

## Review.

*The Country of the Vosges.* By HENRY W. WOLFF. Longmans. 1891.

THIS is no ordinary book of travels which a man may run through to while away the passing hour; it is rather a book of more abiding interest. The author writes as one who has not only a knowledge of the country he describes, but who is also acquainted with its past history and surroundings. He is withal a good linguist.

In commencing his wanderings through the Vosges, Mr. Wolff's starting-ground is Metz, which though not in that country, yet, as he says, "lies most temptingly in the way;" of the town he gives a graphic description. "The streets are, in the more interesting part of the town, all charmingly up and down. Near the Esplanade . . . is a curious little twelfth-century oratory of the Knights Templars, plain and chaste, but good—only now appropriated as a military telegraph station. Those Templars had a house of some pretensions in Metz in the Rue des Trinitaires (St. Livier), near that most interesting old Merovingian palace, on the walls of which you may see a remarkable quaint old relievo sculpture of undoubtedly Merovingian date, showing the Franks in the act of driving the Romans, symbolized as a lion, out of Gaul." Of the churches, we read they all "have good stained glass, for which Metz is famous." Speaking of the Jews, with whom Lorraine, Alsace and the adjoining German States swarm, the opinion is given decidedly "that as now practising their trade in these parts, the Jews constitute—speaking in a general way—a very pest to the country, being surpassed in pestilential character only by the Christian money-lenders. . . . In Alsace and Lorraine, up to the time of German annexation, really nothing had been done for popular credit, and the peasantry had no one to go to but the Jews." But now the communal and savings bank funds have been made available for loan purposes, though the "distrustful peasantry seem still to prefer dealing privately with the Jews."

In visiting the battle-field, a little graveyard is discovered, "in which may be seen a record of our share in that terrible year's work. Grave-stone No. 456 bears this inscription :

IN MEMORY  
OF  
HENRIETTA CLARK, DEACONESS,  
FROM  
CHESWICK, CUMBERLAND,  
ENGLAND.  
BORN DECEMBER 24, 1837;  
DIED OCTOBER 29, 1870.

"The poor lady, people in the village will tell you, died as a kind nurse to the soldiers."

Leaving Metz our readers may like to hear what the author has to say

of Bitsch and its fortress. It has a special interest to us, because "in the Great War between 1802 and 1814 a number of our people, taken prisoners, were locked up there." Of their being cruelly confined in the casemates of the fortress we are glad to read it is "a myth . . . But no doubt the casemates had been freely impressed for punishment cells, as the names scratched into the walls clearly proved. Damp, unhealthy tenements they were. . . . And within them were terrible torture-holes, fiat recesses let into the wall, in which prisoners were placed with a door closed right against their face, so as to leave them no space for moving. There were two rings fastened, the one to the inner wall, the other to the door. To the ring in the cell the man's one leg was chained; to the one in the door his one arm, and then the door was closed, and thus he was unable to move, unable almost to breathe."

We may now turn from such a gloomy picture and visit Strassburg. Contrasting his former visit in 1861 with his present one, we read: "There are the same familiar squares, narrow and crooked streets, buildings of the Reformation era, those picturesque backyards of two or three centuries ago—the most striking is that of the Raven's Inn—with verandahs and quaint carvings, and rich festoons of creepers, little bits seemingly made for the painter's brush. . . . I had not the slightest difficulty in finding my way about. Yet there was one change, and that I thought very striking. In 1861 I had found the whole city German, very German—except the official apex, which of course was French. In 1890 the apex was as distinctly German, but the city had become to a considerable degree French—French in speech, French in manners, French in sentiment. The whip too freely used had made the horse jib rather than go—the correcting alkali had produced an acid reaction." Our author speaks of the charm Strassburg had for Goethe, who "went into raptures over it all." "The dialogue in the Well scene in Faust is said to be taken almost word for word from an old Strassburg Brunnen-gschbräch, published early in the last century, which may be summed up in saying: 'They clung tenaciously to all that could recall the past good times, and foster a hope for a return of the happy epoch.' But 'Quantum mutata!' are the sad remarks. 'No doubt the glory of the second Strassburg will in some sense exceed the glory of the first. But it will be of an entirely different type. French associations will be rooted out—in course of time—trust Berlin for that! But these hosts of Prussian soldiers, *Geheimräthe*, Prussian this, that and the other, are every bit as much strangers in Strassburg as ever the French were. And if they go on exploiting the newly-recovered city, as they have begun, before long it will be reduced to the level of a very ordinary North German provincial capital—prosaic, common-place, uninteresting—instead of being that dear old, genuinely Swabian city, with so much that is racy still about it; so much that is commemorative of old times, so much that has made the city the historical Strassburg that it is."

If our total abstaining friends want fresh scope for their energies, Strassburg will furnish them with a fine field. "For it," we read, "has always been a beery place," and "has not only managed to maintain and develop this cult of beer within its own limits, but has moreover taught

sympathetic France to drink beer wholesale—as if it likewise had become a German province, and partly to forsake wine.”

We are sorely tempted to give some further extracts relative to Strassburg, and especially of the industry of the *pâté de foie gras*, but we must forbear. Further in his book we have an account given of Oberlin's church at Foudai. “The one church of the district as it used to be in Oberlin's days. . . . A most bare and uncomfortable place of worship this church looks—as are indeed its sister buildings. For Vosgian Lutheranism is a stern and severe creed, averse to luxuries and comfort. Advisedly there are no forms put up for the congregation, but mere carpentered beams, on which people may sit, but cannot lean back, or possibly, as M. Dietz was careful to point out, ‘go to sleep’—be the sermon never so soporific. This church was built by Oberlin 115 years ago, in the plain, barn-like style, which seems so dear to orthodox Lutherans. The tower is much older, and, having been consecrated before the Reformation, is still regarded with peculiar awe as indelibly ‘Catholic.’ In it is hung a bell, cast in the twelfth century, dedicated to the Virgin, and partaking accordingly of the ‘Catholic’ character of the town. In other respects these Lutherans are less rigid. They use their church for all manner of purposes—lectures, and meetings, and social gatherings—more particularly at Christmas time, when the German Christmas-tree is placed familiarly upon the altar, and the parishioners assemble for a pleasant social evening in the body of the church.”

In these extracts we have let Mr. Wolff speak for himself. His work is full of valuable matter, which should be interesting at all times, but is especially so in connection with the country coming under German rule. We hope our readers will derive as much pleasure as we have in perusing the volume.

W. E. RICHARDSON.

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## Short Notices.

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*Christus Comprobator*: The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament. Seven Addresses. By C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

IN the December CHURCHMAN we expressed the hope that Bishop Elliott's Charge would without delay appear in *extenso*; and we heartily welcome this volume, published by the great and venerable Church Society, and earnestly invite to it the attention of our readers.

From the fourth chapter, “The Appeal to Christ,” a lengthy extract appeared in “The Month”; and we content ourselves at present with remarking that to that passage are appended in the volume two or three footnotes. Here is one, a note following the words “realm of history” (CHURCHMAN, p. 167). His Lordship says:

Comp. *Lux Mundi*, p. 360 (ed. x.). See also Sanday, *Oracles of God*, Lect. viii., p. 110 (Lond. 1891)—an interesting lecture, but deficient in its