

## CHURCH AT HOME.

(From H. &amp; F. M. Record.)

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE COMMITTEE.

The following most interesting letter to the General, from our highly valued correspondent, the Rev. Philippe Boucher, affords repeated evidence of the importance of his mission, and of the wisdom of that arrangement sanctioned by last General Assembly, by which Mr. Boucher's salary, as formerly mentioned, is paid by this Committee. Mr. Boucher may now be regarded as an evangelist in the employment of the Church of Scotland, under the superintendence of the Protestant Central Society of France. The Church of Scotland has reason to be proud of such a servant. His stirring addresses to us in our General Assembly, and from our pulpits, will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to hear them; and if the effect of his eloquence was so great when speaking to strangers in a foreign tongue, we may imagine what it must be when speaking in his native tongue to the hearts and consciences of his own countrymen. His duty is to do the work of an evangelist throughout the length and breadth of France; to reach to Roman Catholics wherever they will receive him; to stir up the languid spirit of Protestantism; to deliver popular lectures bearing on the great truths of religion, whether in a controversial shape or otherwise; and generally, under the direction of the Central Society, to devote his great abilities and earnest heart to the work of evangelisation. Last year he was invited by a Society of young men in Paris to visit them, from the extremity of the country, for the purpose of delivering certain lectures on religious subjects. One of these lectures the convener of this Committee had the privilege of hearing, and was not more charmed by the clear, uncompromising, and eloquent expositions of divine truth in a Protestant though non-controversial form, than he was astonished by the enthusiastic approbation of the crowded audience, nearly all of whom were Roman Catholics. Again and again the orator interrupted by loud bursts of applause, shewing how well he knew how to suit his arguments to his hearers, and how thoroughly he carried their sympathies along with him. We contemplate important results from the employment of Mr. Boucher in duties for which he is so singularly adapted.

DEAR SIR,—Having been delegated to examine the real character of a religious movement amongst the Roman Catholics of the M—, I found after inquiry facts so interesting, that I wish to call the attention of your readers to them.

A dissension arose between the village cure and his parishioners about a fountain that was to be embellished, for the village consists of 1400 inhabitants living in easy circum-

stances. The cure proposed a statue of "Our Lady of La Sallette." You will perhaps remember that this name is given to a pretended apparition of the Holy Virgin to two children who, according to some, were idiotic enough to believe whatever the priests told them; or, according to others, were shrewd enough to become the interested accomplices of the pretended miracle. Be this as it may, the water of a spring near the spot is sold as miraculous, and at a very high price, in many parts of France, and even of Belgium; indeed, in the latter the importation was considerable enough to induce the custom-house officers to claim a duty upon it. The aquatic connexion between their Virgin and the fountain of M—, seemed to the cure above-mentioned an excellent reason for choosing the statue of "Our Lady of La Sallette" for the village monument. The mayor, who is far from partaking in the general superstition objected that the Virgin would be advantageously replaced by any mythological nymph; and the municipal council, whose department it is to decide in such questions, rejected the proposition of the cure. He, notwithstanding, ordered a statue of the Virgin to be sent from a large town in the neighbourhood, which was an encroachment upon the municipal rights; and, worse still, he wanted the municipality to pay for the statue, which would have been a misapplication of the public funds. A lawsuit followed; the cure lost his cause. *In fine*. In one of his public and official discourses, at the moment the wife of one of the principal councillors entered the church, he assaulted her with most virulent and abusive language. Such were the opprobrious and calumnious epithets he made use of in the hearing of all present, that the husband, justly indignant at such conduct, entered an action against the cure, and the Council of State without whose permission no such action can be entered against an ecclesiastic in the exercise of his official functions (and preaching is such), authorised the pursuit; so clear and so evident had been the public scandal. The cure saw that this second lawsuit would entail worse consequences than the first. What did he do then? In spite of twelve witnesses who had heard the cynic slanders he made, he selected amongst his devotees old women, who dared to come before the court to declare that they had *not* heard those slanders; and then the judges had the still great boldness to prefer the testimony of those who had *not* heard, to that of those who *had* heard. The cure enjoyed the triumph of an acquittal dearly bought by the inward reproaches of a burdened conscience; for here remark that the general impression in the village was and still is, that the absolution of the anticipated perjury of the old women was beforehand promised by him who can "loose" and "unloose."

The indignation of the village was such on hearing of the acquittal of the cure, knowing