

Missions

Board of Foreign Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.,
156 Fifth Ave., New York.

OUR MISSION PRESSES.

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Our Presbyterian Church operates eight printing presses in its foreign missions. These are located at Beirut, Oroomiah, Shanghai, Tungchow, Nodda in Hainan, Bangkok, Chieng-Mai and Mexico City. The amount appropriated by the Board of Foreign Missions for these presses last year was \$6248.79. Their output was 86,235,757 pages. We give here a separate notice of each of these presses, taking them in the order of their date of establishment.

THE BEIRUT PRESS.

In 1832 the American Board established a press on the Island of Malta. Printing could not then be done safely at Beirut or Smyrna. In 1833 the press was moved to Smyrna, but its Arabic equipment was sent to Beirut, where also a new press arrived in 1834, passing through the Turkish custom house without objection, much to the relief of the missionaries. The press here was placed under the care of Rev. Eli Smith and Mr. G. C. Hurter, the latter a practical printer. By 1836 the mission became satisfied that the Arabic type in use was seriously deficient, not conforming to the most perfect

standard of Arabic calligraphy, and so not meeting the popular taste. Mr. Smith collected models of characters of the best manuscripts as the basis of a new font. Mr. Hallock, the missionary printer at Smyrna, a man of great mechanical ingenuity, successfully cut the punches from these and the type was subsequently cast at Leipsic, at the famous foundry of Tauchnitz. This product of missionary energy and skill has proved a most important contribution to learning and the spread of the Christian faith, a very model of beauty to the scholarly Arabic eye, and one which has since become a standard of excellence in Arabic typography in all the best printing establishments of the world.

In 1848 began the translation of the Bible in the Arabic by Dr. Eli Smith. For nine years he labored upon it, assisted by Mr. Butrus el Bistany, a native scholar of superior qualifications. When Dr. Smith died in 1857, Dr. Van Dyck, already known as "a genius in Arabic," was appointed to complete the work. The first printed copy came from the press April 19, 1865. Subsequently electrotypes plates of the entire Bible were made in New York under the direction of the American Bible Society. Later other and smaller fonts of type, after the same beautiful models, were made, and various other editions were issued. This version of the Scriptures is regarded by competent scholars of both the East and the West as one of the most perfect translations ever made in any language. Dr. Van Dyck lived long enough to see it thoroughly tested and to perfect it by a careful revision. Last year some 17,000,000 pages of this splendid version of the Word of God were printed at the Beirut press. It is to be found on sale at all the great

centres of Mohammedan population throughout the world, in Damascus and Jerusalem, in Alexandria and Cairo, in Constantinople and Aleppo, in Mosul and Bagdad, in Teheran and Bombay, in Zanzibar, in Algiers and Tunis, as well as in Shanghai, Canton and Peking, in Siberia and Sierra Leone.

Apart from this immense work of supplying the world with the Arabic Bible, the Beirut press issues annually a large number of other publications. The last catalogue has 529 distinct works, including besides the Scriptures religious and educational books, theological, scientific, historical, juvenile and miscellaneous works prepared by missionaries, the professors of the Syrian Protestant College and by native Syrian authors. Among these may be mentioned the remarkable work of Dr. George E. Post, "The Flora of Palestine and Syria," the product of twelve years' research, which appeared in 1896. The American Tract Society and the Religious Tract Society of London have aided in the extensive publication work of this press. The Sunday-school Union of Brooklyn, N. Y., had printed here in Arabic 1000 copies of the "Angels' Christmas" for distribution in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. A weekly newspaper, "El Neshra" (The Unfolding), has been issued for many years—the only religious paper that reaches the outlying districts in Arabia. "The Kowkab es Soobah" (The Morning Star) is a monthly published for children.

Though doing a work of such a large and varied character and of such important consequence to the advancement of Christian truth and civilization, this press is subject to some serious restrictions. For one thing, the entire plant with its outbuildings

is very illy adapted for so large an enterprise. Again, the censorship of the press, under the Turkish government, occasions it constant embarrassment and serious losses. The inspection every three months by the local censor might be patiently endured, but the Census Bureau at Constantinople subjects it to innumerable obstructions besides, rejecting or mutilating manuscripts submitted to it or forcing it to long delays. In spite of all, however, the press holds steadily to the purpose originally marked out for it, and stands as an evangelizing agency of great potency for the Arabic-speaking world. The past year it employed on an average forty-seven workmen, under the efficient direction of the new manager, Mr. E. G. Freyer. It is not only a self-supporting institution, but figured up last year a profit of \$3237.96, all of which went to the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions.

THE OROOMIAH PRESS.

In 1837 the American Board sent a printing press to Oroomiah, Persia. It proved, however, too unwieldy to be transported over the mountains of Trebizond. Two years later a press that could be taken to pieces, a new invention, was sent to Oroomiah in charge of Mr. Edward Breath, a practical printer. Already considerable headway had been made in reducing the modern Syriac language of the Nestorians to written form, in which work Dr. Perkins, the founder of the mission, was aided by some able Nestorian priests, who were themselves interested beyond measure to see their spoken language actually in written form. They would read a line so prepared and then break out into immoderate laughter, so strange was it to them to

hear the familiar words of their language read as well as spoken. The first book in the modern Syriac was a small tract made of passages of the Holy Scriptures. Of this first work of the press, Dr. Perkins says:

"As I carried the proof sheets of it from the printing office into my study for correction, and laid them on my table before our translators, they were struck with mute rapture and astonishment to see their language in print. Then they exclaimed, 'It is time to give glory to God that we behold the commencement of printing books for our people.'"

The first important volume printed was the Psalms, adapted for use in the services of the Old Church. For some years all the books were printed from type brought from London, of rude and imperfect form. Under the successful direction of Mr. Breath, fonts of type were prepared more worthy of the great work in hand, and which when finished became the delight of all Syriac readers. In the garb of these beautiful letters the modern Syriac versions of the Old and New Testaments have been sent forth, receiving the encomiums of distinguished scholars in England and Germany. The blessing these volumes have been to the Syriac-speaking people themselves is simply incalculable. The latest important work is the revision of the earlier editions of the Scriptures in the modern tongue, and their publication in a type of smaller size with references. This was supervised by Dr. Labaree, and printed at the Bible House in New York city—one of the most laborious and difficult works ever undertaken by the American Bible Society.

The Oroomiah press has issued a large number of devotional and educational works, reproducing in the Syriac some of the best religious literature found in the English language, including the works of Bunyan, Baxter, Spurgeon and Andrew Murray. It also issues a monthly newspaper, "Zahrereed' Baura" (Rays of Light), with a subscription list of some 700, which meets about half the cost of publication. It is probably the oldest newspaper in Persia. On an average the press turns off about 500,000 pages annually, and it sends out from its bindery from 1200 to 1500 volumes. The total number of pages from the beginning amounts to 133,530,181. It employs, as a rule, six workmen in both printing office and bindery. "Rays of Light" is under the editorship of Rev. W. A. Shedd, who also prepares other literary matter for publication, but the management of the press is in the hands of Rev. B. W. Labaree, who has the efficient coöperation of Rev. Samuel Badal, a native of Oroomiah, educated in the mission school, who completed his studies at the Drew Theological Seminary. The press is now housed in an unpretentious building erected with funds furnished by the Board in 1892. The annual cost of running the establishment is about \$1000. The grant of the Board of Foreign Missions in 1896 was \$764.

THE SHANGHAI PRESS.

This, now the largest press operated in any of our missions, was first established at Macao in 1844. The little seed there sown so unpretentiously, yet hopefully and prayerfully, has grown into a great tree, with its branches spreading over the empire, extending beneficent influences wherever

Chinese are found. The new enterprise was consecrated by an early issue of parts of the Scriptures, thus beginning the wide circulation of gospel truth into the Chinese nation which has been so vigorously pushed ever since. In 1845 the press was moved to Ningpo, where it was known as "The Chinese and American Holy Classic Establishment."

In 1858, Mr. William Gamble, who was sent out for the purpose, took charge of the press, and accomplished a work for this press and all mission presses in general in China that has hardly been equaled in the annals of missions or in the history of the development of the art of printing. With his two main inventions, the making of matrices of Chinese type by the electrotypes plate process and the Chinese type case as now generally in use, aided by his business faculty, indomitable perseverance, unflinching patience and true missionary spirit, he succeeded in so developing the mission press that it speedily grew from infantile proportions to a mighty agency for achieving great results for Christ in China. It was said at his funeral, and time but endorses the sentence, "For the century to come, not a Bible, Christian or scientific book in that empire or Japan, but will bear the impress of Mr. Gamble's hand."

Perceiving the great importance of Shanghai as a commercial and evangelistic centre, Mr. Gamble succeeded in having the press transferred to that port in 1860, where the plant was greatly enlarged and from twelve to fourteen million pages were printed annually. To-day the property covers a half acre of ground, with a total value of \$50,400. All the Chinese type is manufactured on the prem-

ises. Some 115 men are employed under the supervision of Rev. G. F. Fitch and Rev. Gilbert McIntosh. A prayer meeting, attended by most of the native workers and led by one of them, begins the day at 7.30 o'clock each morning. The press issues several monthly and weekly publications, chiefly in Chinese, and some in English. All the great missionary societies avail themselves of the fine advantages of this establishment. The American and British Bible Society does an extensive work with this press. It is only necessary to allude to the superb New Testament presented to the Dowager Empress of China by 2000 Christian Chinese women. One critic says: "The appearance of these pages is not surpassed by anything in Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, English or any other language."

The demands from all quarters tax the press beyond its full capacity. Larger building accommodations, with more extensive machinery, and above all, an accomplished associate manager are of prime necessity. In a recent letter Mr. Fitch says:

"In November we sent out from our sales department nearly \$4000 worth of books, tracts, etc. Many of the educational works are being pirated by the Chinese, and sold by them. Formerly we could hardly give them away."

In 1896 there were printed 46,300,925 pages. This press pays yearly into our Mission Board's treasury hundreds of dollars above the cost of running it.

Two other smaller Chinese presses may be mentioned here. One is located at Nodoo on the Island of Hainan. This was presented to the mission in 1890, by friends in the United States, for the pur-

pose of printing books in the Hainanese-Romanized colloquial. A number of gospels, hymn books and other works have been already printed. In 1894 about 27,000 pages were issued. It is understood that the press is worked chiefly by school-boys and natives under the superintendence of a member of the mission, and thus far without direct expense to the mission.

Another small press is located at Tungchow College, Tungchow, Shantung. It was presented by a Christian Endeavor society of Pittsburg. Mrs. Nevius writes: "It is doing good service, and printing a little Chinese newspaper, 'The Shantung Times,' edited by Rev. W. M. Hayes, president of the college, the first regular newspaper in the colloquial Mandarin, begun in June, 1896.

THE BANGKOK PRESS.

Prior to 1859, our Siamese mission depended upon the Baptist and Congregational presses, since abandoned. But that year one was sent to Bangkok by the Board, and in a year or so reported more than half a million of pages printed annually. The Bible has until recently been issued in separate portions, owing to the size of the volume as necessitated by Siamese type; but the Rev. J. B. Dunlap, the very competent manager, during his furlough in this country in 1895, had matrices made in Philadelphia, which make it possible to print the whole Bible in one volume of moderate size. Siam offers unusual opportunities for Bible Distribution. The priests in their wats (every man is expected to spend more or less time in the priesthood and according to law no one can serve the government until he has done so) are entirely ignorant in

a large majority of cases of their religious tenets, nor do they understand their sacred books in the Palai, so are glad to buy our press publications, which in many cases they have actually taught to their people.

Mr. Dunlap has eight printers at work in his press. "Daybreak," the mission paper, is edited by the missionaries, assisted by the Rev. Boon-Itt. The subscription list is on average as high as that of any local paper. No mission probably does so much in the distribution of religious literature in the vernacular as the Siam mission. Rev. E. P. Dunlap, D.D., in his remarkable itinerations sells thousands of Scripture portions and tracts in a single tour. Siam being a land of rivers and canals, and the people fond of fishing, it is said the book of Jonah is a great favorite. About four million pages were printed last year. The Board appropriated for this press this year \$800. Generous assistance towards the expenses of the establishment came through a recent gift of nearly \$600, from the surplus receipts of Woman's Work for Woman, donated especially for new type.

THE PRESS OF MEXICO CITY.

The Spanish conquerors gave the New World the first printing press, to Mexico in 1536. In 1885 the Presbyterian mission established a press in Mexico City. Last year there were connected with it the Rev. Hubert W. Brown, as editor; Rev. P. Arrellano, associate editor; Rev. J. G. Woods, manager, with a force of nine workmen. One of the chief publications is the *El Faro*, an illustrated fortnightly in Spanish, with about 2000 subscribers. It circulates in all the Protestant missions

in Mexico, and finds readers also in Guatemala and Colombia. It has subscribers too among the Spanish-speaking people in our Southwestern States. The Sabbath-school lesson leaves have a circulation in Cuba to the number of some 4500 copies. An illustrated supplement, in the form of a tract, containing a serial life of Christ, and often a sermon, is issued fortnightly, of which some 14,000 copies are printed. 12,000,000 pages is the total output of the press since 1885. The Board annually grants something over \$3000, while the press has an additional revenue from the field of some \$700. One means of propagating the printed gospel in Mexico is peculiar and very interesting. In various public places in Mexico City are scribes or readers, known as "evangelists," serving for the benefit of the illiterate majority. They are accustomed to charge one cent for reading a tract or small leaflet. One sainted woman is reported as never failing to get a copy of each new tract announced, which she takes to one of these *evangelists* and has him read it aloud, so that he gets the benefit, she herself is edified and the crowds of people sitting or standing by hear a message that the Holy Spirit may own to their salvation.

CHIENG-MAI PRESS.

A small press was established in 1890 at Chieng-Mai for the use of the Laos mission. At the outset the readers were compelled to learn the Siamese, and to make use of the Bible in the Siamese tongue; but now they have Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Psalms and a few other portions in the beautiful Laos type, which through the energy and skill of Rev. S. C. Peoples, M.D., of Lakawn, was made in

Philadelphia. The help rendered by Nan Inta, the first Laos convert, in the translation of Pilgrim's Progress and of the Scriptures is worthy of note in this connection. Among other interesting products of this press is a set of Bible history cards, prepared to meet the almost passionate fondness of the people for games.

Summary of issues from Presbyterian presses in 1895-96:

MISSION.	PAGES.
China, Shanghai	49,041,438
* Guatemala	1,000
Laos, Lakawn	1,352,000
Siam, Bangkok	2,940,900
Mexico, Mexico City	5,704,343
Persia, Oroomiah	631,560
* Chile	1,528,000
* Bogota	50,000
Syria, Beirut	24,986,516

Total number pages.....86,235,757

* Pages printed on presses owned by private firms or Bible and Tract Societies.

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained by addressing Secretaries, Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.