

Mediæval Mysteries and Miracle Plays. The author bears testimony to the sincerity and simple piety of the plain peasant people who enact the august and solemn scenes. The *Passion Spiel*, nevertheless, seems to us an anachronism that lingers like a belated ghost of midnight in the light of day.

Part three, and the largest section of the book, is an account of the cities of the Czar--St. Petersburg and Moscow. The latter, especially, is one of the most interesting cities in Europe, with its strange blending of the Orient and Occident, of mediæval barbaric splendour, and modern civilization, the stately churches, palaces, museums and galleries, are set forth with striking fidelity. We must again refer to the delicacy of the engravings, and handsome exterior. It is an admirable gift book for all the year round.

The Capitals of Spanish America. By WILLIAM ELLORY CURTIS. Illustrated. 8vo. Pp. 715. New York: Harper & Brothers. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$3.50.

This is a valuable addition to the noble library of travel published by the Harpers. In interest of theme, in importance of information, in beauty of illustration, it is not surpassed by any previous issue of this house. As Commissioner from the United States to the Governments of Central and South America, Mr. Curtis enjoyed unusual advantages for mastering the study of the economic, social and political relations of those interesting peoples. Nowhere else will be found so complete, reliable and succinct an account of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, San Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chili, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and the Argentine Republic.

Much of the information here given comes with all the force of a strange surprise. It is not, we think, generally known that Buenos Ayres has twenty-three lines of steamships sailing to European ports; that it

has wealthier banks than any in the United States, being exceeded only by two banks in the world; that it has more daily papers than New York or London, and has more telephones and electric lights in proportion to the population than any city in the world. Its two universities rank with Yale and Harvard. The Argentine Republic spends more per pupil than any other country except Australia. The papal nuncio denounced the teaching of some forty Yankee "school-ma'ams." The nuncio and the archbishop, too, who came to his rescue, were shipped back to Rome, and the heretical school-teachers staid. With less than half a million people, Buenos Ayres has 93 miles of street railway, 3,800 licensed hacks and waggons, and sewers "large enough to run a railway train through." It has a church worth a quarter of a million. The river system of the country is unsurpassed, and its railway system will soon equal that of the United States. Its wealth in wheat, in cattle, in horses, is enormous. Of Monte Video, the capital of Uruguay, almost as marvellous a tale may be told.

We have said enough to show the important character of this book as illustrating the new civilization of the Spanish Republics. The stately architecture of San Jose, Bogota, Caraccas, Quito, Lima, Santiago, and Rio de Janeiro will be a surprise to most readers, as well as the majestic scenery and exhaustless resources of the countries of which they are the capitals. Admirable maps and nearly four hundred engravings illustrate the volume. For artistic merit we have seldom, if ever, seen the latter surpassed. The very texture of the drapery, the bronzed skin of the natives, the mystery of the tropical forests, and of the sky-piercing mountains, etc., are exquisitely rendered. The dominance of the Roman Catholic Church is the great blight of the country, and our author gives some of the priests a very bad character. But many of the southern republics are becoming restive under the yoke, and are asserting both civil and religious liberty.