Mr Palmer Davies of the Berlin and Frankfort

Agency received large discretionary powers, and each had under his orders a numerous staff of active and well-trained colporteurs. Thirteen of those who followed the German forces afterwards received the war medal. Mr Davies himself, in his energetic supervision of the work, experienced some of the hardships of the march and the bivouac. In July and August he spent twenty-three nights in railway carriages or slept under his rug on loose straw. He was present at the desperate sorties when Bazaine attempted to break through the beleaguering lines around Metz, and for a time on the 1st September he was under fire. He and a companion had taken a cart to bring away some of the wounded. "When the battle seemed to be over," he wrote, "an officer asked us to fetch three wounded men who had been lying for more than twenty-four hours, unbandaged and unattended to, in a village not far off, which the French had succeeded in occupying the day before, and from which they were supposed to have retreated. We took a surgeon with us and set off at once. Scarcely had we entered the village when a *chassepot* ball, evidently aimed at an officer who was walking beside our cart, whizzed within two feet of my head. At the same instant a company of dragoons came galloping down the street and shouted that the French were in possession. Again the crack of the *chassepots* was heard, and one of the dragoons received a ball in the leg, and his horse two balls in the neck. We took him from his horse upon our cart, hurried back, and were soon covered by the Prussian outposts, who

quickly advanced and cleared the village; but we could not rescue the three wounded Prussians." Besides hardships and dangers of this kind, the colporteur had to run the risk on French soil of being taken for a Prussian spy.

In France the Society's Agent was not idle; depôts were formed in suitable positions; Breton Scriptures were prepared for the Breton troops, Arabic for the Turcos; and grants were made to various organisations, such as the Alsace Committee for the relief of the sick and wounded, the Geneva Evangelical Society, and the French Protestant Committee. Before M. de Pressensé left Paris he had sent out 150,000 copies for distribution. The total issues from the Society's German depôts numbered 960,466, including 12,660 memorial volumes presented to the relatives of the fallen. From Paris, up to the close of 1872, about 4000 Testaments with Psalters were sent out to widows and bereaved mothers. Seven years afterwards it was found that in villages among the Vosges Mountains the poorest children were using as school-books—the *commune* being unable to afford other "readers"—these memorial Testaments inscribed with the names of the men who had died for France.

In the Russo-Turkish struggle, 1877-78, there were 478,000 copies of the Scriptures distributed, and these with the expenses of transit and colportage involved an outlay of £24,000. Mr Sellar, who as temporary agent at Constantinople did much to feed and clothe the Russian prisoners of war in that capital, received from the Czar, through

the medium of the British Consulate, a valuable diamond ring in recognition of his services.

Seventeen thousand Testaments were distributed among our troops when they embarked for Egypt in 1882, and it is interesting to know that one of these saved a life in the trenches at Tel-el-Kebir. In the conflagration which followed the bombardment of Alexandria, the Society's depôt and stock were destroyed, and a demand was lodged for compensation to the extent of £900. When, however, it was understood that the amount would in the long run have to be paid by the oppressed taxpayers of Egypt, the Committee withdrew their claim—a course which was warmly appreciated by the Government of the Khedive.

For many a year there has been no great movement of troops in which the Society has not been interested. A special edition of the New Testament was issued for the benefit of the officers of the Japanese army during the war with China in 1895. Great efforts were made on behalf of the belligerents in the late war in South Africa. Without counting the supplies provided for the contingents from the Antipodes and Canada, over 133,000 Bibles, Testaments, and Gospels were distributed on both sides in 1900 and 1901. Families in the concentration camps, prisoners in St Helena, Bermuda, Ceylon, and India, the sick and wounded in hospital—all were cared for. On the *Kildonan Castle* alone, in the course of seven voyages on transport-service to the Cape, the commander circulated among the troops 4318 New Testaments and Gospels.

We may well cry—

O thou Sword ! . . .
How long will it be ere thou be quiet ?
Put up thyself into thy scabbard ;
Rest, and be still !—

yet it mitigates even the horrors of war which the passions of men have made inevitable that, under the providence of God, they may be overruled for the good of the world.

CHAPTER XXII

THE GATES OF DAWN

PROSPERITY at home has always implied activity abroad, and the successive periods of progress described in the preceding chapters are distinctly marked in the record of foreign work by corresponding expansions—more extensive distributions, the formation of new agencies, and a remarkable increase of versions. The broad lines of operation were still followed, but they were steadily developed and largely supplemented. In the main one is chiefly impressed by the brisk and incessant routine of business, everywhere adapting itself to the gradual change of social conditions. There are three new things, however, which arrest attention: in Europe the disintegration of the political power of the Papacy and the freedom of action which was the immediate result; in West Africa and in British North America the vast territories which were being opened to the Gospel by missionary enterprise; in the East the systematic employment of Biblewomen to penetrate into the innermost recesses of Oriental life.

The Indian Mutiny—appalling as were the incidents of that fierce outburst of fanaticism—

was the beginning of a new day for Christianity in India. The British Government awakened to a new sense of its responsibilities as the overlord of a continent containing many countries, kingdoms, languages, and creeds. The Churches were aroused to the need for a more vigorous evangelisation. It was quickly observed that this rebellion had broken out, not in the Presidency of Madras where for many years the Bible had been drawing the natives into Christian communions, not in that of Bombay where the Scriptures had been freely circulated and large numbers of Sepoys had attended Bible classes, but in "the Brahminical Presidency of Bengal," where caste was encouraged, where "the missionary was forbidden to show his face within the limits of the space allotted to the troops," and "even the chaplain was debarred from giving instruction to the natives in the Word of God." Nor were men slow to note that the first check to the wild rage of revolt was given by the great Christian statesman, Sir Henry Lawrence; the final check, before the retribution began, by "that preaching, praying, psalm-singing man," Sir Henry Havelock. The Society, which had lost between £12,000 and £15,000 in the looting of the large depôts, made an appeal for the replacement of the supplies which had been destroyed, and work was resumed with redoubled energy. Colportage was extended; missionary tours were resumed; the Scriptures were introduced into public schools; and special projects were devised for a wider and more rapid diffusion of the Word of God.

In 1853 the issues of all the Auxiliaries in India and Ceylon had amounted to 1,926,000 copies ; and in addition to these the Serampore missionaries had distributed 200,000. During the next twenty-three years the Auxiliaries issued 3,624,000 copies, making a total of 5,550,000 up to 1876. Still the demand grew for the little books which were "destroying more temples than ever the Moguls did." In the fourteen years between 1876 and 1890 there were 3,678,000 copies added to the aggregate ; and during the last ten years alone, 5,000,000 have been issued. Altogether the Society has prepared for the people of India, in their own tongues, thirteen million copies of the Scriptures, complete or in parts.

Christianity appears to make but slow progress in India. In a population of 294,000,000, the number of native Christians, including adherents of the Roman and Syrian Churches, is only 2,664,000. Still, even in that figure there is encouragement, for it shows an increase of 30 per cent. since the Census of 1891. But in what unsuspected ways may these swarming populations be gradually turning to a truer apprehension of that Divinity who is not far away from any man. Many years after the horrors of Cawnpore a missionary fell into talk with a Hindu, who told him that in his way of life he endeavoured to follow "the *shastra* of Matthew." The missionary was perplexed until he was shown a copy of the first Gospel. The Hindu had picked it up among the torn books when the depôt of one of the northern towns was plundered during

the Mutiny. He knew nothing of its history, nothing of Christ save what was contained in its pages ; but of all the *shastras* he had read this was the best, and until he had seen a better, by this he would abide. The same thing is happening to-day. During a recent tour among the villages of Gorakhpur a missionary learned that at a fair, far away in Bengal, the chief man in one of the villages had heard the Gospel, and had brought home with him a copy of the New Testament in Hindi. Deeply impressed by its contents, he built a little shrine on his verandah and employed an old Brahmin to read daily one chapter aloud to the assembled family and any of the villagers who cared to come and listen. They still worshipped idols, because they had found no text absolutely prohibiting idol-worship ; they still held the doctrine of "transmigration," which they said was sanctioned by John iii. 3 ; yet in this book they believed, and professed to follow its precepts. Surely even on these darkling minds a clear light was about to dawn.

It was in 1884 that the Society first ventured on the systematic employment of Biblewomen. Twenty-five grants were made. Fifteen went to India, which shared in four others with Burma or China, and one went to China, which shared in two others. Singapore, Ceylon, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt came within the operation of this experiment, and one grant was assigned for work in Madrid, Lisbon, Algiers, and Tangier. Of the success of the system, notwithstanding various initial difficulties, there was no doubt. In 1889-90 three hundred and forty

Biblewomen, supported by the Society at an outlay of £2,363, were working in connection with twenty-seven organisations. They had distributed 10,927 copies of the Scriptures (2023 gratis) in the course of their ministrations, had read the Bible on an average to 28,848 native women each week, and had taught 1669 to read within the year. Of the three hundred and forty Biblewomen, two hundred and twenty-four were in India, sixty-nine were in Ceylon, eleven in China; the rest were stationed in Burma, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the Mauritius, and the Seychelles. In 1895-6 the number had increased to four hundred and eighty-six. In 1901-2 (the last available report) six hundred and fifty-eight Biblewomen were employed under the supervision of forty missionary organisations, and the expenditure on this department was £4,238. They had read the Bible to an average of 36,684 every week; they had taught 2400 women to read for themselves; and they had circulated 25,483 copies of Scripture, of which only 4530 were given away. In India alone there were four hundred and thirty-five, slowly and patiently preparing the way of the Gospel, for it is on these millions of women that the religious future of India chiefly depends, and probably not more than six in every thousand can read. Nor is the Biblewoman's ministry confined to the inmates of the Zenanas. You will find her in the hospitals, the dispensaries, the prisons; and at the Nasik Leper Asylum in Bombay, old Rhaibai, the Biblewoman who some years ago became a leper, is carrying on her devoted work.

In China the bright dream of a Christian dynasty on the dragon throne died away as the Taiping power was shattered by the Ever-Victorious Army of "Chinese Gordon." The scheme of the Million Chinese Testaments was not abandoned, however, and up to 1869 there had passed through the press 750,000 copies, as well as 100,000 of the Colloquial Mandarin version and about the same number of the Old Testament. Thousands and tens of thousands of these, as they had been printed, had been distributed far and wide; but in 1863 a more efficient method of circulation was adopted. Prompted by the delusive treaty which professed to throw open the empire to the merchant and the missionary at the close of the second China War, the Society appointed Mr Wylie as agent, with full power to organise a system of colportage. An immense expansion in the work of distribution followed. In sixteen of the eighteen provinces—each on an average as large as Great Britain—the Word of God was dispersed in villages, towns, and cities; some thousand miles of Mongolia had been traversed, and hundreds of copies had reached Japan. Two years after his appointment a conference of missionaries decided in favour of sale as against gratuitous circulation, and the change was speedily justified both by the numerical and the financial results. When Mr Wylie retired in 1877 the annual circulation in China was about 100,000 volumes.

Of the difficulties and perils to which the colporteur and the missionary were exposed at that time the following proclamation, posted in the town

of Shui Fu in the west in 1878, furnishes sufficient evidence :

“The books that the foreigner is selling are printed with ink made of stupefying medicine. When any one reads them for a time, he becomes stupefied and loses his natural reason, and believes and follows the false doctrine. This is to warn the Chinese not to purchase or read them. Again, the foreigners use much money to bribe the poorer class of Chinese who have no means to depend on. They also use the stupefying medicine in all sorts of food, in order to win over the little children. At times, they use it for kidnapping children, whom they then sell to foreigners. Again, they use it to befool them, and then take away their marrow. The children immediately die. In former years there have been law cases about stupefying and kidnapping children at Tientsin and Shanghai. Wherever foreigners come, families ought to warn their children not to go out.”

Yet when the Gospel was allowed to speak the Chinese heart could be deeply moved. Four years after the appearance of this proclamation, as a party of colporteurs descended one of the great rivers, they told the boatmen the sorrowful story of the passion of the Lord. One of the passengers, a very quiet simple-minded man, who had listened intently all the time, asked them to repeat what they had said. They complied, and as they spoke of the crucifixion, they saw the tears streaming down his face, and at last he broke into loud sobbing. They thought the story had brought back some painful recollections in his own history, for he knew nothing of the Scriptures, and had never heard of the life and death of the Saviour. When he grew calm they questioned him. No, he replied, they had awakened no memory of sad experiences, but that One so good, One who had come to save men,

should suffer so cruelly at the hands of those He came to save had pierced his very heart; how could he refrain from weeping?

The annual circulation in 1883 was 233,911 volumes; it fell in 1890 to 210,770, and though the divine Word had had free course through twenty-two degrees of latitude—from Mukden, where in winter the rivers are frozen for weeks together, to Hainan, which is far within the tropics—it rose to no more than 235,921 copies in 1893. As the Centenary drew near, however, China contributed in no small measure to the unprecedented demand which during the last five years has taxed the resources of the Society. The sales of about one hundred and forty native colporteurs absorbed 170,000 copies in 1892; in 1902 there were two hundred and thirty-eight colporteurs in the field, and they disposed of 728,537 volumes.

Comparatively small scope has been found for the Biblewoman in China, but her opportunities appear to be increasing. In 1889 there were eleven, in 1895 twelve, in 1901 twenty-seven native Biblewomen engaged, and these have entered on a quiet but effective ministry in prisons and hospitals, and among the homes of the people.

In 1900 the "Boxer" rising began in the province of Shan-tung, spread like fire in Ho-nan, Shan-se, and Pe-che-lee, and the flames swept northward through Manchuria. Nearly every Christian church and scores of mission compounds were destroyed. Outrage and massacre assumed their most wanton and barbarous forms. Biblewomen died singing under the sword;

native Christians and colporteurs were made into living torches, as in the days of Nero; one breathing copy of the New Testament perished, for blind Chang, who was beheaded, had learnt it by heart from "the book of the generation" to "the grace of our Lord"; the heads of martyred women were hung by the hair on the branches of trees; even little children hiding in the millet fields were not spared. Bibles were buried, hidden in clefts of the rocks, so that when the reign of horror had passed by, the faith might still survive, for many believed they would see the face of the white missionary no more. Yet in these ravaged provinces as many as 373,000 copies of Scripture were distributed in 1902, and in Manchuria, where twenty years ago, it was difficult to get a night's lodging, and the appearance of a Christian was the signal for riot and bloodshed, the Society's agent can enter as an honoured guest into nearly every village. The total circulation in China for 1902 was 872,300 copies. From the days of Morrison down to the present moment 10,148,785 copies of the Word of God have been sown broadcast in the vast regions of the Yellow Empire. It is a significant fact that nearly half of these have been circulated in the last eight years under the wise and vigorous agency of the Rev. G. H. Bondfield. Yet how much remains to be done even in China proper alone, with its four hundred and seven millions! "I have never heard before," said an old Chinaman of seventy-three to a missionary who stopped at a wayside village a year or two ago and spoke to him of the

Father which is in heaven, "*I have never heard before*; I suppose at my age it is too late; He will not accept me now. What use can He have for an old man?" "It is nearly sunset now, O venerable one," said the missionary, "but it is not too late yet." And amid the shrill remonstrances of a female relative, the old man, who was very poor, paid his seven cash for a Gospel. "What! should I grudge the whole sum for God's book?"

And beyond China proper lies Tibet with its six millions, for whom the missionary is printing the Tibetan gospels in the village of Ghoom, high up in the snow-capped Himalayas; and Mongolia with its millions of nomads, among whom the sub-agent, his wife and children, and his colporteur "*Morning Star*," are travelling with their caravan of camels and ponies, exchanging the Word of Life for silk *hatag* (scarves), lambskins, sour milk, rotten cheese, and fuel; and Manchuria with its eight and a half millions, where agents and colporteurs are pushing beyond the northern capital, and where they hope to place a New Testament in every railway station, as was done long since in Siberia.

Beyond these lies Korea, where last year fifty-one colporteurs sold 18,900 copies, and nineteen Biblewomen were teaching that peace which the world cannot give even in the Land of the Morning Calm. Beyond lies Japan, where the first convert was led to the truth through a New Testament found floating in the bay by the commandant of Nagasaki in 1854, and where the spiritual welfare of forty-

six millions has long been the care of the American, Scottish, and British and Foreign Bible Societies. And yet further away, but still under the sun of the morning, lies Malaysia, where for twenty-two years Mr Haffenden has had charge of the Society's work in the south, and where in 1902 Mr Percy Graham was appointed to the vacancy in the north. These two agencies, at Singapore and Manila, cost the Society, including the loss on the Scriptures circulated, £8,898.

CHAPTER XXIII

“OUT OF EVERY NATION”

IN Europe the dominant interest of our story centres, as we have said, in the disintegration of the political power of the Vatican. The beginnings of that momentous reversal of the tradition of eleven centuries may be dated from the 26th October 1860, when Garibaldi saluted Victor Emmanuel, “King of Italy!” Lombardy had been wrested from Austria, and with the exception of Venetia and the city of Rome, the whole Italian peninsula was free from foreign control. The “Red Shirts” entered Naples in September; on the 19th of that month an excited crowd assembled to witness the miracle of St Januarius; before the month was out Gavazzi was denouncing the imposture, and the Bible Society’s agent and his colporteur were selling the Scriptures in the great square, the Toledo. Between the 22nd September and the 30th October, 3400 volumes were distributed. “The book seemed almost as new to the priests as to the people, and some of the former were among the first to buy it.” In Sicily and the cities of Italy thirty colporteurs were travelling

with a free and open Bible, and in that year the circulation rose to 47,000 copies.

In 1866 the needle-gun at Sadowa decided the long contest between the houses of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern for predominance in Germany. The supremacy passed to Protestantism. Venetia, Austria's last possession south of the Alps, was ceded to France, and annexed by plebiscite to Italy; and the Iron Crown, enshrining in jewels and gold one of the nails said to have been used at the Crucifixion, was resigned to King Victor at Turin. Mr Millard, who had been expelled from Austrian territory in 1852—a detachment of *gendarmes* escorted his Bibles and Testaments beyond the frontier “amidst the unavailing tears and sighs of tens of thousands of the people”—was permitted to reside in Vienna. In 1866-7 the issues of the Scriptures for the year amounted to 156,396 copies. The Word of God was dispersed in Poland to the extent of 34,400 volumes. Venice, too, for the first time was thrown open, and among the *colporteurs* there were three Venetian exiles “who were thankful to carry back to their own province the book of which they had learned the value among strangers.” The Committee rejoiced to think that, with the exception of the dominions of the Pope and “intolerant Spain,” the operations of the Society had free range throughout Europe. In after years ecclesiastical influence harassed and obstructed the work in Austria, and even to-day that Empire—though Hungary forms a happy exception—clings to the short-sighted and obsolete restrictions of a by-gone age. “In Roman

Catholic France, and Spain, and Italy, and Belgium, the colporteur has liberty by law to go where he likes; . . . in the great city of Vienna it is a criminal offence to sell a newspaper in the street, or to sell a Bible at a man's door.” Still, in 1902, there was a circulation of 177,159 volumes, and there were signs that the day of a greater freedom was approaching.

To resume the thread of our narrative. In 1868, Pope Pius IX. sent the Queen of Spain the Golden Rose. That gracious symbol—a cluster of roses and rosebuds on one thorny stem, all wrought of the purest gold—is blessed by his Holiness on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and bestowed on the royal lady who, in pious act or intention, has shown most zeal for the Church. On the 8th February the Golden Rose was solemnly presented to Queen Isabella in token of “the protection of God to His well-beloved daughter, whose high virtues make her a shining light amongst women.” Less than eight months had elapsed when Spain was in revolution, and on the 30th September the Queen arrived a fugitive in Bayonne. Safely stored in that old town lay 10,000 Spanish Bibles and Testaments. They had been printed in Madrid immediately after the revolution of 1854, but before they could be distributed the reign of intolerance returned, the books were seized, and were afterwards surrendered only on the strict condition that they should be taken out of the country. A place of deposit was found for them on the French side of the Pyrenees, and there they had lain ready for nearly fourteen

years. As the Queen went out of Spain the Word of God went in. "Take your Bible under your arm," said Marshal Prim, when the Government had issued its manifesto in favour of universal suffrage, a free press and education; "go with it through the length and breadth of the land. You shall be protected, and no man shall hinder you as far as I can help you." Forthwith the Rev. J. G. Curie was appointed Agent in Madrid, and his fifth successor is now carrying on the great work of the Society. A melancholy story of ignorance and bigotry and violence might be told of these years of political convulsion and national decadence, but we shall leave to a bold and high-minded journalist the task of picturing the condition of his unhappy country. Writing on Ash Wednesday 1902, Eusebio Blasco, in an article entitled *Ashes*, uses language which perhaps only a Spaniard could justify :

"Never have we been better prepared to celebrate this day's service. Everything is in ashes; all reduced to dust: authority, patriotism, culture, art—everything that represents the strength of a people. Must we remember that 'dust we are and that unto dust we shall return'? It is not necessary. We already know and practise that truth too well. . . . Eleven millions of Spaniards who neither read nor write; seventeen hundred and ninety convents; three hundred bull-rings; three hundred thousand public-houses; a national monomania for fighting; a dagger in every pocket; in every poorhouse two thousand hungry folk seeking food; poetry scoffed at; ideals dead. . . . Ashes, dust! Everything reduced to dust. Everything in ashes."

Once more we return to the main subject. When the twentieth Œcumenical Council was convoked

in 1868 the Papal Letter contained no invitation to the Princes of Christendom. “The omission is remarkable,” wrote Louis Veuillot, the Ultramontane journalist; “it implies that there are Catholic crowns no longer—in other words, that the order in which society has existed for the last thousand years has ceased to be. What has been called the Middle Ages has come to an end.” Spain had fallen; Poland was extinct, Italy hostile, Austria enfeebled; France, Brazil, Portugal, and the Principality of Monaco remained. The Vatican Council met and five hundred and thirty-three prelates and princes of the Church consented to the most amazing aggression that has ever threatened human liberty. On the 18th July 1870 Pope Pius IX. proclaimed the dogma of his own infallibility as the successor of St Peter. A thunderstorm was raging; thunderbolts fell in Rome; flashes of lightning blazed through the darkness of the great Basilica of St Peter, and as the thunder pealed overhead, the Sovereign Pontiff read, by the light of the tapers held at his side, the fourfold anathema of the new canons. Among the spectators of that strange scene there were those who saw in it a second Sinai and the descent of a new Moses from the Mount; others heard in these thunderings the artillery not of an enthronement but of a revolution.

On that very day the French courier was on his way from Paris to Berlin, bearing the declaration of war against Germany. On the 4th August the Crown Prince of Prussia crossed the frontier, and the disasters of France began. Four days later the regiments of the “Eldest Son of the Church”

evacuated Rome, and amid the acclamations of the people the troops of the King of Italy entered the Eternal City. As they poured through the breach, a colporteur named Frandini, who had been exiled in 1860, carried in the Italian Bible, and from that day the divine book has been free in Rome. Alongside the column which marched through the Porta Pia four other colporteurs entered, and with them went a great shaggy-coated Abruzzo dog dragging its carretta loaded with the Scriptures. On the first Sunday after the occupation, Mr T. H. Bruce, the Society's Agent, accompanied the colporteurs to the upper tiers of the Colosseum, and there, overlooking the arena which had been drenched with the blood of martyrs, they read the account of St Paul's journey to Rome, and the Agent addressed them on a passage from the Epistle to the Romans. A few weeks later a depôt was opened in the Corso, and into its coffers passed many a coin bearing the papal effigy—rare coins to-day, for on the fall of the temporal power the mintage of the Vatican ceased. Mr Bruce, who had been appointed in 1860, served the Society for twenty years; his successor, Signor Augusto Meille, still presses the work forward, and since 1900 the circulation of the Scriptures has increased from 96,000 to 105,000 copies. Still the religious condition of the peninsula calls for earnest prayer and strenuous exertion. The Church of Rome itself, awakening to the perils of a wide-spreading materialism, has had recourse to those leaves which are "for the healing of the nations." In 1893 Pope Leo XIII. recommended to the clergy a "more careful study

of Holy Scripture”; a Papal Rescript of 1898 practically abolished the old rule which prohibited laymen from reading the Word of God in the vulgar tongue without permission of their confessor ; and last year a new Italian translation of the Gospels and the Acts, published by the Pia Società di S. Girolamo per la Diffusione dei santi Vangeli, issued from the Vatican press.

We must now briefly indicate the course of events in the rest of Europe. M. Victor de Pressensé had charge of the Paris Agency till his death (during the siege of Paris), in 1871. He was succeeded by M. Gustave Monod, on whose retirement in 1901 Pastor D. Lortsch was appointed. In Belgium, on the withdrawal of Mr Tiddy in 1854, the Agency was committed to the care of Mr John Kirkpatrick, who died in 1864. His brother, W. H. Kirkpatrick, succeeded, and on his demise in 1902 the Agency was amalgamated with that at Paris. The total distribution of the Scriptures in Belgium from Mr Tiddy’s engagement in 1835 down to the end of December 1902 amounted to 1,082,692 copies. In France seven millions had been put into circulation between the formation of the Paris Agency under Professor Kieffer in 1820 and the year 1880. At that time, as M. Monod pointed out, the Protestants in France did not exceed a million, and their spiritual wants were provided for by two French Bible Societies. The deduction to be drawn is obvious. In 1882, for the first time, the colporteurs had extended their operations into each of the eighty-six Departments. In 1889 the aggregate circulation exceeded eight million volumes, and

during those seventy years the Society had expended (sales deducted) £280,000.

Here, as in other countries, the closing years of the century have entailed more strenuous exertions and larger outlay. Since 1889 the aggregate distribution has expanded to 11,759,718 copies, and the expenditure to something over £620,000,¹ of which £200,000 has been spent on colportage and £280,000 on the printing of the Scriptures.

In Germany the old central Agency worked side by side with the great Bible Societies which took their own course at the time of the Apocrypha controversy. Hoary with age and crowned with the honour of good men, Pinkerton passed away in July 1855. His place was taken by the Rev. G. Palmer Davies, some of whose work we have seen in the Franco-Prussian war. He was succeeded in 1881 by Mr James Watt, who died suddenly in 1894. In the following year—the Committee feeling that “Germany deserved the best they could devote to the service of Bible work”—Mr Michael Morrison, whose connection with the Society dated from 1877, and who had acquired a wonderfully varied experience at Tiflis and Odessa, was transferred to Berlin. The hand of the born agent was speedily felt. In the eight years between 1895 and 1903 the annual circulation rose from 245,000 to 402,900, and 2,455,813 volumes were distributed. The vast territory of Austria-Hungary was also placed under his supervision in 1902, on the decease of Mr

¹ A figure considerably below the mark, as it does not include various items impossible to disentangle from the general totals in which they are included.

H. E. Millard. Mr Millard had in 1887 succeeded his father, the veteran Agent who for forty years had held a responsible post in the work on the Continent and had seen Austria at its best and at its worst.

In 1883 the Committee appear to have first seriously entertained the idea that they would most thoroughly fulfil their charge by stirring up the native Bible Societies of Protestant countries to undertake for themselves the whole supply of the Scriptures needed at home, and by concentrating their own efforts where these were more urgently needed. Effect was gradually given to this policy of withdrawal in the case of Sweden, Switzerland, and Denmark, but the facilities afforded by the large stocks and numerous versions controlled by the Committee have always been at the disposal of these countries. In the North the good offices of the Society in the early years of the century still form a link of affectionate remembrance. Switzerland still obtains some 60,000 volumes a year from the depôt at Berlin; and from the Netherlands, where the connection ceased as late as 1902, contributions are still received from the generous Dutch friends of the Society.

Mr Mirrielees, to whose zeal and discretion the interests of the Society in Russia were committed on the outbreak of the Crimean war, returned to England in 1857. Five years later a new epoch began. Up to that time Russian Scriptures printed abroad were not allowed to circulate within the Empire. In 1862, however, the Holy Synod completed its revision of the New Testament in Russ, and while that august body undertook to

provide such editions as were required for the Society's operations, the Committee reprinted the same text for their own use outside Russia. We have already seen how the interview with the Czar Alexander II., at the time of the Paris Exhibition, led to increased facilities for Bible work and to the appointment of Mr Nicolson as Agent at St Petersburg in 1869. On his Majesty's visit to England in 1874, he graciously accepted a copy of the Russ Bible which the Committee were passing through the press, and in the following year a translation of the Russian Old Testament was completed by the Holy Synod. Difficulties as to the Apocrypha sprang up, and to these were added the inconveniences arising from the circulation of two "authorised" versions. In 1882 the Holy Synod printed for the Committee an edition of the Orthodox text without the uncanonical books, but it was found inexpedient to continue this course; and in 1892 the Committee confined itself to the purchase of the Pentateuch alone for circulation in Russia. In 1895, on the transference of Mr Morrison from Odessa to Berlin, the whole Russian Empire, which from 1867 had been divided between the Northern and Southern Agencies, was placed under the direction of Dr Nicolson at St Petersburg. He was relieved in 1897 by the Rev. William Kean, who still superintends the affairs of a charge which stretches from the Arctic Ocean southwards to Mount Ararat. The total cost of the Agency, including the loss on the Scriptures circulated, is put down at £14,313. During the last three years the large total of 1,528,195 copies

in fifty-three languages has been distributed, and over seventy colporteurs have been employed. Of the esteem in which their work is held in Russia, one may judge from the fact that the Society is exempted from the tax of 3s. per 36 lbs. on imported books, and depôts and employees from the Trade and Industrial Tax imposed a few years ago, that ten colporteurs have passes over the State railways, and that all consignments have free transit on all the lines of the Empire. In a similar spirit of generosity the tramway companies in many towns supply the colporteurs with tickets, and goods are conveyed freight free by various shipping houses on the Dnieper, Don, and Volga, and to the ports on the Black and White Seas. In the limited space of this survey there is much that can be no more than suggested. The Agency at Ekaterinburg, with its fifteen colporteurs and an annual circulation exceeding 60,000 copies, must serve to indicate the continuity of the Society's work in that eastern Empire of the Czar, which is twice as vast as Russia itself.

At Constantinople the tradition of the splendid veterans, Leeves, Barker, and Lowndes, passed on in 1860 to the Rev. Alexander Thomson, who, on his death in 1895, was succeeded by the present Agent, the Rev. T. R. Hodgson; but in the unhappy condition of political ferment and antagonistic creeds which prevails in the countries included in this Agency, operations are beset with many difficulties, trials, and dangers. In Greece the Modern Greek version of the Bible has been prohibited by the Government and denounced by

the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Synod of the Orthodox Church. "No one," writes Mr Hodgson, "has been able to assign any serious or sufficient reason for this outbreak of fanatical intolerance;" but its effect is seen in the melancholy fall in circulation in 1902 from 17,000 to 7000 copies.

Let us turn to a more encouraging prospect. At the anniversary meeting in 1880 Dr Manning of the R.T.S. gave us a bright glimpse of Egypt. After the surrender of Arabi the Committee decided to make Egypt the centre of a new Agency, embracing Syria and Palestine and the regions bordering on the Red Sea, and the Rev. R. H. Weakley was placed in charge in 1884. The work made satisfactory progress, and in course of time Arabia, Abyssinia, the Soudan, and the East Central Africa Sub-agency at Zanzibar were included in the Agency. This last "district," which was added in 1897, was then introduced to notice as "the small Sub-agency" of Mombasa, "deriving importance from its prospective connection with the whole Swahili coast and the Equatorial Mission, which God has so wonderfully blessed and enlarged at the head waters of the Nile." The curious phrasing carries us back to what seems a far-off time. It recalls the missionary Krapf and the story of the famous medicine-man, a sorcerer, who was one of his few converts. The man afterwards fell into grievous sin and disappeared, but when a number of years had gone by, people from the interior of the Nyika country went down to "Mombas" for a teacher,

They had learned to read the Gospel in their own tongue, they said; had become believers, and desired more instruction. The old sorcerer had taken his Gospel with him when he fled, and had taught his countrymen to read it. It recalls the labours of Bishop Steere, who spent twenty years in completing his Swahili version of the New Testament. It was one or other of his early Gospels in that tongue which enabled Stanley to give the King of Uganda some idea of the Christian faith. The traveller told Mtesa of the book from heaven which had made the British a rich and powerful nation; and one remembers how when the C.M.S. missionaries reached the capital of Uganda in 1877, and read the letter from the Bible Society to the King, in which reference was made to our Lord, Mtesa ordered a salute to be fired, for joy at the mention of the name of Jesus. One question he had to ask the missionaries in private—Had they brought *the Book*? He would have liked them to make him guns and gunpowder, but as that was beyond their skill he seems to have thought that the Book perhaps contained a stronger magic than even fire-arms. Mtesa wavered between Christ and Mahomet all his life, and died an unbeliever. It recalls, too, the labours of Mackay of Uganda, and the murder of Bishop Hannington, and the ruthless persecutions which aroused the sympathy of the native Christians in Tinnevely, Madagascar, and Melanesia. It was only in 1762 that Speke penetrated the mysteries of that unknown land; two years ago the Katikiro or Prime Minister of

Uganda was a conspicuous guest at the Coronation, and before his return home was presented with a Bible by the Committee. This was Kagwa, one of the pages of King Mwanga, whose refusal to do a deed of shame gave rise to the persecution of 1887. Last year's sales in Uganda amounted to 11,740 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions, and 7900 copies were granted on "missionary terms" to the various stations scattered through the Protectorate of British East Africa.

At the close of 1901 Mr Weakley retired from the Egyptian Agency, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. A. Cooper. After a long interval of suspension the Society was permitted in 1900 to resume the work which it began thirty-eight years ago at Khartum, a city haunted by the tragic memory of that heroic Bibleman, General Gordon. Dépôts were opened at Omdurman, Khartum, and Wad Medani, one hundred and thirty miles south of the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile, and the colporteurs travel along the rivers and visit the scattered tribes in the oases inland. From their experiences we take one strange and attractive picture of life in the heart of Africa. "There came to me," writes Stephanos Maqar, "some of the men of Qâdisch, and asked for the book *Imâm-es-Shafiéh*. I told them I had a book far better, and handed them a copy of the Bible. 'What is this?' they asked. 'It is the *Taurât* (the Law),' I replied. And saying, 'Peace be upon the Book,' they began to read therein. After a while they said, 'How much is the cost of the Book?' 'Seven *piastres*.' 'How cheap!' said

they. ‘Hast thou not a larger copy of it?’ ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘but it costs seventeen *piastres*.’ Then I gave them a Reference Bible, with which they were much pleased. As they offered me eighteen *piastres*, ‘No,’ said I, ‘I want but seventeen.’ ‘Quite right, we know,’ they replied; ‘but the one *piastre* is for the coffee.’ ‘Far be it from me to take that,’ I said. Whereat they were even more pleased, and departed to the market carrying the Bible in full view of a multitude of people. After a space they returned and said, ‘Ere we depart we wish to see thy face once more in peace, and bid thee farewell.’ ‘Go in peace,’ said I, and thus we parted.”

In the long record of the Society’s operations there is no chapter so full of vicissitudes, trials, and disappointments as that which describes the course of Bible work in Central and South America. The story of sixty years ago is the story of to-day—a story of ignorance, mental lethargy, political instability, religious intolerance. In some respects it is even worse. To burn the Scriptures, to ring the church bells and inflame a hot-blooded mob against the Bible-sellers are not unprecedented experiences in lands which have been blighted by the bigotry of Portugal or Spain; but the *ne plus ultra* of the fanatic and the savage was surely reserved for the year 1902 and the Archbishop of Chuquisaca in Bolivia—to suggest that one of the Society’s sub-agents should be sentenced to capital punishment for distributing the Word of God. During the second half of the century five Agents

have been sent out to Brazil. One, Senhor J. M. G. dos Santos, served from 1879 to 1901, when the Rev. F. Uttley was appointed. Since 1879 the aggregate circulation has amounted to 564,000 copies; and though this is but a drop in the ocean of seventeen millions of white, black, Indian, and mixed races, there is the encouraging fact that, while in the ten years ending 1899 there were 196,625 copies distributed, the number in the last three years has been 187,149. In the Argentine steady work may be said to have begun with the appointment of the Rev. F. N. Lett in 1876. The present Agent, Signor B. A. Pons, a Waldensian minister, took charge in 1898. Five colporteurs are employed, and over ten thousand miles of railway, along which the bulk of the population is clustered, they are, as a rule, privileged to travel at half fare. In Chile the Valparaiso Bible Society, founded in 1861, has distributed a total of 118,634 volumes. The subsidies which from time to time it received from the American and Scottish Bible Societies have ceased. For many years £100 reached it from the British and Foreign Bible Society, but for various reasons the Committee have decided to reduce the yearly grant of £350, with liberty of purchase at half price, which began in 1887. In the Andean Republics — Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia—the outlook is more hopeful. In 1857 an Agent settled at Santa Fé de Bogotá, the city of Mr Matthews' mysterious disappearance. Large editions of the Scriptures were printed, and his sales were phenomenal until ecclesiastical hostility was aroused. He removed to Lima, but

political disorder and straitened finances at home occasioned his withdrawal in 1860. Towards the close of the eighties three members of the “Regions Beyond” Mission established themselves at Truxillo and Cuzco, and to-day stations and schools occupy a dozen points of vantage. In 1901 Mr A. R. Stark, who as a worker of that Mission had had seven years’ experience, was appointed Agent at Callao. Though freedom of public worship has not yet been conceded in Peru, the law sanctions the sale of the Scriptures in these republics, and already Mr Stark and his colporteurs have travelled along the coast, climbed the Andes, and descended their eastern slopes towards the Amazon—a region untouched by any Protestant missionary. It is difficult to arrive at accurate figures, but it is estimated that the whole circulation of the Society in South America stands at about 1,200,000 copies. If the issues of the Valparaiso Bible Society and the distributions of the American Bible Society be added, we shall have a grand total of 2,486,000 copies, but in the course of the century a very large proportion of these must have perished.

To one little spot in this vast continent we turn with interest. In 1863 a small Welsh colony was founded in the valley of the River Chubut in Patagonia. Sixteen years later, between three and four hundred Bibles and Testaments were sent out to them at the request of the General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. In 1887 the colonists numbered 1200, and in 1900 greetings were received at the Bible House, together with the

proceeds of a Thanksgiving Day collection, amounting to £6, 7s. In that remote land the colonists had not forgotten the Society which had been dear to them among the hills of Wales.

Let us ascend, however, into northern latitudes, and group together some indications of the growth of the Society's work in the enormous territories between the great lakes and the Arctic Circle. In 1864 we hear of the mission of Dr Lachlan Taylor, who was sent out by the Committee to plant the standard on the most westerly shores of British America. It was twenty years before the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the Doctor sailed from New York to San Francisco by way of Panama—5900 miles "according to our log"—and so on to Vancouver, where he founded an Auxiliary at Victoria with a Branch at Nanaimo, and after a visit to the great Cariboo goldfield, assisted at the establishment of the British Columbia Bible Society at New Westminster, with Branches at Lillooet and Yule. In 1877 there were supplies of the Scripture sent out to the C.M.S. missionary among the Haida Indians in Queen Charlotte's Islands, a degree or two further north and west, and we read of the beginnings of translation into the Haida speech. Two years later, when Dr Ridley was consecrated Bishop of Caledonia, British Columbia, not one of the nine native languages had been reduced to writing; to-day the Word of God is read in the tongues of five nations, and the savage hunters and trappers of twenty years ago print their own Scriptures. "Bishop," said one of the Red Indians when the

first Gospels were issued, “before you came we had the door ajar, and a little light [from the texts given them to commit to memory] shone into the dark and dismal home. Now we see the Saviour walking and talking, and going on from Bethlehem to Olivet, leading right up to the throne of God.”

Before gold was first discovered on the Yukon (1863), and many a year before the rush to Klondyke, the C.M.S. missionaries were abroad among the Tukudh Indians, who roamed over a hundred thousand square miles along the Arctic Circle. To teach them it was necessary to follow them to their winter hunting-grounds, but a great desire was soon awakened in their hearts; the old and the young learned to read, and became teachers in turn. One man travelled six hundred miles to a mission station that he might have the opportunity of instruction, and in 1872 the whole tribe of the Klondyke region migrated across country about two hundred miles to listen to the truths of the Gospel. The Scriptures were translated into Tukudh and printed by the Committee; the whole Bible was completed in 1897, and in February 1899 Bishop Bompas sailed with the first consignment. Nearly two thousand miles to the east, in the bleak regions about Hudson’s Bay, work of the same kind was going on—teaching, translation, distribution of the Scriptures. Shortly before his visit to England, in 1881, Bishop Horden of Moosonee, was visited by an Indian who desired to be baptized. “How came you to get this book, and how did you gain this knowledge?” asked the Bishop, when the Indian had

brought his copy of the Scriptures, and read fluently from its pages. "Last winter," he answered, "a body of Indians to which I belong were out on a hunting expedition, and met with a body of Rupert's House Indians. Finding that they could read, pray, and sing, we asked them to teach us, and they did so." And when they were obliged to separate for want of food, the Rupert's House Indians had given their new friends a portion of their books. Further east still, we read in 1871 of the completion of the entire Bible in Eskimo, and of five hundred copies as the first cargo of the prosperous ship *Harmony* in the second century of the Labrador Mission.¹

To-day, however, the beginnings have been made in yet another version for tribes of Eskimo nearer the Pole. Some nine years ago work was begun by the C.M.S. in Baffin's Land, at Blacklead Island in Cumberland Sound—a spot so far from the beaten track of human intercourse that news of our late Queen's death was not received till seven months had gone by. The missionary was thirty years ago a poor sailor, and has owed all to the Bible which he used to read on the lower deck of a man-of-war. The deftness of the sailor stood him in good stead, for in those borders of the everlasting ice there are no trees. A little church was made of seal-skins (the gift of the Eskimos) stretched over a frame, and there the Gospel was preached, and the people learned to read the Book of Life for

¹ Last year's report announces the completion of the Bible for the Greenland Eskimo, and the issue of an edition at the expense of the Danish Government.

themselves. In 1902 the missionary, the Rev. E. J. Peck, sailed up Davis Straits on a whaler, and when they anchored off a settlement eighty miles within the Arctic Circle, the Eskimos came off in their kayaks. Among them was a woman whom he had taught to read in “the seal-skin church.” On leaving Cumberland Sound she had taken her Portions with her and had taught her own people along those barren shores.

Many things might be added to this meagre outline; but who needs more than a few figures to divine the progress which has been made in our own colonies and in those countries which the limits of this volume preclude us from noticing? Think of the Dominion of Canada with its twelve Auxiliaries and their twelve hundred Branch Societies; of the West Indies with its Agency and thirty-eight Auxiliaries and Branches; of the South Africa Bible Society which before the war had two hundred and fifty Branches, and of the Auxiliaries at Durban and Pietermaritzburg; of the Australian Commonwealth with its forty-four Bible Societies and four hundred and forty-three Branches, from which in 1902-3 the Parent Society received £2,412 in free contributions, donations, and legacies; of the sixty-two Auxiliaries and Branches in New Zealand, from which the contributions received in 1902 amounted to £1,242. These figures are eloquent of the divine blessing which has rested on the work of the Society in these far-divided quarters of the globe. And a blessing no less evident has rested on its labours in the languages and among the peoples of the islands in the seas

of the South. There still the dusky "children of nature" are glad at heart that they are children of God, and there still, in those green specks of earth within the reef of coral, where money is yet hardly known, they bring to-day, as other islanders brought of old, porpoise teeth and dogs' teeth, shells and combs, fruit and oil, in exchange for the Book of Life.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF THE MAKING OF VERSIONS

It is a singular fact that just at the moment when the Christian Missions of this country were entering on their larger enterprises, there should have been founded a Society which appeared to have been specially designed to provide their equipment, to prepare their way, to lighten their labours, to give their work breadth and permanence. The idea of Missions was as old as Christianity; but eighteen centuries went past before the first organised attempt was made to disperse the Bible through the world in the speech of every land. Venerable codices in Syriac, Gothic, Georgian, Slavonic, attest the zeal and industry of the heroic apostles of the Early Church and the Middle Ages; but gradually the aggression of sacerdotalism and the growth of a sacred mythology superseded the Scriptures. In some of the old communions, such as the Armenian and Coptic, the Book was made a fetich. The faithful were privileged to kiss it; the priest alone might touch it; it was revered, and left unread till, in the lapse of time and the changes of dialect, it became unreadable. At the beginning of

the nineteenth century there were complete or partial versions of the Bible in sixty-four languages ; fourteen of the languages were dead ; forty of the versions were made subsequent to the Reformation.

Of the enormous task which the Society had undertaken, the Society itself had but the vaguest conception. The Science of Language had not yet come into existence—how much that Science owes to the Bible House and its translators in the mission-field we need not pause to inquire. People in those days thought that Chinese was the language of China, Hindustani of Hindustan, Arabic of at least the greater part of Africa. It occurred to few that the language of Europe was not European. As for the strange vernaculars of South America and Oceania, it seemed doubtful whether rude gestures eked out with the whistlings and cries of wild creatures could be classed as language at all. In 1468 the Archbishop of Mayence declared that “the German language was incapable of expressing the deep truths of religion.” We smile at that to-day ; but, oddly enough, in 1788, a learned Orientalist is said to have asserted that a translation of the Bible into Chinese was beyond the skill of man.

The missionary achieved what the *savant* deemed impossible. The missionary discovered that there were hundreds of languages and innumerable dialects. With more or less success he acquired the great literary tongues of the East, and toiled for years at the work of translation. The tact of phrases, the melody and associations of words,

the subtleties and beauties of the language, it might require a lifetime to appreciate; still his version was a beginning. He left to his successors the never-ending labour of revision and yet again revision. He reduced to writing the speech of non-literary nations and tribes. Among savages who filed their teeth, like the Okambas in East Africa at the present time, he found that pronunciation varied according to the fashion of the dentist. His progress was beset with inconceivable difficulties, perplexities, and limitations. In Swahili he had to work without prepositions. In Santal there were at his disposal the vigour and affluence of a vernacular with five voices, five moods, twenty-three tenses, three numbers, and four cases, but the precise meaning of his text became a burthen when every simple "we" and "they" necessitated a choice between one Santal pronoun and another. He had to teach the black of the Niger delta a name for sister and maiden, and to coin Yahgan words so that the savage of Tierra del Fuego might count beyond five, distinguish between his hand and his finger, and learn to speak of God. One wonders how he translated the "fig-tree" for the Eskimo, or "snow" for the Congo negro, or the "lamb" for the Greenlander, or the shadow of "a great rock" for those coral-islanders who knew no stones save those drifted among the roots of stranded trees, or the "sackbut and psaltery and dulcimer" for the Samoyed, whose only music was that of the sorcerer's drum.

But his most crucial difficulties are perhaps most forcibly suggested by the text which the

Bishop of St Albans quoted as an instance at one of the anniversaries of the Society—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Without an idea of sequence, the cannibal, the bushman, the South Sea islander would have no word for *therefore*; *faith* would be an amazing conception among tribes whose very existence depended on suspicion; *peace* would be but a precarious truce from actual warfare; "*justified* would drive a translator to despair"; and as for *God*, though He be not far from any man, the translator would find no word in Tasiko (New Hebrides) or in Buguha (Tanganyika), and in Kaffir only a borrowed name associated with the infliction of pain. It was not only the heathen, but the speech of the heathen, which had to be christianised. The language itself had to be born again. Yet with all their imperfections and shortcomings each of these versions, even the earliest and the crudest, became under the power of the Holy Spirit an effective instrument of grace. "It tell me my heart," said the negro. "It makes men new," said the Bechuana. Out of the mouth of the savage came the conclusive answer to the persistent and vexatious attacks on versions. That was the final defence of imperfect versions—they revealed the heart, they made men new. And there, in the Library, lay the books in evidence—the buried Bible of Madagascar with its patched and mildewed leaves, the Uvean copy of St Matthew smeared with the blood of the native catechist who was cut down as he read it at the door of his hut, the old tattered "Hohenzollern

Bible"—a Roman Catholic version—which contained the inscription: "Forty-six adults have been added to the Protestant Church as the result of reading this book. A number, at least equally great, who did not secede outwardly from the Romish Church, learnt, through its teaching, saving faith in a crucified Saviour, and died a blessed death, relying only on the grace of God in Christ."

Not that the Society was satisfied with imperfect versions. From the beginning the work of revision and retranslation was, as we have said, incessant. It still goes on, and each new edition is an improvement on the last. Hundreds of scholars, organised in many committees, are continually striving to bring the defective a stage nearer to perfection. No expense is grudged. The last revision of the Malagasy Bible cost over £3000. Time and pains are unstinted. In the new edition of the Lifu Bible for the Loyalty Islands 52,310 corrections were made. The revision of the Fiji Bible, which the venerable Dr Langham completed shortly before his death last June, occupied four years, and involved some 40,000 emendations.

Apart from religion, how the cause of civilisation has been advanced by these versions! In the old time races worked slowly up to the rudiments of culture. To-day our missionaries discover them; in five years they possess an alphabet and a literature. Life is lifted on to a higher plane. The lettered man stands erect, conscious of his birthright. "Malay is the most eloquent

language in the world," said an inhabitant of the Archipelago; "look at our translation of the Bible." "White people have many advantages," said a Zulu—"railways, telegraphs, breech-loaders; they are skilful, they are rich, they are well dressed; but there is one advantage which they have not, and we have—the Gospels in Zulu." The English, he was told, was a splendid version; but he shook his head: "It can't be as good as ours."¹

In the Jubilee year the complete or partial translations of the Scriptures in the Society's list represented one hundred and fifty-two languages; at the Centenary the number had grown to three hundred and seventy.

What a strange and enthralling book the story of these labours would make! We should read of the Arabic version of Sabat, who in his hatred for Christianity had betrayed his friend Abdullah to martyrdom, who became himself a convert, apostatised, returned, and recanted, took service with the King of Achin, and finally was sewn up in a sack by rebels and flung into the sea; of the Japanese Testament of Gützlaff, who learned the language from sailors after they had been blown out to sea in a frail junk, tossed about the Atlantic for fourteen months, wrecked on the Oregon coast, captured by Red Indians, rescued by the Hudson's Bay Company, sent to England by way of the Sandwich Islands and Cape Horn, shipped back to the East, landed at Macao, and received by the German

¹ The Zulu Bible, published by the American Bible Society, is the work of American missionaries.

missionary after four years of adventure; of the Eastern Armenian version of Mirza Ferukh, who in boyhood had been carried off captive to Karadagh and adopted by the Khan, who had escaped seventeen years later, joined the missionaries at Shusha to learn Russian, and having been set by them to the translation of the New Testament, became converted to Christianity, and left a son who carried on his work and was a skilful translator in the service of the Society as late as 1891. Among other honoured names we should find that of Anna Urrutz. A simple Basque girl, Anna was brought up in the Roman Catholicism of her people. About the year 1850 she took service in the family of Pastor de la Harpe at Bordeaux. There she embraced the Protestant faith, and unconsciously prepared herself for duties yet unknown. In obedience to a call from one of the Protestant Missions, she became a Bible-woman, first in the lowest parts of Paris, and then in Béarn, her own country, where she suffered much persecution. In her zeal for the saving of souls she completed by persistent application a Basque translation of the Gospel of St John and the Epistles of St Peter, worked hard and late to provide money for its publication, and issued it at Bayonne in 1873. This version was afterwards revised and printed at the expense of the Society, and Anna was privileged to assist in the translation of other portions of the Bible in the Souletin dialect, the tongue of her childhood.

Anna's was not the only female name associated with these versions, which we are apt to regard as

exclusively the work of men. In 1850 Miss Buzacott, by birth a South Sea islander, assisted her father in seeing the first Raratongan Bible through the press; Miss Thackeray took part in revising the Book of Joshua in Swahili in 1884; Miss Allen transliterated the Swahili St John into Arabic characters and printed it in 1886; part of the proofs of the Samoan Bible were read by Mrs Turner for the editions of 1884 and 1887; in 1889 Mrs Gray and her husband, the Rev. W. Gray, translated portions into Weasisi, the language spoken in the Isle of Tanna in the New Hebrides; Miss Wauton was on the revision committee of the Sikh New Testament in 1892; Miss Higgins prepared the marginal references for the Sinhali New Testament in 1894; the first portions in the speech of the Todas among the Nilgiri Hills were the St Mark and Jonah of Miss C. F. Ling of Ootacamund in 1896; and in the recent revision of the Fiji Bible Dr Langham was materially assisted by his wife and step-daughter.

From every quarter of the globe the early Committees received whole-hearted recognition from the missionaries of every communion that without the Bible Society their labours would have been sadly lacking in range and efficacy. What was true then is true to-day on an infinitely larger scale. "If, owing to some great disaster," said the Bishop of Liverpool in 1900, "the British and Foreign Bible Society were blotted out of existence, it is no exaggeration to say that the missionary work of English Christianity would be utterly paralysed, if not destroyed." At the Oxford

Diocesan Conference in October last the Bishop of Oxford declared that "beyond all dispute the Church was indebted to that Society for a degree of support, without which it would be paralysed in discharging its paramount duty to mission work." If the Christian Churches owed it nothing else, they would be under an everlasting obligation for those standard versions (produced by the united labours of scholars of all denominations) which in the case of Mohammedans, Hindus, and Buddhists in particular, have obviated a conflicting variety of written authorities—"the one obstacle" which, as the Bishop of St Albans has pointed out, "would be almost fatal to their acceptance of Christianity." Those versions were the outcome of that catholicity which is and has been the glory of its constitution, which was the cause of disruption, and which for many years has unhappily been a stone of stumbling. The debt between the Society and the Missions is mutual. It sends out the Scriptures on such terms that the Missions practically incur no expense for the books they circulate; its colporteurs [prepare the way for the evangelist. On the other hand, without the missionaries the Society would never have obtained those versions which are the golden chains binding every way "the whole round earth about the feet of God."

A brief reference must be made to the enormous industry connected with the Bible and its versions. The English Bible contains over three and a half million letters—think of the manual labour of the compositor! In Sanskrit, we are told, seven

hundred types are required for the printing of an ordinary book, and in Tamil ten thousand characters are used to represent seventy different sounds. Zincogravure has facilitated the reproduction of many bewilderingly complicated scripts; and for the blind the new system of Braille symbols has reduced the representation of many strange tongues to comparative simplicity. But to confine ourselves to the work in London alone. At stock-taking in March 1903 there were 1,586,905 books in the Society's warehouse, Queen Victoria Street. The issue during the year 1902-3 had been 1,975,934 volumes—6587 every working day—and thousands of these had been despatched to distant lands, each consignment packed in its special case, long and narrow, or short and broad, to suit the dusky porters of inland Africa or Madagascar, or lined with zinc to secure a dry landing through the surf of the South Seas and the Indian Ocean. The cost in packing-cases alone runs to nearly £800 a year.

Four and a half centuries ago the Archbishop of Mayence, who discredited the religious possibilities of the German language, paid four hundred gold ducats (£140) for Gutenberg's Latin Bible; the poor vine-dresser on the banks of the Rhine can now obtain a copy in his own tongue for less than a shilling. And not he alone; but as paper, printing, binding, and transit charges have cheapened, and the productive power of the Society's funds has otherwise increased, the prices of the Scriptures have been reduced to a mere fraction of what they used to be. Witness

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the following charges for the Bible in twenty languages :

English . . .	<i>s. d.</i>	Arabic . . .	<i>s. d.</i>	Japanese . . .	<i>s. d.</i>
Dutch . . .	0 6	German . . .	0 11	Tahitian . . .	1 9
Spanish . . .	0 7½	Armenian . . .	·	Finn . . .	2 0
Portuguese . . .	0 8½	Bohemian . . .	1 0	Esthonian . . .	2 0
Welsh . . .	·	Malagasy . . .	1 0	Ganda . . .	·
French . . .	0 10	Tamil . . .	1 4	Chinese . . .	2 6
Italian . . .	·	Sechuana . . .	1 6		

CHAPTER XXV

THE MEN

FROM this imperfect outline of the Society's work we turn to give some account of the men to whose charge it was intrusted. Among the many blessings which rested on them, length of days was not the least conspicuous. The tale of four Presidents covers ninety-five years of history ; the fifth, whose name carries the reader back to the Battle of Spurs and the Field of the Cloth of Gold, is still in the prime of manhood.

In his eighty-third year, Lord Teignmouth, the "gentle Thane" of the Clapham circle, died on the 14th February 1834, the anniversary of his happy marriage. How highly he prized his association with the Bible cause may be gathered from the epitaph on his monument, which, in accordance with his wishes, recorded no more than his title and age, and the fact that he had been

"President of the British and Foreign Bible Society
From its foundation to his death, a period of thirty years,
And formerly Governor-General of India."

To the veneration in which his name was held, both at home and abroad, it would be difficult

to indicate a limit. His son and biographer, travelling in Norway, reached the house of an aged minister in a wild nook of the Bergen district. The good pastor opened his letter of introduction, read it, beckoned him to follow, and silently led him up to a portrait of his father.

Lord Bexley succeeded as second President. He was the earliest of the Cabinet Ministers who enrolled their names in support of the Society; in the days when it was most exposed to obloquy and derision he was its wise defender; and during the forty years in which he took part in its affairs, his guiding principle was, "If we cannot reconcile all opinions, let us endeavour to unite all hearts." In the eighty-fifth year of his age and the seventeenth of his presidency, he passed quietly away on the 8th February 1851.

Lord Ashley became third President, and a few weeks later he succeeded to the title under which for many years before his death he was one of the best-loved men in the three kingdoms. Who needs to be reminded of that long life of philanthropy and practical religion? The Society had the advantage of his counsels and the encouragement of his personality for nearly thirty-four years. He died on the 1st October 1885, at the ripe age of eighty-four.

Lord Shaftesbury was succeeded by the Earl of Harrowby. Lord Harrowby's grandfather, the first Earl, had been a Vice-President from 1816 to 1847. From 1824 to 1835, the first Earl's brother, the Hon. Henry Ryder, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, had also been a Vice-President.

For five years, from 1842 to 1847, the name of Viscount Sandon had stood beside that of his father in the same list, and it remained there for thirty-four years more as Earl of Harrowby. The presidency of the third Earl of Harrowby lasted over thirteen years; he died on the 26th March 1900, aged sixty-nine, and was succeeded by the Marquess of Northampton.

Though throughout these pages the Committee of the Bible Society has been ubiquitous, it has necessarily been impersonal. The Committee, it will be remembered, has always been composed of thirty-six laymen, appointed annually. Originally it was provided that of these thirty-six the twenty-seven who had been most frequent in attendance should be eligible for re-election, but in 1871-2 the number eligible was increased to thirty. In the course of a century one would expect a considerable change of *personnel*; the withdrawal of nine, and afterwards of six, members annually would of itself make room for 726 new appointments; yet it is a remarkable fact that from 1804 to 1903 the Committee has consisted of no more than 459 individual members. This remarkable continuity of service no doubt contributed very largely to continuity of policy, and to the establishment of a traditional temper and method of procedure. It is interesting to note that 112 members served continuously for five years or more; 69 for ten years or more; 43 for fifteen or more; 37 from sixteen to thirty years; and that one member was re-elected for thirty-two years consecutively, another for thirty-eight years, another for forty, and yet

two more—Samuel Mills and H. Robarts—for forty-three years. Of 173 members who served intermittently, one—Josiah Forster—was on the Committee for forty-two years from 1826, was appointed a Vice-President in 1869, and died in 1870. A Chairman of Committee was first appointed in 1886. Mr W. Schoolcroft Burton was elected from that date till 1892, and the post has since been occupied, year after year, by Mr Caleb R. Kemp, who first joined the Committee in 1880. The services of the Committee, and of all their sub-committees, are given gratuitously. How much that means in the case of business men may be gathered from the fact that in the three hundred working days of the year the fixed engagements of Committee men occupy over one hundred.

The list of Vice-Presidents contains four hundred names. It includes those of sixteen Archbishops, one hundred and sixty-one Bishops (108 Bishops of forty British sees; 53 of sees in India, the Colonies, etc.), forty-three Dukes, twenty-eight Earls, and eleven Viscounts.

The roll of Honorary Life Governors bears three hundred and sixty-five names; that of Honorary Foreign Members, which began in 1893, sixty. The first of "the Christian fair" whose services in the cause of the Society received the recognition of Honorary Life-Governorship was Lady Grey, appointed when the century was still in its teens. In 1892, however, a ladies' list was established, and it contains one hundred and twelve names.

The Society began with three Secretaries. Since 1826 its work has been done by two. For seventy-eight years two men have initiated, inspired, watched, and controlled the operations of an organisation whose story is scarcely less than an epitome of modern history. In all, there have been sixteen Secretaries :—

1804-22	Rev. John Owen, M.A.	1804-33	Rev. Joseph Hughes, M.A.
1823-50	„ And. Brandram, M.A.	1804-26	„ C. Steinkopff, M.A.
1851-52	„ G. J. Collinson, B.A.	1834-53	„ George Browne.
1853-57	„ Robert Frost, M.A.	1854-80	„ S. B. Bergne.
1858-61	„ John Mee, M.A.	1880-84	„ C. E. B. Reed, M.A.
1862-79	„ Chas. Jackson, B.A.	1885-96	„ W. Major Paull.
1880-1901	„ John Sharp, M.A.	1896-99	„ J. Gordon Watt, M.A.
1901-	„ Arthur Taylor, M.A.	1900-	„ John H. Ritson, M.A.

There have been sixty district secretaries, with six assistants; three “home secretaries” (an appointment dating from 1888); ninety agents in foreign countries; nine editorial and literary superintendents; five treasurers, one of whom, John Thornton, nephew of Henry Thornton, the Society’s first treasurer, held office for forty-six years; fourteen assistant secretaries, who have occasionally combined financial with clerical duties; five collectors; and four publishing superintendents, the latest of whom, Mr J. J. Brown, of the Middle Temple, has just retired after twenty-two years’ service. On all sides length of days and constancy of relationship—nowhere perhaps more curiously illustrated than in the case of the Society’s honorary solicitors. The connection began seventy-four years ago. The firm was then Brown, Marten, & Brown. It became Brown, Marten, & Thomas; Marten, Thomas,

& Hollams ; Thomas & Hollams ; Hollams, Son, & Coward ; Hollams, Sons, Coward & Hawksley ; but through all changes the old relationship has subsisted.

Though little can be said here, one cannot pass over wholly in silence that larger staff outside the Bible House, the secretaries of Auxiliaries and Associations, collectors, and unofficial friends who helped to secure the success of local meetings, who entertained district secretaries or "deputations," and often accompanied them on sections of their circuit. There was Robert Gate, secretary of the Penrith Auxiliary ; over fourscore years, but active to the last, he died in 1867 ; half a century earlier he used to go out on horseback "collecting for us" all round Penrith. There was Dr Bruce, the antiquary of the Roman Wall, who would assist Mr Edwards in his tours through the villages in the "Wall" country. And Susan Wilson of Ulpha, in the Duddon Valley, probably the oldest Bible collector in England in her later time ; even on the verge of ninety she was still to be seen, staff in hand, making her rounds ; in 1879 the quaint old farm-house where she had so often entertained visitor and district secretary knew her no more. And Alderman Brown, five times Mayor of Deal, who had taken part in the formation of the Deal Auxiliary, and for seventy-three years had written and read its annual report at its anniversary meeting. In March 1894 he too passed to his rest, at the age of ninety-two. And Miss Lucy Shaw, who has been secretary and collector at Brant Broughton (Newark Auxiliary) for nearly fifty-nine

years, and is still with us, an Hon. Life Governor, in her eighty-first year.

Many another name might be added, but we must pass on to that scattered legion of pioneers who have carried the Scriptures far beyond the range even of the missionary. In the single year 1902 the Society employed eight hundred and fifty-five colporteurs, at a cost of £43,282, and their sales reached the amazing total of 1,830,000 copies. One hundred and forty of them were at work in India, two hundred and thirty-eight in China, seventy-three in Russia, forty-seven in Austria-Hungary, twenty-nine in Turkey and Greece, thirty-six in Italy, twenty in Spain. Others were toiling in regions as far apart as Burma and Brazil, Korea and West Africa, Morocco and the Mauritius, Siberia and the West Indies, Malaysia and the Cape, Persia and the republics on the plateaux and slopes of the Andes. Nor does that exhaust the list. For seventy years and more, in numbers ever increasing—how many during all that time it would be difficult to ascertain—the colporteurs have been afoot on the highways and the by-ways of the world, preparing for the arrival of the evangelist and the building of the mission-church. Apart from abuse and ill-treatment and persecution, their lives were beset with hardships, dangers, and even death. In 1858 we read of colporteurs drowned in two French rivers; in 1865, of Mr Wylie's escape from a gang of desperadoes on the Se-Keang; in 1868, of the providential deliverance of Mr Wellen from a furious Chinese mob praying to the White and Black Dragons for rain. "Work is difficult

this winter," wrote Depierre, a French colporteur in the Orne Department, in 1880, "not only on account of the snow, but also of wolves, which run near the villages. Last Monday three of these beasts followed me, in broad day, for nearly an hour." The same report tells the adventure of Mr Scott, the veteran colporteur in Newfoundland, who lost his way in the forest; passed the night under a tree, wet and hungry and without means of lighting a fire; wandered for hours next day through bog and thicket in a dense fog; and only succeeded, as darkness fell, in reaching the light of a cabin, where a woman received him with much kindness. In 1890 Marco Mariani was struck down by apoplexy, and died alone on a wild Calabrian road on the way to Catanzaro. Nine years later, J. Pozharsky, a Russian colporteur, fell ill in the hills near Tiflis and was frost-bitten, with the terrible result that both his feet had to be amputated in hospital. During the South African War Mr E. Edkins was taken prisoner by the Boers, who seized his horses and burnt all the books he was carrying—from £20 to £30's worth. A few days later he was released, but he had to tramp over forty miles through Kaffirland before he reached a friendly shelter.

A more tragic page must be added. We have already spoken of the mystery which veiled the disappearance of Mr Matthews at Santa Fé de Bogotá in 1828. In November, 1867, setting out with a trusted Chinese colporteur on what he described as "a long and last journey," Mr Johnson ascended the Yangtse River; nineteen

years afterwards it was discovered that they had landed at an inland town to sell their books; a fire, attributed to the evil influence of the foreigners, had burnt down a great part of the place; that night a band of men murdered the strangers and destroyed their boat. Colporteur Rausch was murdered in the Tyrol in 1874. He was traced to within a mile of the lonely spot where his pocket-book and stick were discovered; his body was found in a neighbouring river some weeks later, stripped of all clothes and bearing evident marks of brutal treatment; his books had in all probability been burnt. In 1876 the faithful colporteur, José Mongiardino, was assassinated by his muleteer near Santiago Cotagaita in Bolivia. An old colporteur, Sosnovski, disappeared in Albania in 1880. He hired horses and a driver at Prisrend, and set out to return home; but from that time no trace of him was ever discovered. A similar mystery involves the fate of a Georgian monk who started on a tour of colportage through the Caucasus in 1900, and of whom nothing more has been heard. Most sorrowful tragedy of all, on the 27th June 1900, among the forty-four Europeans who perished at Tai-yuan Fu, the sub-Agent for Shansi, the Rev. W. T. Beynon, his wife, and their three little children—Daisy, aged eleven, Kenneth, aged nine, and Norman, aged seven—were massacred by Yu Hsien and his Boxers in the space before the Governor's *yamen*. Even these were not the last. In August 1902, "El Kaid" ("The Captain," for no one knew his family name), twelve years previously

an officer of artillery in Morocco, but since that time a devoted Christian, sealed his faith with his blood. In 1901 he entered the Society's service as a colporteur, and was done to death in the public streets by a mob of fanatical Moors.

Colportage has had its patriarchs as well as its martyrs. In 1879 J. Van Dorp of Amsterdam died happily at the age of eighty-seven. For thirty-five years he had served the Society, and during that time had distributed 136,000 copies of the Scriptures. In 1889 Pierre Laffargue celebrated his jubilee as a colporteur; his sales showed an average of about two a day during the whole of the fifty years. But we do not require to cross the Channel for examples of this kind. For more than forty years William Mills of Lutterworth carried the Word of God into the villages and towns of Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties. Up to 1888 he had sold 80,288 copies; then failing health interfered with his work, and finally confined him to his room. He died early in 1890, at the age of seventy-one. Roger Haydock of Blackburn is still alive, ninety-four, hale, and interested in Bible work. He became a colporteur in 1857, and during the thirty-three years in which he laboured his average receipts from sales came to about £300 per annum. He had circulated over 100,000 copies when his wife died; and then he lost count.

If one could look into a crystal and see the picture of this incessant distribution of the Scriptures which is going on all over the globe! A missionary in his dog-sledge is bearing the Scriptures to the

frozen creeks of the Forty Mile River in Yukon Territory. An Agent of the Society, with his magic-lantern, is showing the incidents of its story to the Dyaks in Borneo; as another casts the coloured picture on the screen, in a New Zealand village, the Maoris approach and touch the sheet to satisfy their curiosity. One agent is travelling with a caravan of camels and ponies among the nomad tribes of Mongolia; for another, in the mountains of New South Wales, the Bible-van is depôt and vehicle and inn; a third is conveying his books through Luzon in a peak-thatched cart drawn by huge-horned *carabaos*. Native Christian Biblewomen go from house to house in Korea, destroying the terrible power of the sorceress. A colporteur is sledging with jingling bells across the Russian steppes; a colporteur winds with his mule-train through the hills in Bolivia; a colporteur is boarding the steamers, junks, and ships at Singapore; a colporteur is trading Scriptures from his barge with the Samoyed fishers and Ostyak fur-hunters on the Arctic coast; a colporteur is selling his books in a Japanese town by lantern-light at a *yomise* or night fair, or in sight of the great Buddha at some temple festival; a colporteur is sledging around Yakutsk, "the coldest city in the world"; and here is a colporteur with his wife rowing in a boat down the Lena, and calling at all the villages on the banks: one watches while the other sleeps, "so many cases of murder have occurred."

One word more remains to be written of the colporteurs. In 1879, when the financial condition of the Society called for rigorous economy, the

oldest colporteur in the South Russian Agency wrote to say that he and his wife ("almost a confirmed invalid") had agreed to accept five roubles per month less salary, and to draw no longer a small monthly allowance that had been granted for house-rent. In 1880 an *ex-colporteur*, formerly employed in the Netherlands, sent the Society a contribution of £40, 10s. from the United States. In 1882 one of the French colporteurs of M. de Pressensé's time left in his will 150 frs. to the Society. In 1901, when again the burthen of deficits began to be felt, the Albanian colporteurs who assembled in conference at Monastir gladly paid their travelling expenses to and from the place of meeting. What comment is needed? Such incidents as these are themselves comments—on the Society and the Men.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CENTENARY AND AFTER

As these pages go to press, the time draws near the 6th of March 1904, the date on which, for the first time in history, all communions of the Reformed faith have agreed to unite in thanksgiving to Almighty God for the blessing conferred upon the world by the free circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular languages. Of the Centenary of the Bible Society there could be no commemoration more solemn or more beautiful. The proposal was approved by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and nearly every Bishop of the Anglican Church, at home or abroad, has commended it to the clergy of his diocese. It was heartily adopted by all the great Nonconformist Assemblies and Conferences. Without exception, the Missionary Societies accepted this mode of expressing their recognition of the close ties which bind them to the Bible Society, and the C.M.S., the L.M.S., and the W.M.S., among others, have foregone their own sermons and meetings in favour of the indispensable Auxiliary common to them all. Civic dignitaries and public bodies have arranged to acknowledge the national

significance of the festival; and at the special service at St Paul's, their Majesties, the King and Queen, will pay homage to that Book which has been the safeguard of the throne and the security of the nation. In Scotland the Established Church and the United Free Church have recommended their ministers to join in the celebration; in Ireland, where since 1859 the Hibernian Bible Society has devoted its yearly surpluses to participation in the work for the world, a like enthusiasm has been manifested.

In the Colonies the idea has been caught up with alacrity by all denominations; while in the United States the two Presbyterian Churches, the two Methodist Episcopal Churches, and the Protestant Episcopal Church will take part in the commemoration. On the Continent there is still a vivid memory of the Society's helpfulness in the stricken years of the early century and the times of political trouble which followed them. Bible Sunday has been advocated by the Lutheran Bishops of Sweden and Denmark, the State Church of Prussia, the Protestant Synods in France, Holland, and Belgium, the Waldensian Synod in Italy, the Consistory of the Protestant State Church in Saxony, and the Conventus of the Lutheran, the Evangelical, and the Calvinistic Churches in Hungary.

Picture the universal worship of that Sabbath as it passes over the towns and cities and villages of many lands, over foreign mission churches and stations innumerable! Bible bells of the East, Bible bells of the West will ring it round the globe,

and the prayer of men of every colour and of many tongues will be the devout ascription of the Centenary Hymn :¹

*" We thank Thee for a hundred years
Of mercy, Lord, and blessing,
The while our failures, faults, and fears,
And little faith confessing.
Thy gently-guiding Hand we praise,
That led our first endeavour ;
Thy grace that crowns our later days,
And will not fail us ever.*

*" The seed, the sheaf, the waiting soil,
The sunlight and the shower ;
The scholar's zeal, the labourer's toil,
The Book's victorious power ;—
All, all are Thine ; to Thee alone
Ascribe we all the glory,
That myriad tongues from zone to zone
Now speak redemption's story."*

Out of these hundred years of blessing, however, there have grown larger needs, heavier responsibilities, more urgent duties. Since its foundation the Society has issued 47,967,550 Bibles, 74,034,376 Testaments, 58,980,814 Portions — altogether 180,982,740 copies of the Scriptures ; but each successive period of years has demonstrated that the greater the abundance of the Word of God, the more keenly has the sense of dearth been felt among the people. During the first half century, as we have seen, the issues showed a yearly average of 558,772 copies ; in the next fifteen years the average

¹ Hymn for the Centenary, by H. F. Moule. *Bible Society Reporter*, December 1903.

leaped up to 1,951,456 copies; in the last five (ending March 1903) it has been 5,090,470.

The whole Bible has been produced in ninety-seven languages, the New Testament in ninety-three, and various portions have been translated into one hundred and eight. In all, the tidings of salvation have been spread abroad in three hundred and seventy tongues. It is much to thank God for, but how far off is still the day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"! In India there are one hundred and fifty languages, as different from each other as Italian is from French, and no portion of the Scriptures has yet been translated into a hundred of these, spoken by seventy millions of people. In South America there are estimated to be four million Indians who speak about three hundred languages and dialects, and in no more than three of these has any small beginning of Bible translation been made. Polynesia buzzes like a hive with countless forms of speech. Among them there are said to be a hundred, which are sufficiently distinct in character and prevalent in use to warrant the labour and cost of versions: up to the present there are only ten Bibles, eight New Testaments, and thirty Portions in the tongues of Oceania. Briefly, there are more than four hundred millions of immortal creatures for whom Christ died who have yet no word of the sacred volume translated into any of the sixteen hundred languages spoken among them.

On all sides, from nations and peoples for whom

versions have been printed, there comes an ever-increasing and more earnest demand. Beyond these there is a silence—the silence of a mental and moral darkness—which is the only indication of a need perhaps even more imperious.

Up to the opening of the Centenary year the expenditure of the Society amounted to £13,937,469. It is a large sum, and we know with what ascensions of the heart it was given; but if provision is to be secured for the larger requirements which have been indicated, it can only be through a greater liberality on the part of the lovers of the Bible, and through a substantial and regular increase in the free income of the Society. During the past five years there have been deficits, excesses of expenditure over revenue, amounting in the aggregate to £59,838; and these have not been attributable to declension of income, but to the natural expansion of the work for which the Society exists. To permit an entrance upon new departures and the undertaking of many improvements urgently needed, an appeal has been made for a special Centenary Fund of 250,000 guineas. Who can doubt the response to that appeal? Why, if but half the population of England and Wales gave no more per head than the forty copecks of the little Buriat child,¹ that fund might be raised in a day, with a handsome surplus of £45,600.

At this moment, on the threshold of a new century, when the work of the Society is more requisite than it ever was; when unprecedented opportunities are opening on all sides; when there

¹ See p. 275.

are new versions to be prepared, old versions revised, partial versions to be completed; when the machinery for publication and distribution must be enlarged; when more agents, more colporteurs, more Biblewomen are called for—it is inconceivable that inadequate means will be allowed to result in a policy of retrenchment, contraction, or withdrawal.

Recently in the Ranaghat district, some thirty miles from Calcutta, an old Mohammedan woman, highly esteemed for her religious life by the villagers, questioned one of the Biblewomen regarding the truths they were teaching. “How long is it,” she asked, “since Jesus, of whom you speak, died for sinful people?” The Biblewoman explained that this happened a very long time ago. “Then why has God never told me of this? Surely He ought to have let me know of this long ago.” The Biblewoman gravely checked the irreverence of imputing blame to the Almighty God; whereupon the aged woman replied with vehement earnestness: “Then where have *you* been all this time, that I have never heard of this wonderful story? Look at me! I am now an old woman. All my life I have said the prescribed prayers. I have given alms. I have gone to holy shrines. My body is dried up and become as dust with fasting. And now I am told that all this is useless, and that Jesus died to take away my sins. Where have *you* been all this time?”

That reproachful question may well haunt the sleep of Christendom. From Japan and Korea,

from the tundras and along the great rivers of Siberia, from the wells in the Desert of Gobi comes the cry, "Look at me! I am old; I have prayed, I have given alms, I have visited the holy places, I am become as dust with fasting; and all this is useless. Where have *you* been all this time?"

From the Philippines, from Rhodesia and the Sahara and the hinterland of the Gold and Ivory Coasts, the half-sorrowful, half-indignant voice questions, "Where have *you* been all this time?"

In South America there are millions to whom the Bible is unknown even in name; in Central America and in the vast regions stretching to the Arctic Circle there are tribes and races which have never heard of the good tidings of redemption. "Where have *you* been all this time?"

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PRINTED AT THE EDINBURGH PRESS
9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET