

Christians to a conviction and confession of sin, and those who have been brought into closer touch with God have gone forth, and in their turn have been instrumental in leading others to the blessing which they themselves have found.



"I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. . . . I will be with thy mouth" (Exod. iv. 10, 12). "I cannot speak : for I am a child. . . . Whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak" (Jer. i. 6, 7). A missionary of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society in the Fuh-Kien Province of China writes of those whom she describes as "fear-hearts," and of the wonderful change seen in a woman among them. A year ago this woman was so shy that it was painful to watch her efforts to answer questions in class or to speak to heathen visitors ; indeed, it often happened that, though her mouth would open, she was unable to utter more than the faintest whisper. Now she is to the fore in the work of visiting, and has obtained an entrance into some upper-class houses in the desire that her relatives should know what it means to worship the true God. Moreover, she and her crippled son have asked that they may be sent to an altogether unevangelized village, where years before she lived as the wife of a small mandarin, in order that there they may bear their witness for Christ.



The *Missionary Review of the World* gives a translation of a sermon preached last summer in the Mosque of St. Sophia, Constantinople, by Ismail Hakki Effendi. In it the following remarkable passage occurs : "Islam abhors oppression and despotism. . . . Our law demands liberty, justice, and equality. There are non-Moslems among us. They are God's trust to us. We will try to keep their rights even more than our own. Our religion commands us to do so. There are three last admonitions of the Prophet. The first of them is to keep from oppressing the non-Moslem citizens. . . . They have the same rights which we have. We must leave them free. Their good is exactly our good ; their loss is exactly our loss." This is hardly what missionaries in Mohammedan lands are accustomed to !



The Bible at Work.

BY THE REV. W. FISHER, M.A.

IT is said that no rock is perfectly impervious to water ; through many it finds a ready passage, and on not a few it acts as a quick solvent. In addition to its directly converting power, there is a penetrating force with "the water of the Word." Japan is at present showing somewhat interesting signs of it. A Japanese firm in Tokio has recently published, as a purely commercial venture, the New Testament as a diglot—the Japanese on one side and the English revised on the other. Bishop Foss, S.P.G. Bishop at Osaka, tells how Christian novels by Japanese authors are being published in Japan, with such titles as "Spirit or Flesh," "Fruit Without Flower." It is encouraging to learn that the Bible Society's agent reports an increase of

25,000 copies during the first nine months of 1908, for while the Bible has an open pathway throughout the Empire, the figures are not so large as such remarkable liberty should enjoy. Correspondingly, in China are many signs of penetration, one of which is particularly suggestive. A non-Christian publishing syndicate in Shanghai proposed (1) to have a good encyclopædia translated, (2) to have an extensive series of textbooks for schools and colleges, (3) to have the best religious books printed. They asked that the Secretary of the Christian Literature Society for China should be allowed to engage and manage their translating staff for this purpose. All necessary funds were to be supplied by the syndicate. Such a proposal by a Chinese firm, so distinctly commercial, is indicative of a market, and therefore of a mind increasingly influenced by what is Western, and disposed towards it.



The changes, rapid in many respects, that are taking place in China are particularly active in the direction of literature. Two hundred newspapers are now being published, and every provincial capital is said to have its daily paper. Correspondingly, there is a demand for translations of European and American literature. This must tend to a larger or, in any case, a deeper circulation of the Scriptures. Even now there are indications of the influence of that circulation which are not immediately registered in the form of baptisms, and yet are significant. An Amoy missionary tells us that in collecting funds for the Community Hospital he found a copy of the New Testament on the desk of an Amoy native banker. The banker told him that he was in the habit of taking up the book during a lull in business, and said that he felt assured that no reform could be brought about in China without the Ki-tok (Christ) portrayed in the Gospels.



These penetrations are effective in two ways. In view of that day of trouble in the Far East that seems but too possible, though it may never come, they provide an indestructible anchorage, and should there be another and a greater uprising in China—as Sir Robert Hart once feared might come in the future—and should it mean suspension of missionary work, even to the dismissal of the missionaries, it would be beyond the power of any future Boxer movement to exterminate the millions of Scriptures that have been of late years circulated in China. Within the last five years scarcely less than 10,000,000 copies have been distributed by the combined efforts of the British and Foreign, the Scottish, and the American Bible Societies.



In the meantime they afford ground for hope. "The rain filleth the pools"; pools overflow into streams, and to peoples, as to individuals, comes what St. Peter calls the "day of visitation." A well-known missionary says: "I have seen it in print that not less than 300,000 inquirers are knocking at the door of India's Missions to be received under instruction. They want to become Christian." A remarkable spiritual movement is reported by the staff of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union at Ikau on the Upper Congo. "Old and young men and women have enrolled themselves as inquirers. . . . No special effort has been put forward. It is the Holy Spirit gathering to

Himself the result of years of labour. Almost nightly we are besieged by a band of young fellows asking to have the way of salvation made more clear to them. . . . The coming of the Lo-Mongo New Testament has done much to influence the young men." It is hard to escape the conviction that the Word of God is preparing for a day of God.



One notable activity of the Bible is the instant interest that is quickened by any discovery in the East. Even the acquisition by Lord Ffrench of the complete Kah-gyur, or Tibetan version of the Buddhist Scriptures, reported in the issue of the *Times* for January 28, illustrates in an emphatic manner the exquisitely portable size of the Bible for universal distribution. The Kah-gyur consists of 100 volumes or more, each with 1,000 pages. Such Scriptures will never know a world-wide distribution.



The 4,000 manuscripts found by Dr. Stein, of the India Government Mission to Central Africa, excite wonder as to the light they may throw both on Buddhism and Christianity. So many Buddhist traditions indicate very clearly a Christian source, that the testimony of volumes going back, in some instances, as far as A.D. 100, may possibly offer most valuable evidence. At present there is no truly authentic source of any such tradition earlier than the Christian era.



The excavations being carried out by the German Oriental Society at Babylon, under the direction of Dr. Koldewey, as illustrated in the *Graphic* of January 30, are full of interest. They show unmistakably that the prophet rightly described Babylon as "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency," and that the proud boast of Nebuchadnezzar had at least its material justification, even judged by the stupendous remains that are now being unearthed. The prophet's word likewise has been absolutely fulfilled, for Babylon became "heaps," and has remained "heaps" to this day. "From the East" came all the light that we enjoy, and "From the East" is calculated to become significant of a light that in many respects will make the truth of the Word all the more remarkable. The archæological relationships of the Bible are as wonderful as they are interesting; but possibly we are as yet only in the dawn.



Literary Notes.

THE other day Mr. St. Loe Strachey gave an address to the members of the Authors' Club upon the difference between literature and journalism. I suppose that as long as both exist there will always be a great diversity of opinion as to what this difference really is. To instance: the *Spectator* itself is a weekly journal, but I suppose most of us, irrespective of political views, will admit at once that in its pages may be discovered as good literature as is to be found in the writing of to-day. Of course, this fineness of expression, this fairness of view, and this restraint of opinion, reflect in a large measure something of the mind which occupies the editorial chair. And, also, there