

or for some belated romance of Voltaire. The case is similar in BELGIUM. In both countries, also, we have too frequent glimpses of another figure whom the colporteur knows only too well; it is the *curé*, who, when he cannot hinder the acceptance of the little Portions and New Testaments, follows in the track of the salesman to collect and destroy the copies which have been put into the people's hands. In spite, however, of many difficulties, the circulation in both countries has increased; that in France by some 20,000 in a total of over 146,000,* while that in Belgium has advanced from over 16,000 to over 19,000.† This is encouraging and in the journals of the men there is much to engage the attention. But in Europe, so far as the Society's work is concerned, the centres of special interest, for the past year, lie elsewhere, and it is to SPAIN, to ITALY, and eastward to HUNGARY, that the eye must chiefly turn.

To SPAIN—for seldom have the records of any year been more remarkable than of that which has recently closed. Long recognized as the Puritan of Catholicism, intense, conservative, contemptuous of others, the Spaniard has for centuries been one of the least hopeful subjects for evangelical effort. But in one of the first sentences in his report, Mr. Jameson confesses that he has hitherto erred by being too pessimistic, and that he now must give another and a far more hopeful view of the progress of Scriptural Christianity in the Peninsula. "I feel entitled," he writes, "from the history of the year, to lay it down as an ascertained fact that when the people can get to some acquaintance with the Scripture, without overshadowing influence, there is a glad and hearty reception of it." This conclusion is supported by many facts. Among other means of engaging serious attention to the truth of the Bible a band of educated men have visited many of the centres of population. And with what results? Here is an account of a meeting at which an address was given on the Scriptures and on the Society's work, and which was attended by a thousand people. "Think," says Mr. Jameson, with his memory full of the depressing past, "think of a thousand people at a Bible meeting in Spain!" In other places there are instances hardly less noteworthy; the people gather in large numbers; they crowd out smaller halls; they fill the reading-rooms at the new Depôts: in fact the Depôt, with not a few, has superseded the café and become a popular resort. The Press becomes interested, and comments favourably on the astonishing work of the British Society. Even in the Chamber of Deputies one of the ministers declares "that the Government sees nothing censurable in the publicity which is being given to the Society." In one village we read that there is "hardly any one who is not studying the Scriptures;" in another, that "there are many Evangelicals, and that the people love the Book." In some 300 of the railway-stations large placards on the Society's work arrest attention. A new issue of the Scriptures in attractive type and in the paragraph arrangement of the text (the first of the kind among the Spanish editions) has lately been published.‡ So general has been the interest awakened by these and other means that in one very significant sentence Mr. Jameson affirms, "It is not too much to say that the Bible has been made the theme of more conversations in Spain during the past year than in all the centuries since the Reformation." He adds, "The future of the regeneration of Spain is to-day most unquestionably in the hands of the Bible Society, and each year as it passes will make this more apparent." All these are remarkable statements, but Mr. Jameson's acquaintance with the Peninsula is exceptional, and he supports them by the marshalled testimonies of a report, one of the most detailed and voluminous he has ever prepared.

* Total circulation for the year in the French Agency, 146,827 (previous year 126,797); of this by colportage 70,742 (previous year, 64,656).

† Total circulation for the year in the Belgian Agency, 19,832 (previous year, 16,455); by colportage 9,049 (previous year 9,266).

‡ Total circulation for the year in the Spanish Agency, 64,495 (previous year 4,973); by colportage 39,416 (previous year, 37,248).