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THE MAKING OF A BIBLE. *

The pen which records the incidents of forty years spent among the Sioux Indians has been busy all that time in preparing the Scriptures for the use of that tribe, and we take great pleasure in gleanings from the pages of this volume some illustrations of the process by which the Dakota language, as yet unwritten, was learned by Christian missionaries, reduced to a written form, grammatically analyzed and mastered, and finally enriched by a complete version of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The beginning of missionary work among the Dakotas dates from the year 1834, when two brothers from Connecticut, by the name of Pond, built their cabin on the bank of Lake Calhoun. Dr. Williamson and Mr. Stevens followed them the next year, and on the first of June, 1837, after a journey of nearly three months from Massachusetts, the Rev. Stephen R. Riggs and his wife Mary, missionaries of the American Board, landed from a steamer at the point where the Minnesota empties into the Mississippi, and there entered into the wilderness in which they were to sojourn forty years, as the friends and teachers of the Dakota Indians.

Their first business was to master the language, and in this they had such meagre aid as could come from a vocabulary of five or six hundred words, which Mr. Stevens had gathered from the brothers Pond. Beyond this they must get their ears opened to catch strange sounds and their tongues trained to utter them; and the fleeting sound must be presented to the eye and perpetuated by fixed characters upon the written page. The English language might serve some purposes in the missionary work, but Dr. Riggs says, "for the purposes of civilization, and especially of Christianization, we have found culture in the native tongue indispensable." How the work was done we must let our author tell in his own way:

* MARY / ND I : Forty years with the Sioux. By Stephen R. Riggs, D.D., LL.D., Missionary of the A. B. C. F. M., etc. Chicago. W. G. Holmes. 1880.

It was no part of our business to make the Dakota language. It was simply the missionary's work to report it faithfully. The system of notation had in the main been settled upon before Mary and I joined the Mission. It was of course to be phonetic, as nearly as possible. The English alphabet was to be used as far as it could be. These were the principles that guided and controlled the writing of Dakota. In their application it was soon found that only five pure vowel sounds were used. So far the work was easy. Then it was found that x, and v, and r, and g, and j, and f, and c, with their English powers, were not needed. But there were four clicks and two gutturals and a nasal that must in some way be expressed. It was then, even more than now, a matter of pecuniary importance that the language to be printed should require as few new characters as possible. And so "n" was taken to represent the nasal; "q" represented one of the clicks; "g" and "r" represented the gutturals; and "c" and "j" and "x" were used to represent "ch," "zh" and "sh." The other clicks were represented by marked letters. Since that time some changes have been made; x and r have been discarded from the purely Dakota alphabet. In the Dakota grammar and dictionary, which was published fifteen years afterward, an effort was made to make the notation philosophical, accordant with itself. The changes which have since been adopted have all been in the line of the dictionary.

SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE LANGUAGE.

The language of counting in Dakota was limited. The "wancha, nonpa, yamne"—one, two, three, up to ten, every child learned, as he bent down his fingers and thumbs until all were gathered into two bunches, and then let them loose as geese flying away. Eleven was *ten more one*, and so on. Twenty was *ten twos* or *twice ten*, and thirty, *ten threes*. With each ten the fingers were all bent down, and one was kept down to remember the ten. Thus when ten tens were reached the whole of the two hands was bent down, each finger meaning ten. This was the perfected "bending down." It was opawinge—one hundred. Then when the hands were both bent down for hundreds the climax was supposed to be reached, which could only be expressed by "again also bending down." When something larger than this was reached it was a *great count*—something which neither they nor we can comprehend—a million.

On the other side of one the Dakota language is still more defective. Only one word of any definiteness exists—*hankay*, half. We can say *hankay-hankay*—*the half of a half*. But it does not seem to have been much used. Beyond this there was nothing. A *piece* is a word of uncertain quantity, and is not quite suited to introduce among the certainties of mathematics. Thus the poverty of the language has been a great obstacle in teaching arithmetic. And that poorness of language shows their poverty of thought in the same line. The Dakotas are not, as a general thing, at all smart in arithmetic.

A HUMBLE HOME.

After three months spent at Lake Harriet, Mr. Riggs joined Dr. Williamson at Lac-qui-parle, two hundred miles in the interior, where the latter had erected a log-house, a story and a half high. In the upper part were three rooms, the largest of which, ten feet by eighteen, was appropriated to Mr. Riggs and his wife. He says:

That room we made our home for five winters. There were some hardships about such close quarters, but all in all, Mary and I never enjoyed five winters better than those spent in that upper room. There our first three children were born. There we worked in acquiring the language. There we received our Dakota visitors. There I wrote and wrote again my ever-growing dictionary. And there, with what help I could obtain, I prepared for the

printer the greater part of the New Testament in the language of the Dakotas. It was a consecrated room.

I went to New York City and was, the next seven months, engaged in getting through the press the grammar and dictionary of the Dakota language.

(Of the various hindrances and delays, and of the burning of the printing office in which the work was in progress, and the loss of quite a number of pages of the book which had to be again made up, I need not speak. They are ordinary incidents. Early in the summer of 1852 the work was done—and done I believe to the satisfaction of all parties. It has obtained the commendation of literary men generally, and it was said that for no volume published by the Smithsonian Institution, up to that time, was the demand so great as for that. It is now out of print and the book can only be bought at fancy prices.

The question of republication is sometimes talked of, but no steps have been taken yet to accomplish the object. While as the years have gone by, and the book has been tested by Dakota scholars and found to be all that was ever claimed for it, yet, in case of a republication some valuable additions can be made to the sixteen thousand words which it contains. The language itself is growing. Never probably in its whole history, has it grown so much in any quarter of a century as it has in the twenty-five years since the dictionary was published. Besides, we have recently been learning more of the Teton dialect, which is spoken by more than half of the whole Sioux nation. And as the translation of the Bible has progressed, thoughts and images have been brought in which have given the language an unction and power unknown to it before.

PROGRESS.

The various steps of progress in translating the Bible are not distinctly traced, but the general outline is given as follows:

Late in the fall of 1839 the Gospel of Mark and some other small portions were ready to be printed, and Dr. Williamson went with his family to Ohio where he spent the winter. The next printing of portions of the Bible was done in 1842-'3, when Dr. Williamson had completed a translation of the book of Genesis. We had now commenced to translate from the Hebrew and Greek. This was continued through all the years of our missionary life. So far as I can remember there was no arrangement of work between the Doctor and myself, but while I commenced the New Testament, and having completed that, turned to the Psalms, and having finished to the end of Malachi, made some steps backward through Job, Esther, Nehemiah and Ezra, he, commencing with Genesis, closed his work in the last months of his life with Second Chronicles, having taken in also the book of Proverbs.

Before leaving the subject of Bible translation let me bear testimony to the uniform kindness and courtesy which Dr. Williamson extended to me through all this work of more than forty years. It could hardly be said of either of us that we were very yielding. The Doctor was a man of positive opinions, and there were abundant opportunities in prosecuting our joint work for differences of judgment. But while we freely criticised, each the other's work, we freely yielded to each other the right of ultimate decision.

In the latter part of 1863, Mr. Riggs devoted himself to a revision and completion of the New Testament, and in the following autumn he spent three months in the Bible House, reading the proof of the New Testament. Dr. Williamson had also added a revised Genesis and Proverbs, and the Bible Society began at that time to make electrotype plates of the version.

The multiplication of Dakota readers during the next few years gave a new impulse to the work of translating the Scriptures, and by 1870, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Isaiah, together with the other four books of Moses, were added to what had been printed five years before. In the summer of 1872 the book of Daniel was translated, and in the winter that followed the first copy of the Minor Prophets was made.

The Bible in its complete form, translated, electrotyped, printed, and bound, appeared in the spring of 1879, and not long after Dr. Williamson, who had contributed so much to its excellence, fell asleep at the age of eighty years.

These copious extracts indicate with sufficient fulness the difficulties and the delays incident to so great a task as the rendering of the entire Bible into a new and barbarous tongue; but it tasks the imagination to tell what the fruit will be of such protracted toil. But this we know, that the Book has power to waken thought, to quicken conscience, to convict of sin, to manifest the love of God, to reveal good tidings of great joy. It is a civilizing and evangelizing power, mighty for pulling down the strongholds of sin, effectual in building up the kingdom of Christ. The Dakotas are a different people to-day from what they would have been had not Riggs and Williamson given them the Scriptures.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st DECEMBER, 1880.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, October 19th, at 7.30, P. M., A. T. McCord, Esq. in the chair. After the reading of Scripture and Prayer, the reading and confirming of the minutes of the last meeting &c., a report was presented from a Special Committee, which had been appointed to consider the matter of prices, and the management of Branch Depositories. After some discussion this report was referred back to the Committee. The Secretaries having reported that Mr. Robert Black, of Blenheim, had given fifty dollars to the funds of the Society, he was elected a life member of the Society. The Depository's cash account was submitted, other routine business transacted, and the meeting was closed with prayer led by the Rev. John Smith.

The Directors met again on Tuesday, Nov. 16th, at the usual hour, the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. Scripture was read by the Rev. J. M. Cameron, and prayer led by the Rev. S. J. Hunter. After the reading of minutes &c., a second report was presented by the Committee on prices &c., recommending that all Bibles should be marked with their prices in plain figures with the view to promote uniformity of prices in all the Branches; and also that a few of the prices be slightly altered in such a way as to make them more convenient for change, and yet not only preserve the principle of selling at the average net cost; but make a nearer approximation to each book being sold at its own particular cost price. After a very full discussion this report was adopted. Reports were also presented from the Committee on the Ketchum Bequests, and the Committee on the care of the premises. The consideration of the latter was postponed. Reports were submitted from

the following agents : The Revds. J. G. Manly, John Gray, C. R. Matthew, H. D. Hunter, S. Kappeler, E. M. C. Bottrill, W. Brookman, A. D. MacDonald, and Dr. Hodgkin, and also from Colporteurs Lowry, McPhail, Taylor and Rouleau. A grant of Bibles and Testaments was made to a Sunday-school at Mecunoma, Muskoka. The Depository's cash account and other ordinary business was attended to, and the meeting was closed with prayer led by the Rev. J. M. King.

THE SOCIETY'S EXHIBIT AT THE AGRICULTURAL SHOWS.

The exhibition and sale of the Society's Bibles at the Agricultural Shows has this year been more encouraging than ever. The Rev. Dr. Hodgkin, who first suggested this plan of endeavouring to increase the interest of our people in the work of the Society, kindly and gratuitously gave his time and services at the Toronto Exhibition, in drawing attention to the Society's large case with Scriptures in one hundred different languages, and in explaining to the visitors many interesting things connected with various translations, and with the history and work of the Society. The Society's Colporteur, Mr. J. E. Taylor, was also in attendance, and sold a number of copies of the Good Book. A number of people were also much pleased at getting for five cents, the little pamphlet with the 16th verse of chapter III. of St. John's Gospel printed in 215 languages, in which our Parent Society issues the Sacred Scriptures. The large case was also sent to the Provincial Show at Hamilton, where it also attracted much attention. Dr. Hodgkin offered his services gratuitously also for the week at Hamilton ; but at the last moment was prevented from going by some other pressing business. However Mr. Taylor, who has shown special fitness for this work, received very hearty assistance and encouragement from that valuable and valued friend of the Society, Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Branch there.

From Hamilton Mr. Taylor went with the smaller case, containing Scriptures in twenty-five different languages, to the Fairs at St. Thomas, Thamesville, Watford and London, at all which places he was received with much kindness and assisted by the officers of the Branches. In the two months of September and October, Mr. Taylor succeeded in selling 1056 Bibles and Testaments. This result, the benefit of which cannot be measured by the mere figures which record it, is of itself valuable. But besides this we trust that many minds have had the work, which the Society is doing in all parts of the world, brought before them in such a way that they will henceforth take a more practical interest in it. Surely no part of the world enjoys more of the blessings connected with, and resulting from, the possession of the Bible than this Province of Ontario. Surely its inhabitants should be a Bible-loving and Bible-giving people, valuing its own privileges, and showing its thankfulness by endeavouring to send the Holy Scriptures to those who have them not.

THE DÜSSELDORF EXHIBITION.

This exhibition assumed dimensions far beyond what had been expected, as many as 40,000 tickets being sold in one day. As the multitudes streamed in, it was felt by the Agent of the Society, as well as by Christian friends at Düsseldorf, that some effort must be made for them. Authority was at once obtained from London; Pastor Imhäuser undertook to negotiate with the Council of the Exhibition, and such was his influence that in twenty-four hours the arrangements were made. The Bible stand was brought from Wiesbaden, and senior colporteur Weiser took charge of it. Mr. C. Marriott, by the exercise of great tact and energy, overcame all difficulties with the police, and the work began. The stand was opposite the principle entrance, so that every one who entered to the Exhibition from the town side had to pass it.

The work lasted through the months of July, August, and September. In that time there were sold 118 Bibles, 320 Testaments, and 101 portions, and given 47,187 portions. In his report, the Rev. G. Palmer Davies says:—

“ LIGHT AND SHADE

alternate in the experiences of those engaged. In the first weeks, the thing was new and strange. The police watched it very closely, and now and then threatened trouble. Then one day the power of evil seemed to be set loose. Fanatics and sceptics took the books, tore them to pieces, and scattered the leaves to the winds till the ground looked as if it had ‘snowed Bibles.’ The friends were discouraged. But when I inquired carefully into the matter, it turned out that while up to that time 21,000 copies had been distributed, the number of copies torn on that fatal day, and in single copies before and after, was not even 100! Later, it ceased altogether. When it was attempted, in many cases the bystanders interfered; in one case

THE POLICE,

in the following not unamusing manner:—

“A gentleman was offered a Gospel. He declined, and went on to the Exhibition gates; then, suddenly turning back, he went to our friend, who was carrying on his work in his quiet Christian way, and asked for a copy. He no sooner got it than he tore it to pieces and scattered the leaves on the ground, his countenance glowing with hate and contempt. But a surprise, which neither he nor anybody else expected, was in store for him. A policeman stepped up, seized him by the arm, and said, ‘What right have you, sir, to make such a litter at the Exhibition gates? I saw the whole transaction. Nobody forced the book on you. You walked deliberately back and asked for it. Who is to pick up these pages, you or I? The gentleman looked petrified, and, amidst the giggles of the bystanders, picked up the torn leaves one by one, put them into his pocket, and disappeared as quickly as possible among the crowd.

“So much for the shade: the

LIGHT AND JOY

were immeasurably greater.

“When the first 15,000 copies had been circulated, Weiser wrote:—

“‘Joy, joy on joy: such is my experience. The work is borne along on a full tide of blessing. The Lord is with us. Yesterday I offered a copy to a lady and her daughters; she repulsed me roughly. “I never take anything of the sort,” she said. I said, “Madame, you never take the Word of God?” “The Word of God?” she said; “pardon me, pardon me, I did not know it was that. Give me a copy, and my daughters too, as a memento of the Exhibition. I read my Bible every day. Excuse my rough answer.” I said, “Madame, I am too much accustomed to be repulsed to feel it deeply for my own sake. I out-grieve for the wrong people do themselves when they despise God’s Word.”’”

"People of all ranks and conditions came to the stall to testify the gratification at finding us there. At times they gave a contribution unasked. The total sum given in this way at the stall was about £6. The greatest pleasure was afforded by the visits of those to whom the whole work of the Society was new and strange, and our work a

WONDER.

"A well dressed gentleman came up and said, 'I can't understand why you give these books away in this manner. It must cost money.' "Well," I said, 'I am a sower sent out to sow, and I cast my seed at a venture. But of this I am certain, that in the proportion in which my seed springs up and bears fruit will the State cease to enlarge old prisons and to build new ones. Should all the seed sown by our Society, and others of a similar character, spring up and bear fruit, then all the gun-founderies of the world will have to be shut up, and the manufacturers of instruments of slaughter be involved in a universal bankruptcy.' He replied, 'I knew nothing of this great work. All honour to the men who are carrying it on.' 'That is only one side of our work,' I went on to say. 'It has another side. This book is put into men's hands to transform them into the image of the living God.' He grew a little embarrassed, and left me, saying, 'Excuse me, excuse me. The thing is to me quite new. I wish you prosperity.'

"Another gentleman came up and said, 'What an idea! *The Bible at the Exhibition!* Well, after all, it is what was wanted. When one thinks of it, it was a gap; and the

ENGLISH,

like a practical people, just pounced upon it and filled it up.' Weisen adds that on the day when a special train brought out the English iron manufacturers, who held their this year's congress in Dusseldorf, many of them came to his stall and seemed pleased, though he could not understand what was said.

"One more incident and I have done :—

'A LIVERY SERVANT

came one day up to my stall. I offered him a Gospel. He refused it. He stepped aside and watched the people as they came and went with their Gospels in their hands. He then came up again and said, 'What earthly object can you have in view in giving the books away in that manner?' I said, 'This is God's Word, and it says that *you* are a lost sinner.' He started. 'Didn't your father and mother tell you so when when you were a boy, and urge you to fear God and seek to save your soul?' 'That is quite true,' he replied. 'Well,' I said, 'have you done it?' 'No, I have not,' was his answer. 'Are you going to do it?' 'Well, I don't know, but at any rate show me a Bible. What does it cost?' He bought it, walked away with it under his arm, apparently greatly moved.

"In conclusion let me say that I yesterday morning received a letter from Mr. Marriott, announcing the despatch to Frankfort of the first thousand marks (£50) as a contribution of our Rhenish and Westphalian friends towards the expense of our Exhibition. To me personally the joy of this work is doubled by the fact that it is the joint work of ourselves and our German brethren."

THE BIBLE HAS ITS PLACE OUTSIDE.

The following letter from the Rev. G. Palmer Davies will be read with special interest. It is dated September 30 :—

"The work in Dusseldorf will soon close, and then a full report of our experience will reach you. One incident has been so encouraging, and so out of the ordinary course of our experience, that I cannot help sending it at once.

"At the Dusseldorf Industrial Exhibition, a lady asked one of the official attendants, 'Where can I find the Bibles?' To which he scoffingly replied, 'The Bibles—oh! the Bible has its place outside.' The rest explains itself. The lady went to the Bible stand, and, a few days later, sent the enclosed poem, which I forward in the original German, and in a translation which I have attempted, and which will have at least one merit—that of being true to the sentiments of the writer. To avoid all misapprehension, I must say that the Council of the Exhibition is not responsible for the Bibles being outside. This is due to other circumstances, and we owe it to the friendliness of the Exhibition authorities that we were permitted to erect our Bible stand at all." The poem is entitled "Die Bibel draussen!" and may be thus rendered:

Astounded, we had gazed at glorious sights,
Of two large provinces industry's noble fruits,
And grace and taste had reared the structure,
Where every art shone bright with cheerful ray

And such colour-play, and colour melody,
And such rush and roar of the billowy, joyous life,
Where spirit energy and soul-creative force,
Titan-like, full many a height had scaled

Yes, Labour, thou leadest man to noble aims,
Art in thyself a limpid well of bliss;
Yet only then dost thou bring precious gains,
When thou thyself art bright with beams divine,
When thou, who scr'st, wingest thine upward flight,
And touchest Heaven with thy golden wand,
And sing'st thy song to thy Creator's praise.

"Of all the gems show me now *the gem*,"
I asked, "the Bible," "The Bible!"
The Bible has its place OUTSIDE,
Replied the man, and in his gestic
And in his features' play was seen contempt.

"The Bible has its place outside!"
Yet inside, in the world's very centre,
Diffusing life and brightness.

"The Bible has its place outside!"
Yet is she Queen,
Reigning by lowliness, by love o'ercoming.

"The Bible has its place outside!"
Yes, in yon humble tent, an unpretending mustard grain,
And yet the tree whose leaves o'erspread the world,
Under whose shade the millions refuge find.

"The Bible has its place outside!"
Yet in its fountain clear the noblest art is seen to plunge,
And then emerge, with eye clear as the sun,
To wing its heavenward flight on eagle's pinions,
"The Bible has its place outside!"
No, *inside*, in the heart's most blessed "DEEP-WITHIN."

O strong and gentle tidings of great joy!
Spite of them all, thou shalt be Conqueror, thou shalt win the prize
Yes, come, come one, come all, and take God's precious gift—
Not outside, inside be its place of honour,
Ashamed let none be of the blessed Word.

Thus, like a pearl, it rests in the soul's hidden depths;
Thus, like the gentle sun, it darts its healing rays,
And, where it shines, strews life along its path,
And makes the desert bloom, and dry lands moist with dew.

Strive *thou* to make the tidings of great joy,
God's blessed Bible, thy soul's choicest treasure,
And help to Jesu's praise to spread it far and wide,
To earth's remotest bounds.

EXTRACTS FROM THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY'S REPORT.

GERMANY.

Mr. Davies, with a tinge of disappointment, describes his year of work as having "opened in sunshine and closed in cloud."

The task of reducing the expenses of his Agency has been an unwelecome task. To raise the prices of his editions, to lessen the number of his colporteurs, when the work was prospering and the men ready to go forth, were duties loyally but not willingly done. But the Committee were the first to feel the pain, and not theirs was the responsibility.

THE COLPORTEURS.—The German Colporteurs, sixty strong, have had a hard year's work, and in addition to the depressed state of industry have had to contend with the severest winter known for years. A heavy knapsack carried along over roads deep with snow, requires a vigorous frame and a light heart beneath it, or the journey will soon end. Of twenty-nine colporteurs attached to the Berlin District, thirteen have been more or less laid aside.

Of the spirit which actuates these men, the following pathetic letter is an interesting manifestation. It is written by ex-colporteur Orłowski, and is given in his own words:—

"When one had been thirty years at Bible work you can understand that it had become a second nature. I feel so wretched. Had my good wife been still with me I might feel better off. But she is gone, and my work is gone, and much else is gone. What remains is a broken-down body. May God soon take me home! I was delighted with the reports. But when I read them I have no rest within the four walls of my home. I cannot range the land with my Bibles, so I rush out into the open field to get breathing-room, so strong is the memory. Whenever you write, every line is precious. If I were thirty years younger I would begin the work over again, and choose by preference the very hardest fields. But it is of no use. I will write every three months. If you do not hear, you will know that either I am ill or dead."

The extracts given by Mr. Davies from the colporteurs' reports are exceedingly interesting, and from them the Committee select the following: the first two in order to describe colportage in the country and colportage in the town. The contrast is sharp and painful.

" IN THE COUNTRY.

"I came to the Castle of F——. Outside the walls I found a house, apparently uninhabited. I went in and found a man chopping wood. 'It is good,' said he 'that you have come again, for you are wanted. The sentinel has orders to tell you what to do.' I was sent on to the Castle, where I met a warm welcome. The matron loves God's Word. The servants were at once summoned, and soon stood in a circle round me and my knapsack. The matron recommended my books, and spoke warmly of what the Bible is, or ought to be for us all. It was quite a little Bible meeting. The matron spoke; I spoke; all listened attentively. It was a most blessed hour. There was scarcely one of those present who left without having at least bought a Testament.

"From the castle I went to an out-house. On the lower floor I found no one. On the upper floor there was a maid at work. 'Have you a Bible?' 'No, but I am longing for one, for I have never had one since I left school.' She took the Bible, looked at it, rejoiced over it with most touching manifestations of joy. 'Now at last I have it; I have it,' she said, 'and will

never part from it any more.' She thanked me again and again, and thanked God, too, that she now had a Bible of her own.

" IN THE TOWN.

" In accordance with your instructions I one day last week noted every house I visited, and every grown-up person to whom I offered my books. In 11 working hours I visited 38 houses, in which there were 156 dwellings, 9 work-shops, 2 yards, where people were occupied, and 2 unfinished houses. I offered my books to about 280 persons. Of the reception I met with and the answers I received I can speak positively as to the following. Five families had Bibles and read them. Three families were those of advanced Christians. Eleven families had no Bibles, and if they had would have no time to read them. They had only time for work and gain! They had no need of, and no wish for, God's Word! One man said: 'Bring me your Bibles when I am dead; in life they are not necessary.' In 8 dwellings I had to bear the brunt of Socialistic scorn and hate. Sometimes I was told, 'if you but had Lassalle's books' (Lassalle is the prophet of the Social Democrats). Thirteen times the people said, 'Religion has been abolished, the Registrar's Office is now everything' (baptism and marriage in church were obligatory, recent legislation has made them optional). Twice brandy, not the Bible, was asked for. Four times I was told to come again. Six times the people were really too poor. Five persons said they would have bought Bibles had they contained the Apocryphal books. (One workman said he had torn his Bible to pieces and flung it on the dung-hill. In all other cases all I could hear was that the people did not want a Bible. Whether they had Bibles or not I cannot tell. On that day I only sold three copies."

Another contrast is presented by the same house and people on two occasions, the second time under altered circumstances.

" Last September I entered a house where I found the family in deep distress. Their rent was high, two months of it were due, and the landlord was a hard man. All had been prepared by them to carry off the furniture stealthily by night, and leave the apartment empty. 'This is not right,' I said. 'Have you never thought of God? He made heaven and earth, and the morning star, and can send you help or soften your landlord's heart.' They were impressed with what I said, and bought the cheapest Testament I had.

" Six months later I entered the house again. As soon as the woman saw me she ran to call her husband. 'How often we have talked of you,' he said. 'Now all goes well with us, for you taught us to turn to God. But for you, who knows what would have become of us! Walk in.' And so I was compelled to take coffee with them. They are diligent readers of the Scriptures. They could not cease thanking me. 'You owe me no thanks,' I said; 'thank God.'"

A third contrast, between conditions outwardly similar, but by a great gulf divided, is thus described:—

POVERTY WITHOUT THE BIBLE.

" Poverty and want are very general, and are also accompanied only too often by open and avowed unbelief. In one dwelling I found three rooms occupied by four families. In a kitchen I found a woman and two children. The whole furniture was a bench, a footstool, and a bedstead without bedding. On straw, in this bedstead, the woman lay ill. I spoke to her of the Saviour, but she did not care to listen. Her heart was very hard, and her spirit bitter."

POVERTY WITH THE BIBLE.

" I entered another dwelling in another part of the city. I found a woman at a washing-tub. I offered her a Bible. She burst into tears. 'The Bible,'

she said; 'the Bible is my only comfort.' Her story was soon told. She had been a Sunday-school teacher. She married a 'steady' man. He got out of work. Idleness brought temptation. He took to drinking. What he got he spent in the public-house; she supports him, herself and her two children. Every word I spoke to her was as balm to her wounded spirit. 'Heavy as my burden is, the Lord helps me to bear it,' she said. The Bible and the Sunday-school had borne fruit."

The next extract well illustrates that blowing of wind whereit listeth, of which we hear the sound or see the signs in mysterious preparations of the heart within for the appeal which comes from without.

"I rang at a bell. The maid who answered peeped out of the half-open door, and asked what I wanted. I thrust in a Bible as my reply. She flung open the door, and started back frightened. She took the book, turned over a few leaves, and then went to fetch the money.

"'It is very strange,' she said, when she came back, 'I was at work in the kitchen, cleaning the plates, when texts of Scripture I had learned in school came up in my memory one after the other. I said to myself, You learned these texts, and now have not so much as a Bible to look them up in. At that instant the bell rang, and before saying a word, you thrust a Bible through the half-open door. That is why I was so frightened.' She promised now that she had a Bible to read it diligently."

One of the colporteurs describes a scene that may teach a useful lesson to many a parent, who looks round upon his young children and wonders what they will be when they grow up. It is called "A little child's first purchase."

"In a weaver's house I found a little girl. Her parents refused to buy. I took the child and said, 'Do you know that Jesus loves you?' 'No, I never heard that,' was her reply. 'Would you like to hear what he says?' I asked. 'Certainly.' 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not. Jesus wants you to come. Do you wish it too?' 'Indeed I do,' she said; 'I should greatly like to come to heaven.' 'Look here,' I said, taking a map, and putting my finger on Jerusalem, 'here Jesus died that you might go to heaven.'

"The child had a box, in which she had put all her little savings. As yet nothing that had gone in had ever come out. 'Mother, I know what I should like to do with my money; buy a Bible. May I?' The parents looked at each other, and were deeply moved. They said, 'We have often wondered what her first purchase would be.' They gave their consent, and the Bible came into their house. The child could read, and the peculiar circumstances of the case make me hope that the book will not only prove a gratification to the child but a blessing to the parents."

The position the Bible Society has always taken in Roman Catholic countries is distinctly non-controversial. No doubt a zealous colporteur will often be not only ready to give every man a reason of the hope that is in him, but now and then also to turn the tables and ask his Roman Catholic friends for a reason of theirs.

But there ought on no account to be permitted such an interpretation of the colporteur's duty as would tend to make the priests of the various villages look upon the colporteur as a foe. Now and then—and it was so also from the beginning—a priest proves friendly and helpful. The following is an instance:—

"A priest bought a Bible of me and then went with me towards the village. I asked him if he could tell me where I could lodge. 'Time enough to think about that,' he replied; the people are now all in their houses; evening is the best time for your work. When that is over, think of lodgings, not before.' I have sold more than 10,000 Scriptures among Romish populations, and come into contact with hundreds of priests, but I never met such a priest as that."

During the summer and autumn there was held in Berlin a local industrial Exhibition.

"The newly-founded Book and Tract Society had a stall, and on their stall and by our own Berlin printer, our Scriptures were exhibited—5,000 portions in German, Hebrew, Bohemian, Danish, Polish, Russian and Swedish, were placed by the Committee at the disposal of the Book and Tract Society for gratuitous distribution, and 4,289 copies actually given away to visitors and exhibitors. It was a very modest work, but may, it is to be hoped, bear fruit. Many Christians, and even some Jews, expressed pleasure at what was being done."

ITALY.

In their Report for last year, your Committee remarked that no rapid progress could be discerned in the mighty work of rousing in Italy a deeper and truer religious feeling than existed in the days of oppression, of alien rule and Papal supremacy.

Their information leads to the same disappointing conclusion this year. Still, with rare exceptions, the rich, and the noble, and the educated refuse to lament to our mourning, or to dance to our piping. Godly sorrow and Gospel joy alike leave them unmoved. This deadly atmosphere, like its type in the natural world, broods especially over Rome.

Your Committee do not utter these regrets because their own work is declining. On the contrary, they have put into circulation in Italy nearly 6,000 copies more than last year, notwithstanding that the year was one of great trial, a year of bad harvests, of terrible inundations, of unusual snow-storms, and of a destructive eruption of Mount Aetna.

Where then have these Scriptures gone, this godly number of over 56,000? They have gone into remote villages, into small towns, into the hands of the poor, and the simple, and the laborious; they have been carried thither on the shoulders of men as simple and laborious as themselves; men who, as the extracts from their journals will show, are the truest Evangelists in that land.

MILAN AND GENOA.—From these centres more than 21,000 copies have been circulated, chiefly by colporteur. Freedom to come and go, to offer Scripture for sale on the one side and to buy them on the other, is the rule in all the land. Nevertheless, freedom broadens very slowly here and there. There are districts where the village Demetrius can summon the craftsmen, and the colporteur is threatened within an inch of his life. How access was gained to one such village, up to that time considered to be "inaccessible," is thus told:—

"A. Menezon says: 'Thank God I have been able this month to visit places which I never ventured to go before, both myself and others, thinking them inaccessible to the Gospel, because of the superstition of the people, which is incredible. More than once they threatened to cut me in pieces if I ventured to set a foot in their houses. However, you will find in my journal this month P——, one of the places most inaccessible to the Gospel. I went there quietly with a Christian brother, who during the summer had been working at Strasburg in the company of many workmen from Pielungo, to whom he had taken every opportunity of recommending the Gospel. On returning home they begged the good man to let them have a copy of the Scriptures, and for this he asked me to accompany him when he went to see them. I did so, and sold there an octavo Bible with references and two New Testaments. We had, however, some difficulty with the wives of these men who were very much opposed to their husbands having these books, for they greatly fear the priest, who does all in his power to keep down any spirit of inquiry among his flock.'"

In the district through which Lebbolo travels, to the west of Laggo Maggiore, "there are a few if any of the villages in which there are not one or more persons making diligent use of the Bible." He thus describes a pleasant incident:—

"In all villages in this district there are friends to the cause of God, who confess Christ as the only Saviour. I thank God that He led me to those remote villages. At B——there are three who are firm in the faith. One of these P——, invited me into his house to speak of the truths of the Bible; and we, with others who were present, had a long conversation. One bought a New Testament, and P——himself an octavo Bible. He afterwards entertained me hospitably."

And again, writing at the close of the year, he thus unconsciously illustrates the value of his own work and that of likeminded men.—

"In various villages of Valsesia, there are not only men but women too who are anxious for the visit of a minister or evangelist. The Kingdom of God extends gradually, for by the Study of the Scriptures, with God's help, they come to see that they were redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Whenever I meet with these good people, though poor and ignorant myself, I do not fail to speak to them and try to do them good."

TUSCANY AND ANCONA.—Harvests all but ripe, cattle by scores and hundreds, were swept away, and no fewer than 30,000 people suffered more or less by a terrible inundation. Your Committee desired to do something to turn the opportunity to good, and deputed through Mr. Bruce, Signor Manenti, of Mantua, and Signor Manfredini, of Ferrara, to proceed to the flooded district and see if they could find an entrance for the Word of God. At first these friends feared that their errand might seem inopportune, but soon found many prepared to appreciate it. In carrying out this purpose Signor Manenti came upon a trace of a similar work done in 1872.

"In a house which had been inundated, I found an old man, the father of a numerous family, who showed me a Bible which had been under water in a large box. Except that the binding and the first few pages were injured, it was not in a bad state. He had got on the occasion of the former inundation in 1872, and after reading it ceased to go to Mass, preferring to draw his spiritual food solely from the Word of God. I had much pleasant conversation, not only with him, but with a number more who were collected in his house. As I spoke to them of the one and only Saviour Jesus Christ, I distributed a number of portions and some New Testaments, hopeful of good fruit."

In the district round Ancona, there are only "gleams of light." An Evangelist had settled at Rimini, but made little impression and has gone elsewhere. Here, too, the colporteur will again be the only Evangelist. "In redulity is great" and, the colporteur fears, is "extending." Nevertheless, God leaves not Himself without witness to His grace and power and love.

NAPLES.—Last in order of the principal depots comes that of Naples, which supplies the south of Italy and the island of Sicily. From the centre 12,000 copies have been sent out, 2,000 more than last year, and a Bible carriage has been used. In some respects the Bible carriage has been a great assistance, but until more time has been given it will not be possible to decide how far it can be used with success, having regard to the expense connected with it.

One of the first incidents mentioned in Mr. Bruce's report of the work in South Italy bears upon the question of whether or not a portion of Scripture scorned and destroyed may not in its fragments do more than it did in its completeness. It is narrated by Stampacchia, the colporteur who has had charge of the Bible carriage.

"About the year 1871 or 1872 when there was a Maritime Exhibition at

Naples, a young man was walking in the Villa, when his attention was arrested by some lads who were tearing books to pieces, and scattering about the leaves. He was puzzled to know the reason of this, when some torn leaves were blown near to him, and thence his curiosity led him to pick up and begin to read. They contained weighty words, and he sought a secluded spot, so as not to be disturbed. But what were these torn leaves? They were portions of the New Testament which good Christians distributed gratuitously at the door of the Exhibition, and which the boys tore up for their amusement. The pages which this young man, Andrew R—, had picked up contained the 10th and 11th of St. John's Gospel. At the time when he gathered the great treasure despised by others he was a rigid papist, and led an immoral life. This account he settled by going every week to confession.

"In 1874, when I was worker in tortoise-shell, I used to know this youth, for we lived near each other, and then it was that he narrated to me the story of the leaves, which he carefully preserved. Riva's confessor ordered him to give the leaves up to him, and refused to give him absolution until he did so, in consequence of which he went no more either to confession or Mass. I invited him to accompany me to hear the Gospel preached. He promised, and promised, but did not come. After this he had a serious illness, but the old man was still strong in him, and seeing that I could make so little impression on him, I seldom went near him, for he continued to live in sin. Three years have passed away, and now I see him admitted as a member of the Methodist Church at Naples. I asked why he did not accept my earnest invitations to hear the Gospel preached before, on which he said he could not part with his cherished sins, and did not know that Christ would give him strength for this. On the morning of the day he was admitted to the Communion, he went to his mother and sister to ask pardon for all the sorrow he had caused them during the past years. His mother was amazed and said: 'My son, when did you ever before speak to me in this way?' He replied that he was going to take the Communion. His mother, who with her daughter went to Mass every morning, asked him to what church he was going. He said he was going to an Evangelical Church, for he had been going to a Roman Catholic church he need not have asked for pardon, for the priest would have given him absolution. 'Go,' said the mother; 'may you long retain these holy sentiments.'"

An instance, very instructive, of a son gaining his mother for the truth will touch many hearts.

"When Borgli was at the camp at Lonato some men were hesitating, afraid to purchase. But a young soldier now joined us, and urged his companions to buy the Scriptures. He said that in Turin he had bought a Bible, which his mother urged him to destroy. Curiosity, however, impelled him to keep and read it secretly. One day he persuaded his mother to let him read it to her on condition that he burned it if she did not like it. She soon regarded the book as more precious than gold."

A circumstance narrated by Godin, a colporteur labouring in Corsica is so touching in itself, and so interesting in its details, that room must be found for it.

"In Bonifacio, as I was selling my books, I saw a person who was deaf and dumb watching me. On hearing from a bystander that he could read, I opened a New Testament, and showed him a verse in St. Matthew, where a deaf and dumb was healed. He expressed his pleasure most sensibly, and as he was examining the book, I took one soldo, and opened my hand twice. He immediately gave me ten soldi, and so bought the volume.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE FOR THE ITALIANS.

The *Cristiano Evangelico*, of June 18th, 1883, informs us that the prominent publishing house of the brothers Treves, of Milan, brought out, in the first instance, an "edition de luxe" of the translation, made by Monsignor

Antonio Martini, "with notes under the revision of Monsignor the Archbishop of Milan, illustrated with 230 large engravings by Gustave Doré, and the text ornamented by Enrico Giacomelli"—so said the publisher's notice. The price was put at 75 Italian lire, or \$15 of our currency. It may readily be understood that in a country where the wages of the labourer probably do not on the average exceed half a dollar a day, this elegant edition of the Bible in two ponderous quarto volumes was perfectly certain not to find its way into the hands of the *people*. Unhappily, however, the enterprise did not prove a paying one; and the Treves Brothers have just come to the conclusion to *popularize* the work by reducing the subscription price to 30 lire, or \$6, and to render its acquisition still easier by selling it in 200 numbers at 15 centesimi, or three cents each. That the work will thus gain a wider circulation we cannot doubt; but that it will not be bought for any other object than its fine illustrations is equally certain. It is, indeed, something to rejoice at that the Roman Catholic Church in Italy itself sees the constraining necessity to give the people the Bible, even though in a shape and at a price which render the concession well nigh futile. After all, however, it is a cheap and portable edition of the Holy Scriptures that the people must and will have; and perhaps it is best that the priesthood will not consent to put upon the market such an edition. If they did they would, to a great extent, blunt the edge of the truth by means of notes perverting the meaning of the original on all points of controversy between Rome and primitive Christianity. As it is, the Italian people, if they read the Word of God at all, must of necessity read it as furnished by Protestants, in a more faithful translation, with no note or comment to break the force of its simple and soul-saving teachings.—*The Christian World*.

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