

Visits to the continent of Europe are becoming much more common among Englishmen than formerly. An English minister having a month's vacation gives in the *Christian World* a lively account of his three Sundays there. Some of our readers may have seen a description of the Passion Play of Ober-ammergau, but as we do not remember having had it in our columns before, we copy it from this account of a recent visit to that distant village in Central Europe:—

SUNDAYS ON THE CONTINENTS.

SUNDAY ONE.—OBER-AMMERGAU.

We were glad enough to get away. School boys throw up their caps when holiday-time comes, and hard-worked ministers may be excused some exuberance of feeling and expression when the last sermon is preached, and the morrow inaugurates a month's freedom. Especially if they anticipate such a trip as we enjoyed. Excited by the glowing descriptions and pictures in Gilbert and Churchill's admirable work on "The Dolomite Mountains," we resolved to spend our summer holiday wandering in that splendid but little-travelled Austrian district. But to get there was the first consideration. Leaving London on the Monday, we reached the quaint old town of Basle on Tuesday evening. Memories return to us of grand glimpses of the Rhine with the light of early morning upon it; also of passing a company of German artillery returning from the war all travel-stained and sun-bronzed, the cannon and horses decorated with testoons and bright little flags. We also remember being left behind by the train at one station (Bingen), and taking a cab and catching it at the next. (Mem.—Cabs in Germany beat trains, therefore always travel by cab.) After a welcome night's rest at Basle, we spent some hours the next day at the Rhine Falls, which we have no intention of describing. The effect is just unspeakable. You want to be silent as in some mighty presence, where speech would be an impertinence. One of our companions having expressed the extraordinary and intoxicated wish to stay and "drink it all in," we thought it time to leave Neuhausen, and proceed to Constance. Here we calmed our minds by climbing, in the dusk of the evening, to the top of the Cathedral tower, much to the amazement of the ragged old sex on who lives there, and who had evidently made himself comfortable for the night. We cannot say we thought much of the view, for we did not see it. Up Lake Constance to Lindau, on by train to Immenstadt, was our next effort—grand pine forests, snow-clad mountains, exquisite lakes, vast and richly-cultivated valleys, pass before the mind like a gorgeous panorama over which we must not linger. Leaving the rail, we took the omnibus to a little village called Sonthofen. Perceiving ourselves on the top, those within trembled for their safety, dreading lest the outskirts should suddenly become the insides. The lamps of the street reminded us very forcibly that passengers are not expected up so high in the world. We reached an hotel at which we could find no trace of any Englishman before us, and certainly the village was considerably excited by our peaceful invasion. The darkness having made walking impossible, we sat outside our hotel, to the great amazement of some fifty Bavarian peasants, who evidently regarded us as a new kind of harmless animal. The young women were very curious (when are they not?) about the texture of our puggarees, and so we passed round our hats for public examination. Presently we sang the National Anthem, and the villagers immediately swarmed from their houses, and flocked about us, listening to our unpretentious music. Such rapid popularity was more than we anticipated. Not contented with our first performance, they demanded another song, and so we made Sonthofen echo with "Home, sweet home," "Auld Lang Syne," "Partant pour la Syrie," and several anthems and hymns, to the crowded street's rapturous delight. We then persuaded them to sing us "The Watch on the Rhine." A soldier just returned from the war stood on the hotel steps and led the rest, who sang with vigour that stirring national war-song. We then gave three lusty English cheers for United Germany, and our concert ended, and we left the villagers, doubtless wondering at the eccentricity of Englishmen. Driving towards Innsbruck the following day, we learnt that at our next halting place, Reutte, we should be within thirty miles of the now famous village of Ober-Ammergau.

the Bavarian Highlands where that remarkable Passion Play is performed, of which so many eloquent descriptions have been written during the last few months. For some of us the temptation was too strong, and we resolved to spend Sunday there. We travelled by omnibus the whole of Saturday for the ridiculously small sum of three shillings and fourpence, passing through scenery of the noblest character, which excited perpetually new admiration at every turn, until, having exhausted all our largest epithets, we were forced into wondering silence. At one place we saw a splendid hart that had just been shot, carried down a lake in a boat by a Tyrolean jagger. Another time a vulture swooped and sailed over our heads with that elegant strength that is only to be described as the poetry of motion. For miles and miles we jogged through the magnificent pine forests of Ammergau, stopping for refreshment at a Jager-house, where about forty hunters dressed in the picturesque costume of the district were congregated, and a large number of peasantry and priests on their way to see the Passionspiel. Reaching Ober-Ammergau we were fortunate enough to obtain lodgment in the house of a very genial Pharisee, who treated us as guests, and did not afterwards enter his affability as an item in the bill. The village is embosomed in mountains; every cottage looks neat and clean, and is frescoed on the exterior with paintings of scenes from sacred history. Having secured seats for the morrow, Sunday, we lounged about watching the picturesque effects produced by the different national costumes, and amused by the anxiety of the constant stream of visitors, especially the all-important Englishers, to secure accommodation for the night. Next morning bed had no attraction. Service at the church commenced at six o'clock, at which the actors assemble to prepare themselves for the solemn engagements of the day. The play also was to begin punctually at eight. For the information of any who are not acquainted with the facts, we may state that, more than 200 years ago Ober-Ammergau was afflicted with a plague by which many died. The monks of Etal, a neighbouring monastery, now a brewery, induced the inhabitants to make a vow to perform the Passion of our Lord every ten years, and tradition affirms that from that date not a villager died of the pestilence. The vow has been religiously kept from that time to this, and one year in ten, every Sunday from May till September, the play is acted. Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the desirability of such a performance, only one impression is left on the spectators' mind, viz., that the actors themselves are mainly influenced by religious motives, and throughout the whole there is not a gesture that can shock the most sensitively pious mind. We ourselves wended our way to the theatre that beautiful Sunday morning with conflicting emotions. Eager to see what is so remarkable and unique, we yet dreaded lest art should overstep the bounds of reverence or that reverence should be ignored in art. Arrived at the huge wooden shed, we found it rapidly filling, until, when the gun fired, indicating the time for commencement, almost every seat was occupied by a respectable, expectant, religious audience. To convey any adequate impression of that eight hours' performance is absolutely impossible. No writing, however vivid or eloquent, can do it justice. To be understood it must be seen. It consisted of tableaux vivants representing Old Testament scenes, such as "The Expulsion from Eden" and "The Lifting up of the Serpent in the Wilderness" as types of the New Testament revelation, alternated with the acting of the scenes of the passion itself. The latter consisted of a chronological and consistent harmony of the narratives of the four Evangelists. One fact was peculiarly striking—that in the midst of a Roman Catholic population the Gospel history should, with one trifling exception, be literally adhered to. Traditions of the Church have no place in the representation. Naturally the chief interest centres in the man who performs the part of the Christ. When he first appears the silence of strained expectation is almost painful. He is seen riding into Jerusalem on an ass, clothed in the purple robe, accompanied by the twelve disciples, and surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd of some 300 men, women, and children, shouting "Hosanna!" and spreading their clothes in the way. The scenic effect of the procession as it moves slowly on to the stage, with the sun flashing on the rich Oriental costumes, is most thrilling. In the whispered anger of scribes and priests is suggested the commencement of a plot

that will end in the Crucifixion. But we fix our eyes upon the Christ until it seems as though 1,800 years have rolled away, and we are in the veritable presence of Him who came to redeem the world. Let not the reader be startled. It is the actual impression, and we cannot throw it off. And from the first act to the last, through all the most painful and awful scenes, and even when he takes the divinest words upon his lips, there is nothing to offend the most delicate feeling. The man bears himself with a beautiful, dignified repose, a patient resignation, a sweet, natural superiority that is absolutely marvellous. We sit spell-bound, and yield ourselves to the influences of the sacred story so truly told. As the tragedy proceeds it is painful beyond endurance. The scene in Gethsemane, the cruel Betrayal, the Mocking and Scourging, the Cross-bearing, the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, awaken the tenderest sympathies that often find utterance in tears. Look round, and see how the grand old Gospel narrative appeals with equal power "to men of almost every nation under heaven." Perhaps the most effective scene is the sad procession to Calvary. The Christ, surrounded by Roman soldiers, jeering priests, and the general rabble, is described staggering under a heavy cross, exhausted by the "cruel experience of the last few hours; and as that group issues from one of the streets of Jerusalem, it is suddenly faced by another group from an opposite direction—Mary, the mother, accompanied by the Magdalene and other disciples. She beholds the suffering Jesus, and, falling back into the arms of her friends, her agonising cry, almost shriek, "My son, mine own loved son," rings throughout the place, and every head is bowed in irrepressible sobs and tears. We then know, for the first time, what the prophecy meant—"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Other scenes we must not describe. Among the grandest pieces of artistic acting was that of the Judas. The passion of avarice, the struggle with conscience, the steady growth of evil purpose, the final hesitation, the terrible remorse, the madness of despair, were depicted with a force and vividness possible only to genius of the highest kind. The man does not act Judas—he is that apostate disciple himself. So we sat for eight short hours through the Sunday, ever and anon finding relief from excessive emotion by looking out upon the calm mountains and green, sun-lit slopes, and sombre pines, and soft sky, and passing clouds. From that day to this not the shadow of regret that we so spent the Holy Day has crossed our mind. It was a time of pure devotion. We have no apologies to offer. The act has justified itself. Never did we realise so fully and intensely the significance of the Gospel history. Our belief in the facts is stronger by reason of that fiction. Many good Christian people will not understand this. We expect their severest condemnation, but our conscience absolves us, and we shall be the better preachers of the glorious Gospel through witnessing the Passionspiel at Ober-Ammergau.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE WESTERN CONVENTION. CHURCH EDIFICE FUND. HOME MISSION WORK. THE FOREIGN FIELD. EDUCATIONAL PROSPECTS, &c.

The Annual Home Missionary Convention of the Baptists of Ontario has just completed its Session at Hamilton. The occasion was one of interest, and the exhibit given of the strength and progress of Baptist principles, most encouraging. The three great departments of our Christian work, Home Missions, Foreign Missions and Education are all being carried on with energy and success, while other collateral agencies are contributing much to the general result. The following particulars clipped from the report of the *Daily Globe*, may be of interest to Nova Scotia Baptists. First on the list was the Church Edifice Society. From the report of the Secretary, it appeared that during the last year the operations of the Society had been very successful. Four important churches had been aided with loans, and nearly \$1,600 obtained as income from various sources. The Society has now a total of assets amounting to about \$3,500.

Next in order of time came the Home Missionary Board meeting. The following summary from the voluminous report of the

Secretary will convey an idea of its operations. "It appears that the number of missionaries employed during the past year was 46. These missionaries have preached the Gospel salvation at 122 stations, to congregations averaging, on the whole, 9,676 persons. They have unitedly preached 4,501 sermons, made 8,054 pastoral visits, travelled 50,000 miles, and baptized 258 persons. The total membership of the Mission Churches aided is 2,449. The amount paid by them in support of their pastors was \$8,200.89, while they have contributed to the funds of the Home Missions \$664.03. The total amounts paid to them by the Convention in aid of their pastors during the year was \$4,939.16. The number of Sabbath-schools sustained by the Mission is 385. Six new chapels have been built during the year. The church in Stratford has become self-sustaining, and it is confidently anticipated that others will soon follow in its wake. The total amount received for the funds of the Convention during the year, up to October 5, is \$4,509.

The members of the Board express their devout gratitude to the God of Missions for what has been accomplished during the year. No missionary has been stricken down by death, while the work in the various mission-fields has been vigorously pushed forward. The prospects for the future are bright and promising; and, under God, it is believed that the Home Missionary Convention will accomplish a far greater work than it has yet accomplished during its past existence.

At an adjourned meeting the expediency of adopting a new Hymn Book in public worship, and of organizing a Denominational Sabbath School Convention, were discussed and Committees appointed to report at next Convention. "On Wednesday at 11 o'clock Rev. R. Fyle, D. D., of the Literary Institute, Woodstock, preached a very able sermon from Matthew xi. 4, 5, 6, in the John street Wesleyan church. After giving a brief account of the general import of the text, the preacher confined attention to the words, "Unto the poor the Gospel is preached, and blessed is he who soever shall not be offended in me." The positions ably illustrated by the preacher were:—1. That Christ takes a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the poor; 2. That there is a danger lest men should be offended at this aspect of the Saviour's work."

In the evening the Platform Home Missionary Meeting was held and addresses delivered by the President, S. T. Wood, Esq., and Revs. Torrance, Davidson, King, Lemle, and Hurd of Ontario; Manning from the Eastern Convention; and Dr. Backus, Secretary of American Baptist Home Mission Convention. The speeches are said to have been stirring and powerful. The following brief extract from that of Rev. J. King of Port Hope, strikes me as containing in its latter clauses some suggestive facts for Christians all over the Dominion. "Evidently the Baptists as a denomination are growing—not like the gourd, but like the stately oak. Each anniversary brings with it a fresh promise of success; our position in Ontario never was better than it is to-day. We are sometimes reminded that Baptists are a few feeble folk. We may concede the fact, but our feebleness is not the feebleness of decrepitude, but that of a child which has within magnificent possibilities; our strength is not comprised in the size of our bodies, but in the strength of our principles. But with all our growth, when we consider the vast number of souls in the darkness and bondage of sin, we are but as a cottage in a wood. How small the Christian church!—those in whose hearts Christ holds undisputed sway. Looking at it in this light, neither we, nor any other denomination has occasion for boasting. The moral condition of our country, the great laxity of principle, and looseness of manners which everywhere prevail, is fearful to contemplate. Intemperance, impurity, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, infidelity, are among the foul blights that disfigure our communities. We are loudly called upon as Christians to consecrate ourselves to the work of the Lord.

A collection in aid of the work, amounting to over six hundred dollars was taken up before the close of the meeting.

The Foreign Missionary Anniversary Meeting was held on Sunday evening. The President, Rev. J. Bates, of Woodstock, whose only two daughters, Mrs. Timpany and Mrs. McLaurin are now in the Teluga field, occupied the chair. Rev. W. Stewart, the Secretary read the annual report which was full of encouragement. The wonderful success of this mission and the

touching eagerness with which multitudes of the poor heathen there embraced the truth, as well as the moving appeals of other multitudes for Christian teachers who—to the reproach of the Christian Church be it spoken—are not yet forthcoming, are already familiar to the readers of the *Messenger*. The contributions to this mission from Ontario and Quebec during the year past have exceeded \$6000. One cannot but think that this amount, which might, I believe be increased, joined with that contributed by the Maritime Province Baptists, would suffice by God's blessing, for the carrying on of a noble work, while our American brethren would scarcely suffer their operations to be curtailed for the want of it.

The last evening was devoted to Education. Papers were read by the President and Treasurer of the Institute, setting forth its state, progress and prospects. About \$16000 are now available or secured for the contemplated enlargements, which will be pushed forward in the spring. It is proposed to spend not less than \$19000 in improvements within the next two or three years. While the advocates of the one-sided theory denies to Christian Churches the right which to engage in the work of general Education even for the state of its accompanying moral safeguards and blessings, bid fair to render abortive, the attempt being now made to bring about a Presbyterian Union; it is matter for congratulation that some good and influential Baptists, who have been opposed to the Institute on the ground of its location or for other reasons, are, one by one, falling into the ranks of its warm supporters. Mr. McKenzie, M. P., who presided at the meeting, confessed himself among the converts from the former to the latter views.

J. E. W.

For the Christian Messenger.

EXTRACTS OF A LETTER FROM MISS M. DEWOLFE.

Dear Editor,—

The following notices of "Meo Quay," a Karen girl, will doubtless be interesting to many of your readers. Sister DeWolfe, perceiving her to be a very promising child, and one that specially needed support in order to her obtaining a Christian education, and feeling reluctant to call on the Board for the necessary means, determined to undertake to sustain her, as far as possible, from her own salary. Aware that it was not consistently in her power to carry this benevolent purpose into effect, when a friend proposed to entrust to me the disposal of fifty dollars left by Sister E. F. Higgins, of Onslow, for a religious object, I proposed devoting it to this, and he approved the measure. The notice of this is gratefully acknowledged in the following extracts. Two smaller sums, contributed by individuals for this object, or to aid in supporting another, have been since received and forwarded.

Yours as ever,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Oct. 26, 1871.

HENTHADAH, Aug. 11, 1871.

Rev. Dr. Tupper,—

Your favor of May 31st reached me to day. Your words of encouragement are cheering. I thank you for them; as also for the confidence reposed in me in placing the means furnished by Sister Higgins at my disposal, for the support of *Meo Quay*. She is a bright, promising child, 12 or 14 years old; and she bids fair to make a noble woman. I hope to have her for an assistant in our school some day, when she has finished her education. She has lost her mother. I feel it is helping the cause, and doing the child much good to be under such training as she gets here. She has given herself to Christ; and lives, I think, a consistent life. Mr. Smith baptized her last hot season. She seems to love her Bible and prayer. Often when I call them in for prayer she is among the first to come; and she prays earnestly. I enjoy these seasons very much.

This bequest of sister Higgins will do more than to support this girl for one year; it will enable me to assist in the support of another, or it may go for her support subsequently. We consider between thirty and forty dollars per annum sufficient for the support of a pupil in school, if she have not many books to purchase. Girls have to pay a dollar and half a month for board, about twelve for clothing a year, and five for books and incidentals.

Sister DeWolfe says that children are very often thrown upon them; and mentions a case in which a boy and girl are left orphans, by the death of both parents, of

Most of the readers of the *CHRISTIAN WORLD* will know that this is the place in