

building arches so far from home? you will ask. Do you remember Caius Marius, the rough, bold Roman general, who did such good service to his country with his legions in Africa and elsewhere? He was a grand soldier, almost unrivalled in his day in the art of war; but he was a bad statesman, perpetually offending the proud senators with his rude imperious ways. You will believe in his bad temper if you ever come to Rome and climb the Pincian hill, where, among the busts of heroes in the gardens, you will recognize the Consul Marius without a smooth line on his grim old face! About the year 100 B. C., Rome was seriously threatened by an invasion of the wild tribes of the North, who had combined to make an attack upon their common foe. The Romans, with old Marius at their head, marched into Gaul to oppose the invaders. Near Aix (short for "Agace Sislæ," so named on account of its hot springs) the great battle was fought, in which the wild Teutons were defeated with so terrible a slaughter, that it is said the proprietors of the neighbourhood afterwards used the bones of the giant barbarians to make fences for their vineyards. That may or may not be true; we are not obliged to say. Certainly, we saw none of these classic boundaries. But we may remark in passing that, if chalk is conducive to the fruitfulness of the vine, then surely the delicious grapes of Aix-les-Bains owe something to the Teutons' bones. Antiquarians however, will no doubt consider as more trustworthy proofs of Roman conquest in the country the massive remains of roads or masonry, such as the arch in the Aix market place.

Many battles have been fought at Aix since the days of Marius; and even at the present time the place is infested with hordes from the North. We are sorry to say that the British hosts have been led more than once by our sovereign in person. But the conflicts now-a-days are waged not against the Romans, but against the "rheumatiz," as the old women designate our common foe. Just opposite where we were standing, and facing the old arch, there stands a large, handsome building. That is the *Etablissement des Bains*; and as we watched the crowds passing in and out, it was easy to detect the signs of sickness and suffering in the throng, while the sight of the twenty doctors talking to their respective patients in the wide portico, was a confirmation of our sad discovery.

But there is a bright side to this picture. Many of the invalids whom we saw going to the baths—some of them to pass through the hands of the *doucheuses*, who will knead them like a Scotch bannock, others to be steamed in the inhaling room, until they smell like a lucifer match, others to be stewed in a large wooden sauce pan with a hole in the lid for their head—will leave the sulphur baths of Aix in a week or two as conquerors, rejoicing in a triumph greater than that of Marius. A handsome dark-eyed attendant with a coquettish French cap attracted our attention. We were told that was "Charlotte," who had been twice sent for to England to nurse the Queen. On asking her whether she liked England, she replied with a flash in her dark eyes, "Like England? Yes, and your Queen. I love her. If she calls me again, I leave all, and I fly to your Queen!" And, as she spoke, the eyes had a glitter of tears in them.

We were destined again to hear that song of praise. Near Aix, in the hamlet of St. Innocents, lives a little brown, withered-faced old woman, who has a great family of Angora rabbits, which we went to see one morning. No one could fail to be charmed with the pretty soft grey and white creatures, scampering gleefully about their shed, all unconscious of their own importance or of the exorbitant price which madame would demand for their cast off coats from the strangers of the cold north. Catching one of the merry, fat, grey balls Madame began to pluck it, much as a poultry maid plucks her fowl; while all through this process, and the exhibition of her rabbit-wool stores for sale, the little woman delighted us with her story of the Queen of England's visits. Upon the first occasion, the Princess Beatrice was so charmed with the rabbits that she carried off several of them to England, bringing with her on her return in spring to Aix, the rabbit-wool to be carded, that she might have it made into a petticoat for "her mamma." And again and again we were told what a good kind lady the Queen Victoria of England was, and what a royal gift she bestowed upon the little owner of the rabbits.

There are very few Protestants in Aix, so few, alas! that the little French Reformed Church is closed in winter three Sundays out of the four. On the first Sunday of the month a service is held by the pastor of a neighbouring town, who leaves his own flock on that day to minister to the little handful of Protestant Aixais. In summer there is a weekly service on Sunday afternoon, attended chiefly by the visitors and the inmates of the *Asile Evangelique*, which is attached to the Church.

The Roman Catholic priests take an easy oversight of their large flock, granting ready indulgence in exchange for filthy lucre to that great mass of their parishioners, who, upon the plea, I am ashamed to say, of having to attend to the foreign visitors, are in the habit of absenting themselves entirely during "the season" from the Church services.

And here let us lovingly give a hint to those of our Christian readers who may or do go abroad. To make a bed and dust a room are simple affairs on the Continent, but if Annette, the *femme de chambre*, who knows the young lady on the third *étage* is "a heretic," finds she has taken the trouble on Sunday mornings to perform those duties for herself, in order that a poor tired chambermaid might have a few quiet moments to call her own that day, she will be inclined to think that the religion and the book which teach Mademoiselle to be thus considerate of others, cannot be so very bad. And, in her gratitude for the trifling kindness, Annette may the more readily be induced to accept and read the offered Gospel or tract.

Our first impression of the simple Savoyards was that they were a joyous, light-hearted people, content with their life and happy in their religion, living in a state of perpetual sunshine within and without, with no care in this world beyond the cultivation of their vineyards. But the glimpses we had under the surface did not confirm that idea. We spoke to a sad-faced woman one morning who was watching her cow on a country road. Poor thing! She was grateful for a kind word. In answer to our gentle questions, she broke into bitter weeping as she told how she had lost her husband and three fine sons, and was left all alone in the world. "All alone," yes, truly and utterly comfortless, for she did not know Him who said: "I will come to you." When we reminded her of Jesus, the Friend of the sorrowful, and of His love and sympathy, she shook her head drearily, saying, "Oh! He is too far away, we cannot speak to Him; we can pray to the Holy Virgin, that is all we can do." Our Jesus too far away for us to speak to Him! What will those Roman Catholic priests answer on that day, when they are called to give in their account, and are asked by the Judge, "What did you teach my people about Me?" Oh! that Mr. McAll could see his way to establish a Mission Station in Aix-les-Bains for the benefit of these poor uncared for people! We are glad to tell that upon only one occasion were the Gospel and text cards which we offered refused in Aix.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM JAPAN.

At the close of the service at the native church one Sabbath morning two strangers appeared at the door, and were very anxious to enter. They were told that the services were ended, and, with an air of great disappointment, one of them said, "My name is Okabe, and I am from the distant province of Shinshin. Rev. Mr. Ballagh invited them into the session room, and learned that he was the elder of the Church at Kasugawa, and had come to attend the meeting of the Presbytery. He was present at the prayer meeting in the evening, and gave some account of the place and his work. He is about thirty years of age, with a remarkably fine and intelligent face, and is the teacher of the school in the town where he resides. He was a member of the Liberal Party, and first heard the Gospel at Uyeda and Komoro, which is about twelve miles distant from his home.

As soon as he became acquainted with the teachings of Christ, he felt their truth, and tried to follow in the right way, and began to teach this religion to the children and people of the village. His skill as a teacher, combined with his popularity and zeal for the Master, soon resulted in the conversion of eight persons, and a missionary was sent for to baptize them.

Without any regular preaching the work grew, and, after some time, an elder of one of the Churches

went to assist in teaching and preaching as best he could. More were soon gathered in, until, in the spring of last year, a Church was organized, and Okabe was chosen the elder. Such was the confidence in him and his work that when a place was required for Sunday and other services, it was suggested that the village temple was unoccupied and not used, and that it could be taken for that purpose. So it was cleared out, and has been converted into a Christian place of worship.

Hearing of what had been done at Kasugawa, some people in a neighbouring town asked to have the same preacher come and use their temple in like manner. And so, without a word of opposition, these buildings erected for the worship of idols, have become the means of spreading the knowledge of the true God and Christ the Saviour of the world.

Okabe is full of love for the Master and the Master's work, and reports that twenty-four have been baptized and ten more are applicants for baptism. And thus, without any effort on the part of the missionaries or the native ministers, this work of God's Spirit has grown into a nucleus of great power and good in that secluded valley away in the interior of Japan.

A young Christian from Kumamoto recently went to a distant mountain village to become a teacher in the local school. There was living in the same place a young man of about the same age, who had been adopted by the most wealthy person in that region. When he learned that the teacher was a Christian, he would not associate with him at all, and for a considerable time tried to make it as unpleasant for him as he could.

But the teacher was not deterred from the path of duty, and in time won the confidence and esteem of the one who had hated and opposed him. Then a warm friendship sprang up between them, and the teacher was able to lead his friend to a belief in and acceptance of Christianity.

When the father of the young man heard of what had happened, he threatened to disown and cast him out if he did not give up this new and hated religion. But these threats were of no avail, as the son said that the presence of Christ in his heart was of more value than either gold, houses or lands.

When the time came for the young man to be baptized, the father was present. Both returned to their home, and by neither word or act was there any manifestation of opposition. On the contrary, the father seemed to be convinced of his former error, and allowed the son to do as he chose.

This young man has been chosen to be the head man of the village and when he goes to the Christian services every Sabbath he takes all his associates and officials with him. In this way the triumph of Christianity in that place is fully assured.

Rev. Mr. Brandram was recently going from Oita to Osaka, on a small Japanese steamer, and for some reason there was a delay in the course of the passage. There were about forty persons in the cabin with himself, and one of them asked him if he would not preach to them. Mr. Brandram replied that he had come to Japan for that purpose and it would give him great pleasure to speak to them. But as there were a large number of passengers he did not wish to compel any one to hear him speak, and so he would first like to know if there was any objection to a Christian service being held there and then.

Then a judge who was among the passengers spoke up and asked if there was any one who was opposed to having a missionary preach to them. Not an objection was raised, and, on the contrary, all seemed quite desirous to hear what this foreigner had to say.

Mr. Brandram was much pleased, and gave them a plain and simple Gospel sermon. There was close attention on the part of all, and much interest and pleasure was shown by the hearers. As there was quite a diversity in the capacity of his auditors, Mr. Brandram feared that his discourse might not be acceptable to some who were men of superior learning and position.

But to his great pleasure and surprise, the next day the judge repeated the illustrations and points that he had given them, and said that they were very good. And then he added, "Preach just like that all the time. We all like to hear such good and plain doctrine as that." Another service of a similar character followed.

Among the passengers was a young man of wealth