

The President's Corner

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To Claim Our Heritage

WHEN we set out to see as much as possible of Europe and the British Isles this summer it was not with this thought in mind. These are the words of John Trapp to whom we owe much for the pleasures experienced abroad, for it was he, as we were driving out of Brussels toward Luxembourg, who suggested that this indeed was the real intent of our visit since our ancestors had come from Europe so many years ago, and from the same part of it into which we would so soon be travelling.

"What was the highlight of your trip?" is the question most often put since our return. And how can one reply? To sit on the wall of the old Roman Forum two thousand years old, where now the greatest of Verdi's operas "Aida" is being performed in Verona upon a stage which will accommodate the cast of a thousand? Or, to view the tomb of Juliet in that same city of the "Two Gentlemen"? To walk in the ruins of the Colosseum at the edge of Rome and think back to the days when one struggled with ancient history, never dreaming that one day we would walk upon those same stones and re-live some of the pomp and glory of the Roman Empire? Or, perhaps to look upon an even greater grandeur while driving through the Brenner Pass in the Alps, with blue skies and brilliant sun shining on the snow-capped peaks rising in serried ranks to an unbelievable height? Or, to live for a short time in the storybook town of Bernkastel on the Rhine River, where one's windows looked across the river again to the mountains over the housetops of this tiny spot tucked away in the lap of the mountains? The beauty of a moonlighted trip through the Grand Canal of Venice, or the next day to stand in awe of the beauty of the golden mosaics in the domes of St. Mark's Cathedral? Or, an entirely different kind of beauty to be experienced looking across the lake at Killarney toward the gap of Galway, or to experience the swelling of pride in the dignity of the service attended in Westminster Abbey on a rainy Sunday evening and the feeling that one had "arrived back home again" in this city which has experienced the vicissitudes of war and the panoply of ceremonial processions? To stand at the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral looking at the ruins all around which still remind of the war, and to

wonder how this beautiful building escaped with as little damage as it did with all around beaten to the ground; to walk inside and find behind the great screen an inscription in the marble floor setting aside this place as a memorial to the "people of England" who lost their lives in the war? All these are things of which the tapestry of such a trip is woven, but it remains always for the figures of the people we met to stand out most in this bright and lasting picture.

One of the most interesting experiences was that of meeting with members of the English Women's Institutes in London, when I was privileged to present the gift of \$1,000 from the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario to the Lady Aberdeen Scholarship Fund. This scholarship, when it is finally set up, will provide one year's study in Sociology, the person chosen to go back to her own country to assist in setting up study groups for better home life. Here it was a pleasure to meet again McIntyre Hood, with whom I had not talked for a number of years. He had come to report the afternoon's activities. Attending was Mrs. John Donaldson, who represents F.W.I.O. on the executive of the Associated Country Women of the World, with which F.W.I.O. and 25 other groups are affiliated. There were representatives from Nyasaland, Finland, Scotland, as well as England attending the tea which followed the presentation.

Throughout a leisurely tour of England, Scotland and Ireland we were met at every stopover by members of the Women's Institutes, and this made that part of the trip all the more memorable, for we were surrounded by friends in a strange land who helped us to understand their ideas and ideals not only for the organization they represented, but for the welfare of their people as well. Not too much was said of the suffering entailed by the war, and those references which we heard in England invariably were either prefaced or followed by smiles for the frustrations of wartime living. The years since have been filled to the brim with the desire to wipe out the memory and to rebuild that which has been destroyed. And this, perhaps, is one of the things which brings to us most forcibly the meaning of war. One walks along the way to look upon buildings of beauty and charm centuries old, and suddenly you come upon a new building out of tune entirely, and you know that this is the scar tissue which has formed over the wounds of war. Or even now you still look upon the gaping wounds which war has left on the face of Europe, for there has not been money to restore or to clear away entirely the rubble which still lies in those places which were bombed out.

There is still another impression which one gains and that is the love with which the restoration of many buildings has been carried on. We saw the famous chapel in Chelsea in which the tomb built by Sir Thomas Moore is to be found, that tomb in which he never was permitted to rest along with his first and second wives. The chapel actually had but one small part of a wall left standing, for it is situated almost at the edge of the river which runs through London; but today all that was left has been gathered together and bit by bit replaced so that, while the outside