

ITALY.—BIBLE CARRIAGE WORK.

“I have been out for fifteen days, during which time I visited nine fairs or markets at Pavia, Voghera, Stradella, Piacenza, Parma, and Guastalla. Our colporteur was alone after that at Mentone, whence he was to go on to Verona and Venice. At Voghera and Stradella, following my usual plan, I went on selling from the carriage for about two hours, preaching to all who came; and then, leaving the carriage with Curti, I went from house to house, encountering the laugh of infidels and the fierce looks of bigots, but very successfully selling books to the value of 200 francs. All who buy know that it is the Word of God, that in reading it they will read the mind and heart of God, and that in His holy love for us He gave His son to die that we might be pardoned, sanctified, and guided in all things up to the moment when we shall be received, if believers, into our Father's house. I seek ever to keep close to the essential points of Christianity, without troubling to inform my hearers that I am Evangelical. If some one asks me about that, I reply that at the last day the Lord will not ask us if we are Protestants or Catholics, but if we have loved and accepted Him as our Saviour.

“At Stradella and at Parma I preached in the quarters of the respective local evangelists, of whom one was Free Church, the other Methodist; and at Voghera I was with the evangelist of Count Guicciardini, connected with the Brethren; and all recognised with joy that I was engaged in a work useful to them, as well as to all the other various bodies of Christians. Even a Roman Catholic priest encouraged me by buying some books and inviting others to buy, acknowledging that to seek a revival of religious feeling and to disseminate religious books was a holy work. Some unbelieving Liberals also confessed that it was a work useful to their country, because the Bible teaches us to love God and the king, and to be pious and liberal. One who had bought a Bible carried it off to the bishop to ask if he might freely read it; and he assured me, in the presence of many witnesses,

that the bishop replied thus: ‘Read, and not only read, but practise all that this Book commands.’ At Piacenza I sold and spoke in the market-place, by the light of the moon, to a crowd of promenaders.

“An agent of the police came to ask for my papers. I replied that I had them all right, but that they were not necessary, as by the law the sale of books and when he had seen them was satisfied; but I complained that he had interrupted me in my work, and he made excuses that he was afraid I should sell republican and socialistic books. Seeing some soldiers about to enter a disreputable house, I accosted them, and after a minute's conversation they bought some portions, and went quietly away reading them. At a village near Parma I had no more portions left, and felt discouraged, but the Lord so answered prayer that I sold twenty-two Testaments. A little sermon on the Piazza sold me five more directly, and the people were enchanted to be told that they might be good Christians, and yet ardently love liberty and the fatherland. At Parma, where they said I should do nothing, we sold six francs' worth in three hours, and in the evening had an excellent meeting in the Methodist Chapel, where they had special prayer for the carriage, and praised God for what it had already done. At Auastalla, having seen our dear Vaudois evangelist, M. Revel, he feared we should have no success, but we sold twelve francs' worth in the morning. However, in the middle of speaking to the people, I got a telegram saying I must preach at Milan on the next Lord's day, so I had to leave all to Curti; but M. Pons will, perhaps, be able to give some assistance at Venice for a little. If not, I shall return to it at once. Oh, how I love this Bible carriage work, which daily proves to me the tender, paternal care of my God, keeping me from all harm, inspiring me with the needful courage and wisdom how to sell His own Word among a people hitherto forbidden to read it in their own tongue! The large proportion of those to whom I speak in the marketplaces have never even seen such a thing as an Italian Bible.”