

butions of the converts and an improvement both in their general tone, especially in their views about morality, and also in the amount and quality of the work done by the Christians in general and the catechists in particular. A new station—Chinchun—was opened in the spring of 1908, and the first-fruits, eighteen adults and eight children, were baptized there on Christmas Eve.



For some fifteen years work has been carried on at Herschel Island, the most northern station of the C.M.S., amid surroundings as bleak and desolate as can well be imagined. The missionaries, the Rev. I. O. Stringer, now Bishop of Yukon, and the Rev. C. E. Whittaker, have not had much to encourage them; and so recently as 1906 the outlook was not cheering, for though the great majority of the Eskimo attended the services and listened with attention to what was said, their interest, save in a few cases, was not lasting. Since the year named the station has been without a resident missionary, but the fruit of the seed so patiently sown in the past is beginning to appear. The head-man of the village has maintained the services, and lately a family arrived at Fort McPherson, another C.M.S. station, having travelled sixty miles out of their way to procure service books. Some of the people, too, are asking to have their marriages solemnized, and it appears that a few, with some further instruction, will soon be ready for baptism. This cheering account is corroborated by the report of the North-West Mounted Police, as presented to the Canadian Parliament. The inspector at Herschel Island there writes, so says a correspondent of the *Record*, as follows: "The people are quite religious, holding services on Sunday and doing no work on that day. There is no missionary here. Their religion they carry into their everyday lives. They neither beg nor steal, and slander is unknown among them. They are as near 'God's chosen people' as any I have ever seen. After my experiences of this world I could almost wish I had been born an Eskimo. They are very fond of their children, and take the greatest care of them. They never require to be chastised, and are very obedient. One never sees any quarrelling or bickering amongst them."



The Bible at Work.

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

IT is the time of yearly totals. The Bible Society has increased its versions to 418, 105 of which are Bibles, 102 New Testaments, and 211 at least some book of the Bible. The blind can be supplied with Scriptures in thirty-one languages. There are about fifty different printing stations, and its volumes are printed in sixty different alphabets. As the result of the year's work, it records a total circulation of 5,934,711 copies. Some of the inner totals are particularly interesting. Korea, which has experienced, and is experiencing, a great spiritual movement, has received 163,000 copies. In

view of the 50,000 converts said to have been added to Christianity last year in Korea, these figures are made significant by a leading missionary, who writes: "The greatest factor in our work has been the circulation of the Scriptures and their study as the Word of God." Japan, which is still high above the horizon in common interest, has taken more than 195,000 copies, while most striking of all is the circulation in China, which has reached the enormous figures of 1,365,000 copies, only one in a hundred of which has not been purchased.



There are at least eighty Bible Societies at work in the world. If to the total of the Bible Society we added that of the Scottish (2,056,375) and that of the American (probably about 2,000,000), and the totals of the lesser Societies, a grand total would be obtained in all likelihood not far from 12,000,000 copies. Impressive as these figures are, they yet fail as figures to impart or impress their true and full significance. If by some means they could be expanded into their geography, with its world-wide extensiveness and its numberless localities, and if, further, as by some mental vision, they could be apprehended in their human contact of personal detail, a spectacle would be revealed which, even to an honest and thoughtful rationalist, would be a matter of marvel. An old Book whose youngest chapter has lived through eighteen centuries—an old-world Book, a foreign Book, a pre-eminently religious Book, and one instinctively alien for the most part to all religions but its own—such a Book going out in such numbers year by year, and, in the case of China, in increasing numbers—what is the meaning of it? No other religious book attempts to compete with it. Mohammedanism is flooding Northern and Central Africa, but we hear of no distribution of the Koran in Europe or in China. Whence this modern circulation of the Scriptures? Is there an answer, or inkling of an answer, to be found in the words of Isaiah? "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."



The distribution of the Scriptures has, amongst others, its ardent and liberal supporters, and in policy it is established in the records of a century's experience and successful labours. But it can hardly be said that the principle of it takes that rank as a living conviction in the Christian mind which rightly belongs to such a vast and important enterprise. No man would so champion the navy that he would disband the army, nor would the best friend of the army discharge every ship in the navy. For all the necessities of war such a country as ours needs both army and navy. May not the Book as well as the man, both for purposes of aggression and defence, have a distinct importance of its own because of an office that is organic to the progress of the kingdom of heaven? Whatever may be said of policy or of principle, in practice the circulation of the Scriptures results in its own witness and testimony. A Korean convert in Kyung Sung was asked from whom he first heard the Gospel. He replied, "I heard it from St. Luke." Speaking of the great and wonderful changes that have taken place in Uganda, the Rev. H. E. Maddox accounted for them by two facts: "Firstly, practically everything that the native Christian of Uganda, and the surrounding

countries, has learned of the way of salvation, he has read for himself in his own language out of the Book of his own possession; and secondly, there is throughout the whole of the Uganda Protectorate, where missionary work has made any beginning at all, a perfect appreciation of the fact that no religious teaching is of the slightest value which is not founded upon the obvious teaching of the Word of God."



In the same address Mr. Maddox pointed out another valuable and effective agency of the printed Word. "Mohammedanism is spreading across parts of Africa like a mighty flood. In the days to come, out of the wild waste of waters, we shall see here and there a rock rearing itself and defying the flood. Uganda will be one of those rocks. . . . Where the Word of God has entered into the heart and life of the people of Uganda, we may confidently affirm that they will never cast away the intelligible appreciation of God's Word for an unintelligible word of Mohammed. Mohammedanism can triumph over ignorance, but it cannot triumph over such knowledge as theirs. The Bible in Africa is the true Dreadnought of the empire of Christ. . . . We do not ask—and I do not think that we even desire—for the African an elaborate education; but what we do ask is that every peasant (as we see can easily be done) may be taught to read in his own language of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We confidently affirm that if this knowledge were given to all the heathen tribes of Central Africa, with no more elaborate instruction than it has been possible to give to the 100,000 readers of Uganda, the invasion of Islam would prove a fiasco." These are striking words, and leave no doubt of the worth of the circulation of the Scriptures in actual practice.



One aggressive quality in the Bible is the subtle unaggressiveness which belongs to it. No one in controversy suffers defeat joyfully or even patiently, but the Book as a disputant is impersonal. "How is it," said a Sikh lecturer, "that when I read other religious books I feel ready for controversy, but when I read the Bible it so appeals to me that all desire for controversy ceases." He had probably not been so uncontroversial were the same words brought to him by a human voice. That inoffensive argumentativeness was acknowledged by a Mohammedan in Egypt, who said: "It is evil of you to send these books to us who are Moslems, for when we read your books our minds are disturbed, and we do not know whether to believe your books or our own."



Literary Notes.

ONE of the greatest successes, if not the greatest success, in the history of book-publishing is the library of excellent books which Messrs. Dent began to issue two years since at one shilling a volume, entitled "Everyman's Library." There are very few people who have not heard of the series. Probably anyone who takes the most cursory interest in literature has bought one or more volumes. When I repeat the statement