

oned. Even with Dante, intensest of patriots, Christendom was first and Italy second. Columbus feared only one enemy, and that enemy was not so much a national enemy as an anti-Christian enemy. The Saracens threatened Spain and all Europe; the Turks held the Holy Sepulchre; the Spaniards fought both for Christ and Spain; Columbus, who was not a Spaniard and who doubtless looked on the campaigns of Ferdinand and Isabella with the impatience of a man seeing small things impede the view of a great one, burned devoutly for the salvation of an unknown world of souls and for the treasure of unknown lands, that a new crusade might be undertaken. Spain was interesting to him—only so far as it helped his great project. Portugal had deceived him; he had nothing to expect from Italy; Spain, saved from the Moors, would listen with comprehension to his plan for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre; he appealed to Castile and Aragon. He desired, above all, to add a new world to Christendom, not to the dominion of Isabella.

We must remember, and all veritable history helps us to do this, that Columbus believed that Christ is God more devoutly than he believed in his own existence; the Blessed Virgin, the base on which the mystery of the Incarnation rests, was to him more real than any earthly queen. To save the souls of strange human beings, to make them heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven by baptism, to have them partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, under the form of bread, and to be mystically united with him was the chief object Columbus desired. In our time, when faith is as "water unto wine," we give every missionary the benefit of his zeal, and why should we deny it to this man who so often asserts it at a time when the childlike belief of St. Francis d'Assisi was the rule? Did the Madonna appear in a dream, to crush one in affliction? It was but natural; had she not suffered, and was she not the Mother? Why should not the Lord Jesus cause His statue to come down from the Mother's carved arms and play with other children? If the little children wanted Him badly enough, why should He refuse? He had been a child not so long ago.

"See," cried the Italian woman, pointing to the curling hair of Dante, "there is he who has come through Purgatory; his locks are crisped by the fire!" It was an age of faith and of reason, too. See how well Columbus reasoned, and how Isabella, one of the most religious women of her time, understood his reasons. But with them both faith was above reason.

(To be Continued.)

INDIAN PASSION PLAY.

AN IMPRESSIVELY DRAMATIC PORTRAYAL OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

One of the most important religious events that has ever taken place in Western Canada was the recent presentation of the Passion Play by the Indians of St. Mary's Mission near New Westminster.

The Indians have but little imagination, and accordingly the missionaries have had great difficulty in teaching them the various Bible stories. The plan of presenting a Passion Play was finally adopted a few years ago as the best means of giving the natives a conception of the leading events in the life of the Saviour. Several times the Indians at the various missions have essayed to present the play or various parts of it, but never have they given so complete and realistic a production as on this occasion, and it is doubtful if the play has ever been so well presented on this continent.

A party of distinguished Roman Catholic priests is now visiting the missions of British Columbia, and the play was given in order to show them the advance which the Indians of the Province have made. The visitors were Archbishop Duhamel of Ottawa, Bishop La Fleche of Three Rivers, Bishop Lorraine of Pembroke, Bishop Macdonnell of Alexandria, Bishop Brondel of Helena, Vicar-General Marechal of Montreal, and many other well-known members of the priesthood. The Indian tribes which took in the conclave were the Shuswap, Thompson River, Fraser River, Squamish, Sebelt, Stickeen and Douglas.

The thousands of Indians who had gathered from all parts of British Columbia were encamped at the foot of the bluff, overlooking the Fraser River, on which the mission stands. The tribes were in separate clusters of tepees, and in the center of each group was placed the standard of the tribe. In addition to these standards, bright banners were streaming from the tops of many of the tents, and the natives themselves were decked in their most gorgeous colors—the flaming reds and strong yellow, as usual, predominating.

When the train bearing the visitors arrived on the morning of Thursday, June 2, a drizzle was falling, but every Indian in the camp was standing by the track to get a glimpse of the fathers from the East. As the priests stepped from the train a Squamish chief, Harry came forward, and in the native tongue delivered an address of greeting, which was translated by an interpreter. From the mission hill a salute of cannon was fired, and the bluffs along the river tossed back a hundred echoes. After the speech of welcome was over, three brass bands, every player in which was an Indian, gave some remarkably good music.

While the visiting clergy were taken into the mission for luncheon the Indians squatted on the ground by their tents, built smouldering fires for their native cooking, and munching dried salmon. The rain would stop occasionally, and then pour down again with renewed vigor, but the Indians paid no heed to it.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the announcement was made that the play would begin. Two chiefs addressed the people in the encampment ordering them to mass themselves at the foot of the winding path leading up the hill to the mission. The Indians gathered like an army on the lowland, and at a given signal from the two chiefs the procession moved up the steep ascent. First came the women, carrying the papooses, then the young bucks, and after them a mixed crowd of old men and women, boys and girls. Slowly they moved up the hill, chanting in Latin, broken by the guttural sounds of their own language, the "Hail Jesus." The song seemed to effect them greatly, for now their voices would rise high and shrill, and now would die away to a low moan. At the creoscedos the Indians would throw back their heads and wave their arms in a religious frenzy. The play had no speaking parts, but was presented in a series of eight tableaux. The stage was the broad, hard boulevard leading past the mission buildings. The tableaux were all placed at once, one after another, at intervals of about fifty feet, and consequently each scene had different sets of actors. Only the best of the Indians were chosen for parts, and to the honor of being in the performance was a high one, and the men and women selected were regarded as much to be envied. The tableaux were as complete as the limited resources of the mission would allow, and the costumes, which were carefully fashioned after those of pictures, were fairly correct.

At the top of the hill a chief was stationed, giving in a low tone the command by which the procession divided, half going on one side the boulevard, and half on the other. As they marched along, the Indians still sang their weird chant, and at each tableau or stage of the cross every one in the procession made a profound obeisance and crossed himself.

The first group or tableau, contained a stalwart Indian, roped in a white surplice and cloak of blue. He knelt in supplication, while six red-gowned natives lay on the ground behind him feigning sleep. The scene was the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Indian representing Christ had been drilled until he seemed to have an unusually good conception of the part, for he threw his whole soul into the portrayal, and his face wore a wonderful expression of suffering and intercession. During the forty minutes while the spectators were walking past, he appeared to be in a state almost hypnotic, for not a muscle of his body moved.

The second scene was Christ seized by the soldiers. An Indian, about the same in stature as in the first tableau and wearing exactly the same dress took the part of the Saviour. Other natives with the shields, spears, helmets, and jerkins of Roman soldiers were binding the unresisting Lord.

In the third tableau Christ appeared before Pilate. The Roman Governor who seated on a dais spread with scarlet, while his chair of state was covered with a robe of the same gorgeous color. Before him a slave held a basin and pitcher with which he was about to wash his hands, disclaiming all part in the crime which the Jews wished to have committed. Before the Governor stood Christ with downcast eyes and bound with chains. Near by was a group of sullen and angry Jews watching the proceedings of the trial.

The fourth picture, the flagellation, was horrible in its realism. Christ was bound to a post, and two savage soldiers were standing over him, with bloody knouts upraised. The Saviour, from whose back the blood was pouring, bent forward, his face showing both anguish and spiritual determination.

In the fifth picture Christ sat in a rough chair, and soldiers with spears in their hands stood about him. One of them was placing on his head a crown of thorns, while the blood from his brow trickled down his face and stained his white garments. So true was the scene that the spectator could hardly rid himself of the idea that the blood was real.

Fully as real was the next tableau, the burden of the cross. Overcome by the load, Christ had slipped, and his body was pinned to the ground by the heavy weight. The crown of thorns still pierced his brow, and his countenance was obscured by dust and blood. An Indian woman, as St. Veronica, stooped forward to wipe his face, and two soldiers with blows were urging him to rise to his feet.

In the seventh scene Christ was meeting the weeping women of Jerusalem, and with a reassuring smile was telling them not to grieve for him.

From this spectacle the procession, softly singing the solemn chant, passed into the large yard of the mission. There on a platform at the very edge of the cliff towered the cross. A waxen image of the Saviour was nailed to its arms, and clinging to the feet of the Crucified and receiving the drops of blood on her head was a Mary Magdalene whose long jet black hair streamed below her waist. Beside her was a dusky Virgin Mary, with dumb, tearless agony expressed in every feature. Near the edge of the platform a tall, handsome Squamish Indian, representing St. John, sat bowed in hopeless grief. Soldiers with swords and spears were grouped around the cross, and