

Enough; the rest you can divine for yourselves; with what eager haste he went to the assembly, and how there the Lord met him and revealed to him the way of peace. And Giuseppe Moreno, for such is the name of the hero of my little story (minister of the Methodist Evangelical Church at Naples), is now one of the most zealous, devoted and heaven-owned preachers of the Word of life throughout the length and breadth of the Evangelical Church of Italy.

I quote this as one instance of the good wrought by the diffusion of the Bible in Italy which has come to my knowledge; but I repeat what I said a while back, that a great deal of what you are doing remains unseen. Why, your Report tells of some thousands of Holy Scriptures, either in their entirety or in portions, circulated every month, and of hundreds of thousands sold and circulated since the opening of Italy in 1859. Now what, I ask, has become of these copies of God's Word? What are they doing? Where are they? I should say, judging from my own personal observation, that barely a third part has been sold within the circle of our existing evangelical churches and congregations. Then where are the remaining two-thirds? A caviller may say, "Many of them have fallen into the hands of the priests and have been confiscated and destroyed." Be it so. "Many of them have been bought and sold again, and turn up often in unexpected quarters; many of them have been purchased under the impulse of curiosity, or by way of protest against priestly interdiction, and lie dust-covered on the book-shelves." Be it so. Make all these deductions, there will still be a large residue, and where are they? They are in peasant huts in far-off mountain valleys, and amidst the rich Lombard plains, and under the shadow of the lofty chesnuts of the Apennines, and among the orange groves of Sicily. They are in the knapsacks of the soldiers, the stalwart sons of Italy gathered from the North, from the South, from the East, and from the West. They are in the studies of thoughtful priests who are timidly inquiring after the Truth, or vainly hoping for what I believe will never come while Popery is Popery—that is, reform from within the Church. They are in the hands of Nicodemuses who would fain come to Christ, but not in the light of day, and of thoughtful sceptics and of simple-hearted Catholics, who, in that confusion of mind which the liberal God will condone, are reading them together with their Litanies to Mary and their guide-books to the Confessional for the aliment of their souls. They are doing what the sap is doing in the tree during the long winter months; what the seed-corn is doing under the soil before it peers out into the sunshine; what the leaven is doing while it is secretly and silently, by processes undistinguishable to us, diffusing itself in the mass. Just as that sap is preparing the verdant glory of the coming spring; just as that seed-corn has in itself the prophecy and the promise of the coming harvest; just as that leaven will leaven the whole lump, so these copies of the Holy Scriptures diffused through Italy by the agency of your colporteurs are preparing for Italy a glorious spring-tide, a glorious harvest and a leavened purity and sweetness. That is what they are doing. Let no one think that I am over sanguine, and that I overlook our difficulties. No one who has laboured for half a score of years in Italy is likely to err in over enthusiasm. His danger is the other way. The over-sanguine are the casual