

the Bible, costly and not easily procured, was searched and valued. Now, in the wise arrangements of God's Providence, it is chiefly the laboring classes who are interested in the blessed Volume. It is not, as formerly, those who are to be found among the retinues of emperors and viceroys, that listen to the tale of redeeming love. It is chiefly the poor to whom the Gospel is preached, and thus your Society and others engaged in a similar work are provided with labourers which three centuries ago were not to be found. With perhaps three exceptions, the Colporteurs were all brought out of the darkness of popery, and some of them have evidently a considerable knowledge of the Scriptures. Doubtless, they do good beyond the mere sale of so many copies of the Bible; and a seed dropped, a word spoken in love in a careless ear, will one day be found, in some instances at least, to have been owned of God to the conversion of a soul. It is to be regretted that so many of them have, for obvious reasons, little opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached or of benefitting by fellowship with other Christians. Altogether their calling from one point of view is not an enviable one. They are exposed to all weathers, to cold and to long seasons of wet and heat; they offer a hook which God has in mercy given them to guide man, with his darkened heart and wandering step, to Him who is the "Light of the world;" but the scowl of the bigot, and the contemptuous sneer of the unbeliever, is too often the only reply. It is sometimes difficult in these circumstances for these sons of the South to present the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit to those who oppose them. Consider, that all this is repeated from day to day, and from month to month, many rejecting where one makes a purchase or gives a word of encouragement, and you will see that the life of a Colporteur in Italy is not an easy one. At the same time in all labour, and especially in Christian labour, there is a compensation; all hearts are not closed to the story of grace, and labour in the Lord's vineyard, if a service of love, is richly rewarded. Your Colporteurs sow the seed with pains, and I trust with prayers. Some fruit does gladden their hearts; and the readiness with which so many attend when a ball is opened in any city or town for the first time for the preaching of the Gospel, is one evidence that their labor is not in vain."

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