

Miscellaneous.

GEORGE MUELLER'S ORPHAN HOUSE AT BRISTOL, ENGLAND.

The Revival notices Mr. Mueller's last report, and makes a number of extracts. It says:—Infidelity, which has never yet seen its way to erect a charitable institution by any means whatever, must find Mr. Mueller's account of this work as hard to believe as many other facts of Christian experience. That a poor man, without influence or rich connections, and without personally asking any one for a shilling, should permanently support 1150 orphans, (proposed to be increased to 2000), and do a vast amount of other Christian work by means of voluntary offerings, and that these contributions should come to him just as they are wanted, from persons in all parts of the world, many of whom he has never heard of, are things which a rationalist must be utterly unable to account for on natural principles. If he is consistent, he will adopt the easy and familiar course of pronouncing the whole narrative "incredible, and denying the existence of the institution altogether. But as the buildings on Ashley Down are too solid and substantial to be got rid of in this manner, the sceptic is driven into a corner, and we venture to say that no explanation that can be offered will satisfy a reasonable mind, except that which Mr. Mueller himself gives, viz., that the Father in heaven sent the money according to the need and in answer to believing prayer. Thus, in the midst of "conflicting opinions" and "oppositions of science; the very stones on Ashley Down are carrying out continually, 'The Lord reigneth; praise ye the Lord.'"

The revival among the orphans, already referred to in our columns, commenced in the following manner:—It happened that, toward the end of last year, one of the orphans, Emma Bunn, more than seventeen years old, was seized with hopeless consumption. She had been fourteen years in the asylum, but showed the most complete unconcern about the things of God. Various persons spoke to her, and much prayer was made in her behalf; but her case became more and more discouraging. She remained, to all appearance, in a state of indifference until three days before her death, when she was enabled to put her trust in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of her soul. She now became very happy in the Lord, exhibiting at the same time a deep sense of sin and great self-loathing. Now, too, she manifested much concern about the salvation of her young friends and companions, and sent several messages to them from her dying bed, entreating them to seek the Lord. The result is thus related by Mr. Mueller:—"Her thoughtlessness and carelessness regarding the things of God had been well known among the orphans, and her conversion and her messages were now used by the Lord as the instrument of the most extensive and glorious work of the Spirit of God that we ever had among the children during the whole time that the orphan work has been in existence. I write after the lapse of five weeks, reckoning from the death of Emma Bunn, and about 350 orphans in the New Orphan House No. 3 alone, have since then been led to seek the Lord, and the greater part of them have found peace for their souls through faith in the Lord Jesus. These dear children, formerly almost all careless and indifferent, and most of them much like what Emma Bunn had been, have their prayer-meetings among themselves as often as they can, and in other ways give joy to our hearts."

Apart from the orphan houses, the institution supports or assists fourteen day-schools and five Sunday-schools. It has also circulated, gratuitously or otherwise, upward of 4000 Bibles and Testaments during the year, besides other portions of the Scriptures, and nearly two millions of tracts and other books, of which 1,695,415 were given away gratuitously. Work is a very important feature of the institution. The sum of £4225 12s. 2d. was expended for this object during the past year, chiefly in grants of money to 125 laborers in the Gospel at home and abroad. The grants vary in amount from £5 to £135, the higher sums being given to those engaged in the foreign mission field. Seven laborers in British Guiana have been assisted, six in China, three in Penang, six in India, two in the United States, two in Nova Scotia, two in Canada, two in Spain, two in France, one in Belgium, one in Switzerland, ten in Italy, three in Ireland, one in Scotland, and the remainder in different parts of England. Two new orphan houses are reported. The cost of both (exclusive of furniture and fittings) will be £41,147, about £8000 more than was anticipated, the cost of building material and labor having risen during the last few years. The building fund at present amounts to only £34,000, and therefore the contract has been signed for one house only, with an agreement that Mr. Mueller may, if he pleases, accept the tender for the fifth house on or before Jan. 1, 1867. If, therefore, the remaining £7000 be sent in before that date, the remaining house will be at once proceeded with. When these two houses are completed, accommodation will be afforded for 2000 orphans.

THE AMERICAN UNION COMMISSION.

The following extracts, taken from a letter written by an estimable lady of our own State, now serving the American Union Commission of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, in Georgia, will be read with interest, and lead many benevolent hearts to contribute freely to the good work in which they are engaged, in providing for the impoverished women and children of the South, and especially for the widows and orphans of loyal men who did all they could to maintain the integrity of the nation against the assaults of its enemies.

ATLANTA, GA., October 6th, 1866. Since the school-houses built by the Commission have been completed and thoroughly furnished with desks, books, maps, and every appliance, our teachers have collected around them five hundred

poor dependent children, taken from the tents, shanties and alleys of this desolate city. This is following out the injunction of our blessed Saviour, to care for the little ones. How tender was His solicitude for them when upon earth, and how honorable their distinction when he made them emblems of the redeemed in glory!

The majority of these children were deprived by the war of their natural protectors, and are now dependent on the charity of others. I wish you could hear, as we very often do, these little ones tell their experience with sorrow and suffering. It is enough to melt the heart of a stone, to listen as, in their artless way, they tell of father's anxiety and fear of the rebel gang in their vicinity, and of how father kept himself hid away in some dark or narrow place for days, often weeks, and of his trying to escape from his enemies. Sometimes they succeeded in getting away, and a long time after, in a mysterious manner, they were rejoiced to hear that father was safe, and in the Union army. The next news told them he was wounded and in the hospital, and if he lived, would be a cripple for life; then followed days and nights of anxiety and sorrow.

Another will say:—My father tried to get away, but was captured and brought back, forced into the army, or thrust into prison, and we had to leave our home; the soldiers told us we must go. Many of these children can tell of scenes they witnessed that would make you start back with horror. They have seen the midnight assassins, the consuming fire, the torturing and hanging of prisoners, their own exile far from home, and its attendant privations and many sorrows. And why, all this? Because these were brave men, who chose to suffer rather than willingly assent to our dear old flag. And now the children of these heroic men (marry, they are calling for help. Will their neighbors and enemies, who persecuted them and deprived them of their fathers, sympathize with them now? No. They father preferred to die for them; now you also can go to the Yankees. And shall we refuse to care for the offspring of brave and persecuted men?

Why is it that our Northern friends are so slow to understand that it was the truly loyal who suffered most—and suffer still? For their adherence to the Union they suffered and lost all they had to lose, before the Federal army could reach and rescue them. Hundreds of them were murdered, and many died from exposure, and their little ones are here with none to care for them. We have gathered them in the schools. They appreciate the kindness of the Commission, are very studious, and improve rapidly. But the work has just commenced, and now let it go on vigorously. Let us educate and elevate their little ones. This it is that purifies the very fountain of society, "for the child is father to the man." This is laying the axe at the very root of the tree. This is building from the right source. The foundation is now laid by Northern hands; let us not grow weary; let not the work stop while the building is in course of erection, and prove a stigma to its projectors.

If the citizens of Pennsylvania and New Jersey will sustain their Commission one year longer, the city might, probably, be able to take care of the schools, but this coming year, we who are here see and know that they cannot do it. At present, the people are taxed to the utmost, and still more is needed to buy bread for hundreds of destitute women and children. The unprecedented drought of the past season makes provisions scarce and high-priced, and consequently a heavy tax is required to give each family bread.

I am happy to inform you that our scholars are almost entirely the children of parents who opposed the war. I might fill sheets in describing every day incidents and scenes of sorrow and destitution, that perhaps would seem almost incredible, but that I have made my letter so long already. I will leave a description of our thinly-clad and barefooted children for my next letter.

Contributions to the Commission, in money or clothing, will be gratefully received by Samuel V. Merrick, President, William Struthers, Treasurer, No. 1022 Market street, and Joseph Parker, Secretary, Tract House, No. 1210 Chestnut street.

TOTTERING THRONES.

There are strong indications that the thrones of Europe are wearing out, and while the instability of democratic institutions has been the theme of the aristocratic powers for the past few years, the utter instability of crowns and thrones may well excite our wonder now. Eighteen years ago revolutions shook nearly all the kingdoms of Europe. Then France in reality seized Rome. Then Russia, having saved the Emperor of Austria, would have seized the Principalities, but that France and England made war, attacked the Crimea, broke the heart of the proud Emperor Nicholas, who died, and left his son to make the best terms he could. Since then there has hardly been a safe place for a single crowned head in Europe. Austria, the power of whose Emperors has been growing by accessions of territory for a thousand years, was terribly thrashed by Napoleon, while King Bomba of Naples was utterly extinguished by the Italians. Indeed, it is hard to tell where matters would have stopped, if Louis Napoleon had not become, as it is said, seriously frightened at the battle of Solferino, and determined to make peace on any terms. Then came Napoleon's attempt to establish an empire in Mexico, with a failure so manifest as to make the whole thing as ridiculous as that of Solouque in Hayti. The real old native stock of kings was put to grief in Denmark.

Now the turn of Austrian humiliation has again come, until Francis Joseph has been saluted in the streets with demands for his abdication of the worn-out, shattered throne he occupies. As for the lesser thrones of Germany, the King of Hanover is to be just so much of a king as Prussia allows, and no more; in fact, not a sovereign at all; really—his wife being advised to depart. About the same is the case with the King of Saxony. As the King of Hanover refuses to surrender some million, and a half of the State treasures that were slipped off to England, he is to have the payment

of revenues from the crown lands stopped until it is refunded; and all the German States north of the Main are to have their troops governed by the orders of Prussia, and will be represented in all their foreign relations by the ministers of the conquering monarch. In this respect, a lesson has been taken by Germany from the Constitution of our United States, with this exception—that, instead of these powers being held by a national government, it is as if New York was, by force of arms, to compel the other States, for unity, to be represented abroad by ministers of her appointment, and defended at home by military forces subject to orders from that State as the centre of government. An ambitious King of Prussia can now demand of these petty dukedoms and principalities and kingdoms that they shall, as his vassals, lead out their troops to war for him, and under his orders and generals, when he pleases. We have, therefore, indeed, a united Germany, but one in which all the thrones are fairly worn out but one, and that assumes the powers of the whole.

In days like these, things move fast; the press works and the telegraph works, and in brief periods we know all the news of the civilized world. Causes operate with unheard-of rapidity throughout the globe, and how long other thrones can stand, who shall tell? Not two years ago it was confidently predicted that it was the King of Prussia, that must abdicate. No one, except Louis Napoleon himself, believed that he could have kept his seat on the French throne, and the present King of Italy succeeded to a throne that utterly broke down under his father; and yet these are the only kings in Europe of any consequence as really aggressive powers. Wars without a just cause, on rotten thrones sinking down from utter weakness and exhaustion, are the only visions for the future before Europe at this moment. Unless steady, progressive and liberal reforms become the order of the day, there is, and can be no stable security. Russia and Italy have both tried that course, and found in its strength, because progress is a part of the eternal order of things, and no Government can long remain that does not recognize it.

VESEVIUS—THE ERUPTION OF 1861.

The eruption of 1861, the last of any importance from Vesuvius, is particularly interesting from the position of the seat of eruption, and the circumstances attending the phenomenon. Unlike the case of 1855, previously to which there had been an unusual period of repose, on this occasion (between 1855 and 1860) the mountain had been constantly uneasy, and occasionally active, and had even thrown out several important currents of lava. These vents, however, had closed, and everything was quiet in the month of March, 1860. On the 7th of December in the following year, very clear indications of coming disturbance were felt on the side of the mountain, between the principal crater and Torre del Greco. About 3 P. M. on the 8th, at a distance of about 4000 yards (two and one third miles) nearly S. W. from the centre of the great crater, and nearly the same distance from the sea, at an elevation of about 950 feet above the sea, there rose a large column of thick smoke, accompanied by an enormous quantity of very fine ashes. It would seem probable that, at this moment, a broad and open fissure was formed, extending toward the west, and nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, from several points of which eruptions took place. I was informed by my guide, who had been present (and the statement was confirmed by other eyewitnesses), that only fine ashes erupted from the part of the fissure nearest the crater, while ashes and small stones were ejected lower down, larger red-hot lumps of scoria and blocks of stone below that, and toward 5 P. M., a flow of lava from the lower extremity. The lava was unusually fluid, loaded with crystals of pyroxene, and of peculiar texture. It proceeded rapidly toward Torre del Greco, and at 11 P. M. had reached within about 1000 yards of the houses. It there stopped. The eruption of ashes, however, continued, and was very copious, being conveyed to a great distance. The first dust was accompanied by stones thrown into the air to a height estimated at more than 800 feet. The crevice formed on the first eruption was followed by others the next day, extending toward the sea, and greatly alarming the inhabitants of the town of Torre del Greco. On the 10th, the water flowing from the public fountains and other springs was suddenly increased in quantity; this increase being accompanied by the emission of large quantities of carbonic acid gas, and even, as I was informed, of carburetted hydrogen, with small quantities of petroleum. Large quantities of gas rose from the sea. The springs remained affected for some time, but the new cones and craters soon ceased to exhibit any activity, and the main disturbance was at an end in eight days from its first commencement. Electrical phenomena accompanied the commencement of the eruption, but they affected only the principal crater. They are described as consisting of flashes of forked, blue lightning, different from ordinary lightning, and confined to the summit of the crater. Shortly after the eruption, the ground was cracked, and many deep fissures were produced in the town of Torre del Greco, reaching down to the sea, and rendering the town almost uninhabitable.

The craters of 1861 are nearly in a line, and succeed one another at short intervals, commencing on the lower slopes of the mountain. The uppermost presents well stratified walls of tuff, probably those of the fissure. It is oval, and greatly depressed. There are remains of a small vent at the point nearest the cone of Vesuvius. It is much higher on the part toward the mountain than on the side near the sea, and is only separated from a smaller round crater adjoining it by a narrow ridge. It is partly filled with ashes of extreme fineness. Beyond the first and second crater is the third, which erupted somewhat later, but in the same way. There are no true cones of eruption, though there is a sloping heap of ash round both craters. They all exhibit more of the fissure than the usual, and are thus rather peculiar. The fourth (next in order toward Torre del Greco) was remarkable for its large eruption of stones, which are distributed over the

ground adjacent in enormous quantity, mingled with ashes. Much mischief was done, as the country was cultivated and inhabited; one house being within a hundred yards of the fissure.

There is still much chemical action going on in a part of this crater, and a considerable emission of sulphurous gases has taken place from it; but I could not discover any fumaroles in action at the time of my visit. The remaining three of the craters seem never to have attained any large size, although the chief erupted matter proceeded from the fifth and sixth. These are lower down the slope, and are now almost destroyed, being recognized quite as much by the desolation around as by their form. The lava currents and the blocks of lava thrown out by the craters were all of the same kind, darker in color than usual, and somewhat blue, resembling the lavas of 1855. Slight shocks of earthquakes were recorded at the mountain Observatory from the 7th of December to the 29th of January, and more considerable shocks took place about the time of the eruption and for a month afterward. Heavy rain fell the day before the eruption. The appearance of the eruption at its first commencement was unusually grand; but it lasted a very short time. On the whole, there are few instances on record in which the linear arrangement of the craters and the direction of the fissures, found in the adjacent country and indicated by outburst of water and gas, afford more striking indications of the nature of the disturbance.—Good Words.

SMOKY TOWNS OF ENGLAND.

It is really distressing to perceive the vast difference in the quality of the atmosphere of London and our large towns and that of the country or of many cities of the Continent—Paris, for example. Here we are in the metropolis, breathing coal-smoke, begrimed by coal-smoke, and sometimes involved in that "pitchy cloud of infernal darkness," through which we see the sun dimly as a fiery red ball. Our buildings are made hideous by coal-smoke, being patched with horrid streaks of black, where the rain fails to penetrate. The things we call statues, though consisting of bronze, are blackened with soot—an effect which it is reported an eminent deceased sculptor admired, as they were thus boldly relieved against the sky! If we keep our windows close, the ubiquitous smut gains access and if we open them—as we needs must—we breathe in the air-tubes of our lungs. Plants as well as animals are poisoned by smoke, and see how they struggle for existence even in the parks of London. The fine trees in Kensington Gardens are dying apace, and roses bloom not within some miles of Charing Cross. Then how great oppression falls on our spirits from the fuliginous exhalation of the pure light of the sun! Tyndall tells us that the aqueous vapor in our atmosphere keeps us warm like a blanket, and so prevents us from being speedily frozen to death. But what is that dense canopy of coal-smoke over our heads but a veil which makes man wretched and nature hideous? This, as we all know, is not the language of exaggeration; and what is so bad in the metropolis is far worse, if possible, in many manufacturing towns of the country. With us the evil is now caused in great measure by the imperfect combustion of a very large quantity of coal in our domestic fires, as, with few exceptions, the nuisance formerly occasioned by furnace chimneys has been greatly abated. But in the country, as Sir Robert Peel stated recently in the House of Commons, it is far otherwise. There factories are permitted to vomit forth torrents of black smoke with impunity, although, as Sir George Grey remarked, ample powers exist for the suppression of this great evil, if only his favorite "local authorities" could be prevailed upon to put the law in force. Who are these "local authorities" of whom we have lately heard so much in Parliament? Why, doubtless, in many cases, the very men who create the abomination. Mr. Henley, the venerable member for Oxfordshire, advised that heavy penalties should be inflicted for a breach of the law in this respect, and that half should go to the informer. This is good sound sense. Another suggestion has been made that the Factory Inspectors might with advantage be directed to take this matter in hand, and we are disposed to think this suggestion reasonable. At any rate, your "local authorities," who produce the smoke, can hardly be expected to proceed against themselves; and as they are often omnipotent in their locality, the suffering inhabitants would not be likely to risk an encounter with these mighty men of the mills! Lancashire contains, we are assured, some of the dirtiest and filthiest towns in the kingdom, and smoke has done and is doing most of the mischief. Why do not the rich possessors of these mills, who generally take good care to reside as far as possible from their own smoke, show some regard for the health and comfort of their working people? They can declaim loudly enough in Parliament and elsewhere against the employers of agricultural labor, and prattle on the rights and virtues of the working men. Can they say that they have themselves done their duty to the working classes, while they knowingly and needlessly inflict such a wide-spread nuisance upon a large, and, for the most part, dependent population?—London Quarterly Review.

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