

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM KNOXVILLE.

Knoxville, Tenn., February 16.

BRO. MEARS:—I closed my last with an appeal for fruit and vegetables—food for the body; I commence this with a cry for reading matter—food for the mind. It is sometimes more important to give a sick or wounded man a religious paper or book than some delicacy. With nothing like this to occupy the mind, the patient is left too much to thoughts of himself—dwells on his ills—becomes so depressed and despondent as to retard and often indeed entirely prevent recovery. It is very important "to keep up spirits." I have seen men for lack of cheerfulness becoming disheartened and giving up too soon, while men in the same ward, tenacious of life and hopeful, though in a much more dangerous condition from the start, would recover. Then let all that have a will to please the soldier and do him good, help furnish aliment for his mind and its diversion from himself. Said a soldier in hospital to me the other day, "I'm glad to see you; I got right smart of courage in reading that little book you gave me the other day. I'm very thankful for it." Yes, it does give them courage and moral strength, cheerfulness and patience in their hours of loneliness and suffering. And how glad have I found the soldiers here to read papers no matter of what date. There was a perfect dearth here; no papers came into the place only as now and then some one came through from Chattanooga and Nashville. Secular weeklies and dailies of 1857 and 1858 were hunted up, distributed and read with the avidity of new papers at home, when I first came.

There have been but comparatively few religious papers as yet distributed in this army; we have received but two or three meagre consignments, and mostly of old dates. This is a reading army, and what we need and must ask for is about 10,000 copies weekly of good religious papers to distribute broadcast in this army. The soldiers here are from all parts of the North, New England, New York, Pennsylvania and the West—I presume nearly equally divided between the two sections, East and West. Therefore don't fall behind the Western churches in supplying this great and at present so needy field, with their good papers. May your excellent paper be well represented in these charities of patriotic Christians. Many, many thanks in behalf of the grateful soldiers receiving them, for the generous gift of Benedict Stewart, Esq., in placing such a goodly number of them into our hands for distribution. May we have many such handsome receipts to acknowledge. Remember that at Chattanooga and at other points in the Army of the Cumberland, religious papers and books have been supplied for months, but here the opportunity is just opening to furnish these mentally starved soldiers. Be assured, everything sent them is received with much gratitude, and read with great relish. And just here, readers, allow me to suggest, that some one of the family at home, after they have read their religious and secular paper, neatly fold both up together and mail them to that soldier boy, father or husband of yours, far away, whose camp-life is dull and monotonous, or whose hospital hours may be gloomy and cheerless, and you could give him no greater gratification. But you must get in the way of doing it, not only occasionally, but set out with the determination of attending to this duty at a certain day, punctually, or it will not be regularly done.

While the too popular expression is current, that our army is rapidly becoming demoralized in its morals, which admits of much question, it is certainly true that it is a school and discipline for the improvement of men's minds. The majority read and write more in one month than they did at home in a year. Said a man to me in our room, who had just written a letter there, (which is almost constantly crowded with soldiers writing "to the dear ones at home"); "I could scarcely write when I came into the service, but writing to my wife so often, I can write pretty well now. I can read writing and printing too, much better." This is the language and experience of multitudes. There must be as many as seventy-five letters written per day at our office, judging by the paper we have given them at the counter.

Ours is an intelligent army. There are none like it in the world. They are an army of scholars—not only soldiers trained their whole life to walk erectly and be thoroughly drilled into the art of fighting; but trained to think—brought up under the influence and discipline of higher ideas and principles, to develop by a far nobler education, into a more glorious life of action. Many of the ablest and best of all the depart-

ments of learning and of all the professions of life are in the army. We have purely intelligent patriotism brought to bear on our cause; and with a jealous apprehension of the integrity and honor of that cause, they have in the most terrible conflicts evinced the sublimest heroism, and under all their trials borne themselves with the utmost patience. Never have any soldiers in history been more uncomplaining and self-sacrificing than the present soldiers of our country. They know and feel that there never was such a cause—with such mighty, far reaching interests to the human race, bound up in the result of our great struggle. They regard it as decisive for or against the welfare and well-being of mankind everywhere, and are willing to render all service and sacrifice they can, to accomplish the peace and freedom of our land from rebellion, and the proclamation of the triumph of Democratic principles throughout the earth.

In view of all this voluntary patriotic self-denial and sacrifice of our noble fellow countrymen, may we not be found wanting in doing all we can from our peaceful, quiet and prosperous homes where the comforts of life overflow, to provide for the comfort of these soldiers who are warding off poverty, war and death from us. J. L. L.

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

The Great Fair in the Rooms of the Patent Office.

The great fair for the benefit of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, is now in its full tide.

The most distinguished citizens and congressmen, are deeply interested in its success. The receipts are large—said to be many thousands a night. All measures, even those most questionable, are taken to secure money. Every article offered for sale is raffled off. And in this way articles of small value obtain fabulous prices; a cake worth two dollars is disposed of in twenty shares at fifty cents a share. A picture, which can be bought in Rome for ten dollars, or New York for twenty, is raffled for three hundred. A set of china worth sixty dollars is disposed of in the same manner, for two hundred and fifty. Everything that smiles, flatters and wheedling can do to wring from one his money is done.

And yet they call this charity? Have we become so utterly destitute of all pity that we have to be cheated into benevolence?

This system for obtaining money has in it all the worst features of gambling. Thousands of dollars must pass from the hands of the visitors for which they receive nothing in return; and others bear away valuable articles which have cost them not one-fiftieth part of their value. It is true there is not the intense excitement, the passion, and frenzy of the gambling board; but the principle is the same. And the fact that the good, the pious, the beautiful have loaned their influence and example to such measures for replenishing the treasures of charity, gives aid and comfort to those who rush into all the excesses of the worst gambling saloon. We all know, when tempted to do wrong, how eagerly we seize every argument that can bind, as with cords, the conscience, or induce it to come over to the defence of the sin. At such an hour, the force of the temptation is greatly increased by the weaknesses and inconsistencies of those who profess better things. There always has been a jubilee in the haunts of wickedness when the righteous have fallen into sin. How can those mothers and fathers who have countenanced and sustained the raffling at Fairs, warn their sons against the faro-table and the lottery? But all this, we are told, is for the good of the country, and to clothe, nourish and comfort the suffering and wounded soldiers. I doubt the healing power of a balm that flows from such a tree. It is no charity, it is the mockery of truth and virtue, to dignify the lowest selfishness, by that name.

I should like to see the Christian Commission reject all such doubtful gains. Let this kind of appeal be made in every city and village in the land, and more will be done to demoralize, to undermine principle, to confuse the bounds of right and wrong, than can be repaired by a half century of faithful teaching. Principle, like modesty, blooms but once, and rudely tampered with will lose all its fragrance forever.

This whole matter assumes a special importance, at this time, in this city. For never, in the history of any city, was there such necessity for the virtuous and good being on their guard. The haunts of dissipation have multiplied almost by hundreds. Gambling saloons fitted up with the greatest elegance, are almost as much thronged as in San Francisco. Everything to minister to sensualism and prodigality is multiplied. Where every form of swindling and fraud finds advocates, and the mantle of success covers as with a garment of beauty, the most atrocious

speculations; where all society is threatened with that sort of all calamities, being left with nothing but the shell of virtue and religion: when the night is dark and the storm raging, it is no time to put out our signal lights. When the enemy is near us, it is no time to draw in our guard, and order our pickets to sleep. If there ever was a time in the history of our country when we should keep our garments unspotted from the world, this is the hour we ought to rise to the dignity of the time, and the sacrifice of the citizen ought to equal that of the soldier.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND DEBATES IN CONGRESS.

The most remarkable thing that has appeared this week, is the report of Senator Sumner in regard to Slavery and the Freedmen. The report displays the most remarkable research, and is of great value as an historic document. The Hon. Senator takes the strongest ground against the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act, and endeavors to show that the words of the Constitution which demand the rendition "of persons held to service," cannot mean slaves, because by all slave-laws they are held as chattels and property, and so declared in the laws of all the slave States. But the most noticeable feature of the report is that in which he reviews the history of our legislation in regard to negro testimony before courts of justice. On this point, I subjoin an extract from the *Chronicle* of this city.

South Carolina, it appears, has never had a law expressly excluding negro testimony, yet practice exclusion is prevailing there. It is difficult to read the provisions in a single State without impatience, but the recurrence of this injustice, expressed with such particularity, in no less than fifteen States, makes impatience swell into indignation, especially when it is considered that in every State this injustice is adopted and enforced by the courts of the United States. In no State can a slave testify against a white person, except that in Maryland he may testify against a "white person who is not a Christian." Only (under certain circumstances) in Delaware and Louisiana can a free negro testify against a white person.

The eccentricities of judicial decisions, illustrating such exclusion, are cited numerous. Among the consequences of exclusion are mentioned the maltreatment or murder of slaves, or even free negroes, with impunity; and the perpetration of crime against white men, in the presence of colored persons, with the same immunity from punishment. The report traces this proscription to the barbaric ages, and makes it the offspring of slavery, originating in ignorance and prejudice. Among the ancient Greeks a slave's testimony was not believed upon his oath, but was admissible under torture. The Romans adopted a similar legal practice. In England, under the common law, this proscription was never recognized.

The grounds for such exclusion are examined at length, and the report concludes as follows: "It is for Congress now to determine whether the proscription shall continue to be maintained in the courts of the United States; or, in other words, if a local rule, irrational, barbarous, and unjust, shall be allowed to exist any longer with the national sanction."

Accompanying the report is a letter from Chief Justice Appleton, of Maine, which declares exclusion of testimony incompatible with uniformity in administration of law, and an unmistakable proof of deficient civilization; and produces arguments to show that exclusion is not on account of falsehood or the excluded witness, his incapacity, or servile condition, but upon his color alone, "as if mendacity was the result of having a great amount of pigment cells, and a greater number of cutaneous glands." J. J. M. Washington, March 5, 1864.

RELIGION AT HOME AND IN THE ARMY.

In our immediate vicinity, especially in the churches of this city; the state of religion cannot, to human eye, be considered flattering. Not one of our churches, or of those of sister denominations, is known to be enjoying a considerable ingathering from the world. Such a fact should not be hidden; nor should it exert a disheartening effect upon us. It should not blind our eyes to the many outward marks of divine favor which we, as churches, are enjoying; or to the fact that in many other places, God is revealing his converting power in a remarkable manner. So near as Wilmington, a great though quiet revival has already vouchsafed to two of our churches, resulting in the hopeful conversion of seventy or eighty souls. We had the privilege of chronicling, in our last week's issue, some particulars of a powerful work of grace in Haverhill, Mass., in connection with the labors of Mr. Hammond; and our Rochester correspondent was privileged to report several blessed seasons of revival in localities in New York State with over two hundred and fifty cases of hopeful conversion; two hundred of them belonging to one small town alone, and over one hundred being in connection with our own churches. Under our

Religious Intelligence many cheering items of revival intelligence are collected from week to week.

Nevertheless, the spiritual condition of the church generally, must be admitted to be far from cheering. As a transforming power in the immediately surrounding community, the church is not doing her appropriate work. Converting power does not attend the preaching of the Word to any great extent. The instances in which it does so are exceptional.

Yet there is one field of effort towards which the sympathies, prayers, labors and liberality of the churches have been especially directed, where fruit has appeared, in an encouraging degree. The spiritual condition of the army is, we believe, the chief burden of the church at this time. There are many of her members, her elders, deacons, and Sabbath school teachers, children, and not a small proportion of the material for her future growth. There are souls in great jeopardy for this world and the next; there are instances of appalling destitution of religious privileges. These men and their chaplains have been made the subjects of earnest, unceasing prayer; and the life of the church has flowed forth in decided manifestations in their behalf. The work has not been in vain. Numerous and precious revivals have taken place in the tented field. In some instances, the power of God has been so solemnly exhibited as to fill his people with awe. More than a thousand conversions, with every sign of genuineness, nay, with rather deeper indications than usual of the Word of the Spirit, are reported at a station in the Army of the Potomac. A thousand others are reported at various centres of effort in the same army. A state of feeling has been observed among the soldiers highly favorable to such efforts. The soil in many places is open to the seed, and only waits for the patient and prayerful laborer. And he is going forth as far as Knoxville, Huntsville, Ala., and other remote places, rejoicing to suffer inconvenience and hardship in so important a field of the Master's service.

While, therefore, we find much to humble us as we glance around at the state of religion in the land, we have abundant cause for thanksgiving also. God has not forgotten to be gracious. He gives us many a token for good. We should employ them as arguments in hoping and praying for more.

MORE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF LIBER-ALITY TO PASTORS.

We continue to give place to such items of intelligence with great pleasure, and for three reasons:

1. It is due to the congregations that some public acknowledgment of their kind, and in many instances, noble and generous acts should be made. To pass them over in silence would be disheartening. Paul, with his consummate knowledge of human nature, and under the guidance of inspiration, makes ample acknowledgment of the gifts of the Philippians to himself, calling them "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing and acceptable to God," thus giving them a reputation as wide and imperishable as the Scripture itself.

2. To stir up the congregations, who as yet have not communicated, in giving and receiving, with their pastors. We have every reason to believe that pastors who have exerted themselves in circulating religious papers among their people have speedily had their reward, in the stimulus given to the liberality of their people by the good example of other congregations, recorded in our columns, which otherwise would never have come under the notice of their own.

3. To remind all concerned how much can be done, with a little trouble, by a united effort of the people, to make their ministers comfortable, and to tide them over this season of temporary, and, we trust, extraordinary financial pressure. It is a very easy, a very delightful and a very profitable work to all parties; it is a tolerably sure way of harmonizing congregations and of drawing closer the ties between pastor and people. Rural congregations, especially, will find it very easy to load up a "big wagon" with articles of the utmost value to the minister, and thus relieve his family of many a season of anxiety.

4. We have no intention, however, to soothe the consciences of those congregations who, with abundant means, pay their ministers an inadequate salary in the best of times, and who think to discharge their duty by a spasm of liberality as fleeting as the "deceitful brooks" of Job's neighborhood. We hope that they are learning in these times of large and generous effort to be ashamed of themselves; and that, as a result of this Donation spirit, we shall cease to hear complaints of large, wealthy and intelligent congregations with such low conceptions of the value of the

ordinances of God's house as to throw serious doubts upon the practical value and the reality of their piety. We are encouraged to believe that a higher standard of liberality is being introduced into our churches.

PAPERS FOR THE ARMY ACKNOWLEDGED.

Part of a recent donation for sending our papers to the army was applied to the use of the Post Chaplain at Fort Delaware, Rev. E. J. Way. His letter was published in last week's issue, and we hope it will not be overlooked. We commend this excellent chaplain's appeal for reading matter especially to our numerous readers in Wilmington, and other parts of Delaware.

Acknowledgment of a second package, sent to the Army of the Cumberland, will be found in the letter of our Knoxville correspondent.

Another parcel is sent weekly to Rev. John C. Smith, D. D., as chaplain to the Judiciary Square Hospital in Washington. Dr. Smith writes as follows:

Washington City, Feb. 15, 1864.

BRO. MEARS:—The papers came to hand and were placed in the hands of patients the same day. Many thanks to B. D. Stewart, Esq., for the means, and to you for your kind words informing me thereof.

We have ten wards, with anxious readers. The number sent of course will not be too many. We have nearly 300 men.

I congratulate you, upon the enterprise you display in the *American Presbyterian*, as well as all your readers on the large and valuable amount of reading you so regularly furnish us every week. I am your debtor in all these things, and hope to do more, much more, for the paper. Fraternaly,

JOHN C. SMITH.

SOLDIERS' PAPERS.

From a lady, \$5.50

DEATH OF PRESIDENT HITCHCOCK.

Rev. Edward Hitchcock, D. D., LL. D., from 1845 to 1854 President of Amherst College, and both before and after Professor at that institution, died of consumption at Amherst, Mass., on Saturday morning, at the age of 70. For two or three years his health has been gradually failing. Dr. Hitchcock was born in Old Deerfield, Mass., May 24th, 1793. In 1825 he accepted the professorship of natural history and chemistry in Amherst College. From 1845 to 1854 he was President of the College, and also gave instruction in natural theology and geology; and it was through his exertions that a professorship of natural theology and geology was permanently founded, the chair of which he filled to the day of his death. Dr. Hitchcock suggested and executed the geological survey of Massachusetts, the first scientific survey of an entire State under the authority of the government in the world. He was the first to scientifically examine and classify the fossil footprints in the Connecticut Valley, and his ichnological cabinet at Amherst contains specimens of all those known remains. He was the originator and the first President of the American Scientific Association, and the last Congress very properly named him as one of the fifty corporators and members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Hitchcock will be lamented, especially by all Christian students of nature who desire to see God acknowledged in all scientific pursuits, and who believe that there is nothing in science, properly so-called, at variance with the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

The class of scientific men and the modes of thought fostered by American institutions of learning, have, thus far, been, on the whole, friendly to Evangelical Christianity. Dr. H. was prominent among the Christian men of science, whose names and works have been an honor to America. He is named with a Dana, a Silliman, a Henry, and a Kirkwood. His "Religion of Geology" was a noble effort to prove, not only the compatibility of the teachings of science with Revelation, but to show what brilliant, conclusive, and instructive confirmation, of the one, were to be found in every department of the other.

An eager and inquiring mind, that found in human knowledge but stepping stones for a nearer approach to the Deity, and that ranged boldly, so far as mortal wing could carry him, through the sublimer regions and relations of this lower world, will enter with peculiar joy into that nearer communion with the Deity, which this veil of flesh denies, and, with adoring wonder, will drink in the new and copious libations of knowledge opened to happy spirits in the eternal world.

At the conclusion of one of the chapters in the volume already named occurs a passage we may appropriately and profitably quote at this time.

Let us never forget, that in a very short time, far shorter than we imagine, all the scenes of futurity will be to us a thrilling reality. Fully confident am I that the scenes which will open upon us will surpass our liveliest conceptions. The

glass through which we now see dark will be removed, and face to face shall we meet eternal glories. Let then, live continually under the influence of the scenes that await us beyond the grave. They will thus become familiar to us, and we shall appreciate their infinite superiority to the objects that so deeply interest us on earth. We shall be led to look forward even with strong desire, in spite of the repulsive aspect of death, to that state where the soul will be freed from her prison-house of flesh and blood, and can range in untrifling freedom through the boundless fields of knowledge and happiness that are in prospect. While yet in the body we shall begin to breathe the ethereal air of the new heaven, and gather the fruits of the tree of life in the new earth where righteousness only shall forever dwell.

"We go to the grave of a friend saying 'A man is dead,' but the angel throng about him saying, 'A man is born.'"

SOCIAL GATHERING

OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE WESTERN CHURCH.

On Wednesday evening, February 7th, the congregation of the Western Presbyterian Church, assembled for an evening's social enjoyment, in the lecture room of their house of worship. The Lecture and Sabbath School rooms were ornamented with national flags and evergreens. In the latter room a table was spread, in the arrangement of which the most exquisite taste was displayed. An abundance of good things were provided: ice creams, cakes, fruits, nuts, sweetmeats, etc., etc. The pleasures of the evening were greatly enhanced by the singing of two beautiful anthems by the choir.

The pastor elect, Rev. J. S. Willis, having been requested to address the company, alluded to the new relation soon to be established between himself and the people, and happily introduced to them his truly estimable lady. The company then partook of the entertainment provided. A floral token of the love and esteem the congregation entertained towards Mrs. Willis, was, with a few brief and well chosen words, presented by the Sheriff of the city, Mr. John Thompson. Mr. Willis, for his lady, responded to the compliment with much grace and beauty of language.

There were many pleasing incidents connected with this social gathering, which will not soon be forgotten. Parents and children were there; a happier or more sociable company never assembled.

The Committee are certainly deserving of all praise for ability displayed in arranging and conducting the affair. February 22, 1864. M.

News of our Churches.

FOURTH AVENUE CHURCH, NEW YORK.—The close of the first year of Rev. Dr. Crosby's labors among this people was marked by a donation of \$1200 to the pastor, the salary having already been raised a thousand dollars. Ninety-six members have been added to the church, (twenty-eight by profession) a larger total than in any previous year of its history.

Our Church in Rock Island, Ill., says the New York Evangelist, will gratify many readers to know that this church, which has been so long laboring under a heavy debt, has just been fully relieved. So overwhelmed were the people with the debt, which was about \$14,000 with interest, that it had been closed for a year, and the Roman Catholic Bishop had made efforts to buy it. A few months ago it was found that \$4,000, if paid promptly, would cancel the whole debt. \$1,500 was accordingly raised at the West. W. L. Lee, of the firm of Lee, Judd & Lee, Blackhawk, Colorado Territory, late of Rock Island, paid \$1,000; \$2,500 were raised in this city, of which W. E. Dodge, Esq., gave \$1,000. The property is valuable, though slightly out of repair, but worth fully \$15,000. The payment of the debt has given new courage and zeal to the congregation. The scattered members are coming together, and many who had never been connected with them are now taking hold of the enterprise, and it promises to be a complete success. Rev. Mr. Caldwell has been invited to supply the pulpit. \$1,000 has been raised for his support, and \$1,000 or \$1,500 more will be immediately laid out in necessary repairs. This is the only N. S. Church for Rock Island and Davenport (directly opposite Rock Island, on the West bank of the Mississippi river;) and with the blessing of God may accomplish a great work.

Rev. D. E. WELLES, of New Philadelphia and Canal Dover, Ohio, having accepted a call to Monroeville, Ohio, preached his farewell sermon, February 28th.