

# SOCIETY IN ITALY—THE SOCIETY'S WORK.

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concerned, are maintained. A better proof of it cannot be given than the fact that since the Encyclical has been published, not a single edition of the Bible or of any part of the Bible in the Italian tongue has been printed by the Roman Catholics in Italy. To be quite sure of this, I had inquiries made a few days ago at the great Central Library of the *De Propaganda Fide* in Rome, and at the Archiepiscopal bookstore in Milan, and the answer was that nobody had heard of a new edition, much less of a new translation of the Bible in Italian. I inquired also if the Encyclical had in any way increased the sale of Holy Scriptures, either in the Latin or in the original tongues, and the answer was equally in the negative. No better proof, I think, can be given of the sad fact that the Encyclical of November 18th, 1893 has, as we say in Italy, 'left the weather it found,' and has exerted no appreciable difference, as far as the study and dissemination of the Word of God in Italy are concerned.

But one may ask, Is it then really impossible for an Italian to get a copy of the Word of God in a version sanctioned by his own Church, so as to read it without disobeying the Church law? I do not say that is impossible for one who is determined to get a Bible at any price to procure one. He can get Sonzogno's edition, which only costs twelve times as much as one of our own Bibles. But he may feel qualms of conscience about that, for Sonzogno's Bible has not been published with the *imprimatur* of the Church, and indeed is not countenanced by the clergy, for although it contains all Martini's notes, it is not accompanied, as the canons of the Church prescribe, by the text of the Vulgate. Therefore he must look elsewhere. Not in ordinary booksellers' shops, however, but on second-hand bookstalls or in some diocesan bookstore. There he may chance to find a stray copy of Martini's own edition, or of some reprint of it done many years ago. It will be in many ponderous volumes and cost from 18 to 40 francs. He may, it is true, content himself with the New Testament, of which an edition (the only one I have been able to procure, and, as far as I know, the only one that has ever been printed of the New Testament alone) has been published in Turin in 1882. I have it by my side as I write; it is a square, thick, ungainly volume, with paper cover, no Latin text, and all Martini's notes. It costs four francs, that is to say, twenty times as much as our cheapest New Testament. The same editor has printed four years ago in a separate volume in better type and style, still with Martini's notes, the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, and this can be got for one and a half francs. Then, to be quite complete, I have been able to find a smaller edition of Gospels and Acts, printed in 1879 in a boys' reformatory at Bosco Marengo, near Alexandria. This can be had in paper cover for fifty centimes, and cloth bound for sixty. It bears the approbation of several Bishops, and well might they approve of it, for the notes of Mons. Martini have been replaced in this edition by those of the Douai Bible, which are even more than Martini's favourable to Romanism.