

## Correspondence.

## FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

## TRAGIC END OF THE ELMIRA FAIR.

Of this event we gave a brief statement last week. Since then particulars have come to hand, and they are sad indeed. Great preparations have been made for this fair. Contributions had been sent in from all the surrounding country, and great results were anticipated. No one could have dreamed that it was to end so disastrously.

The church building, in which the fair was held, as would be supposed, was not yet completed for church purposes. The walls were up and enclosed, and at this stage temporary galleries and booths were erected, and this offered the most commodious place in the town for such a purpose; and here the fair opened most flatteringly on Monday, the 14th of March. All went on well until Friday evening. The attendance was large; the gross receipts were over \$12,000.

On Friday evening, as a young man was lighting up the building, the flame of one of the gas burners, leaping nearly a foot, as it was said, from the orifice, caught one of the festoons of evergreens with which the church was elaborately ornamented, and in a few moments, in spite of the utmost exertions of those present, the whole building was on fire. Fortunately, as it was just tea-time, but few persons were in the church. If it had been crowded to suffocation, as on previous evenings, and as it would have been an hour later, the sacrifice of life must have been too fearful to contemplate. As it was, one young man, Freddy Hart, failed to make his escape, and his charred remains were afterward found amid the smoking ruins. He had escorted a young lady, it is said, to a place of safety, and with heroic daring went back amidst the smoke and flame, to see if there was any thing more for him to do, and so offered up his life to his noble impulses. Mr. M. M. Converse also, a man of almost seventy years of age, was burned, in his efforts to aid others, that he died on the following Sabbath. Several others were somewhat injured, and many had a very narrow escape from destruction.

The flames spread so rapidly that the utmost exertion of those who were present, could save but a small portion of the goods of the Fair. It must have been a very sad spectacle to those who had worked so hard, for so many weeks, to gather such stores of saleable articles, and all for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers, to see the flames consuming them. There was their handiwork, their their generous contributions, which they intended for the relief of so much suffering, all turning to soot and cinders before their eyes. We do not doubt some genuine tears were shed, and heroic exertions were known to be made; and yet the remorseless flames wrought on, hissing, spitting, crackling, until all was consumed. All the money, however, in the hands of the cashiers, and in the ticket-office, was saved. The contractors of the building lose \$15,000, and will be crippled by it. The Trustees had effected an insurance for \$10,000, which permitted the holding of the fair; but the First Church and Society will be sadly delayed in getting the new house of worship, for which they have already been waiting for some time.

## AN OLD MAN CELEBRATION.

We have near this city, at Adams Basin, a man still living, and in the enjoyment of excellent health, who is said to have been born on the 14th of March, 1760, and who is therefore over 104 years of age. His name is Alexander Milliner. He commenced life therefore in the year in which George III, of England, began his reign. He was nearly sixty years of age when that monarch died. He has lived through the reigns also of George IV., William IV., and twenty-six years in the reign of Victoria. Seven monarchs have in the meantime sat upon the throne of France. And what changes beside in the lifetime of this singo man!

In his day our Independence has been achieved; France has had three revolutions; England has acquired the most of her vast possessions in the East; Poland has been partitioned out among the greater powers; Greece has struggled for her liberties; great men have lived and died; and all the modern discoveries and inventions have had their rise—spinning machines, steamboats, railways, locomotives, safety-lamps, magnetic telegraphs, power looms, power presses, agricultural implements, and loco-foco matches. When he was one year old, potatoes were first planted in France. When he was eight, Cook was making his first voyage of discovery in the Pacific. He was fourteen when the war of the Revolution commenced; fifty-five when Napoleon was banished to St. Helena; seventy, when Louis Philippe was placed upon the throne of France; and one hundred and one when

the slaveholders inaugurated civil war in the United States of America. He hopes to be living still when the hopes of the rebels are all dead. And this is not impossible, for he is still wonderfully active, still bears with comparative ease, walks quite readily while leaning on the arm of another, and every way looks as though he might remain on earth a year or two longer.

While but a boy he entered the army of the Revolution as a drummer. He served more than five years in that capacity, on the body-guard of Gen. Washington, and was what is called drum-major. He was also five years in the navy; ate bread in seven different kingdoms; was six years a prisoner in the hands of the French. He married at thirty-nine years of age; lived sixty years with his wife, a godly praying woman; had nine children, seven of whom are still living.

And what is, perhaps, more remarkable than all the rest, he is thought to have become a Christian after he was one hundred years old. He was then in this city, and the supposed change excited much interest in the minds of some of our best men, who visited him, conversed with him, and gained what they regarded as tolerably satisfactory evidence of this remarkable change. He is now regarded by his friends as a man of daily prayer; and he expresses a hope in Christ. But still the evidence is not always just what the Christian could wish. How much allowance must be made for the infirmities of his extreme age, and for the inveterate habits of so long a life of impenitence, it is difficult for us to say.

But the case is every way one of peculiar interest. And thus judging, his fellow-citizens, especially the old men from the surrounding region, assembled on Tuesday, the 22d or March, for a celebration in honor of his extreme age. Veterans of seventy and eighty years were in attendance, and seemed almost like young men by the side of this patriarch. The exercises of the celebration consisted of an address, from which we gather the facts above recorded of the old man's life, together with a sumptuous dinner, and post-prandial speeches. The old man participated in them all, twice addressed the assembly in a few words, thanking them for their attentions, and hoped they would all prove true to their country. He is evidently a friend of the old flag, under which he served almost ninety years ago.

## CENTRAL CHURCH AND HOME MISSIONS.

The contributions of the Central Church in this city, this year to Home Missions will amount to \$1000. Over \$700 have already been raised, and the rest will be forth-coming before the year closes. The church considered itself pledged to that amount; and to a similar sum for Foreign Missions. For the latter cause many have subscribed to pay so much a month, some of its leading men as high as ten dollars; or \$120 a year. And it is done on principle, done systematically, regularly, and efficiently. And besides giving to these two great chief causes of benevolence, this church contributes liberally to every other. It is a model of generous giving. We know many more wealthy societies, that do not give half so much and are not therefore half so prosperous.

Installation.—Rev. A. Erdman, was, on Wednesday, March 23d, installed as pastor of the Stone Church, in Clinton. Sermon by President Fisher, of Hamilton College, "a capital good one," as we are told, "from Rom. xvi: 25: proving that there is no progress for the race, except through the aid and use of the Holy Scriptures;" installing prayer by Rev. Mr. Hubbard, of Whitesboro', (charge to pastor by Rev. J. W. Erdman, a brother) of Fayetteville; and charge to the people by Rev. W. E. Knox, of Rome.

Rochester is said to be the foremost city of the State in furnishing volunteers for Uncle Sam's Army; her quota, even under the last call, being already made up with more than two hundred men to spare. We stand by the old flag. Our country, one and inseparable to the end of time. So may it be.

ROCHESTER, March 25, 1864.

## A CONCERT OF PRAYER FOR THE NATION.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Permit us to call your attention to an article by the Rev. Rev. William Patton, on the first page of "The Independent," of Jan. 28th, entitled "The Great National Baptism."

We think no Christian can read the appeal without feeling his heart stirred within him, and having his prayers stimulated for the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon his beloved country.

After vividly setting forth the demoralizing tendencies of camp life, and the grievous effects to be feared on the breaking up of the war from the return home of thousands of men polluted with every vice, the writer asks where shall this threatened tide of corruption be counteracted; and a remedy for the

appalling evil is proposed, in a great "National Baptism of the Holy Spirit." Then follows a list of Scriptural passages breathing delightful encouragement to seek such a blessing, and a mention of tokens for good already given us.

But the disheartening thought occurs that many will read and be affected at the time by these and similar views, who yet, for lack of having them kept steadily before the mind, will suffer them to fade away, and the efforts suggested by them to relax. We need united exertion, to support each other in the great undertaking proposing; that when the faith of one flags, or weariness comes over his spirit, or it lapses into forgetfulness, the presence and voice of others may aid, and arouse and stimulate him.

Again, what is left to be done at any time is apt to be deferred, and often omitted. Can we not then have a specific day and hour appointed when Christians in each city and town may unite together to mingle their prayers for this object?

Will not some one prepare a circular to be sent to each pastor of a church of our branch, asking him to call together the praying ones of his charge to join with other churches in the East, and West, and North, and even in the South, in sending up one mighty cry to God for a deliverance from the power of Satan and for the bestowal of his own good Spirit upon us?

We desire to see appointed a country's concert of Prayer—to be held once a week, or fortnight, or month, as may be thought best; and the hope is entertained that what may be begun by one portion of the church might by the power of sympathy spread to others, till every Christian sect should be found united in this service of love for the common cause. Even from across the water our well-wishers in England and France might be moved to join in such an attempt to establish the reign of righteousness in our land.

But it may be said that it is inconvenient to multiply meetings, and that already there is a vast amount of private prayer offered.—We hope such is the case and yet would ask if it is at all commensurate with the crisis before us?

To observe business pursuing its accustomed course—to see the well-filled lecture room and the crowded places of amusement, and to feel the abundance of comfort enjoyed throughout the North, one, ignorant of the fact, could hardly imagine from any appearance of concern on the faces of the people, the gigantic and bloody struggle going on in the country. Ah, if the church were putting forth her strength in prayer it could not but be more felt. The very atmosphere would reveal it. No, we fear she has not assumed the position which she should at such a time.

Said a clergyman, "I believe more in the power of prayer than of bullets to settle this controversy." Do Christians generally believe thus? Then why not put forth this power?

Do we believe that He who stilled the raging of the sea could speak peace to the nation? Hear what the Lord hath spoken, "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me." "I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned my hand against their adversaries," and yet still further—"The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him." Here is the solution of the question so often asked, "How, after we have conquered our enemies' country, are we to conquer their hearts?"

If we can move the arm that moves the world let us in earnest attempt it, and let the attempt be seen and known and felt. Let the ungodly take note of it, and be constrained to acknowledge that there is a reality and value in the religion we profess.

Who will try to bring about this sublime effort of Christian patriotism? Who will take the first step towards establishing

## A COUNTRY'S CONCERT OF PRAYER.

## PAPERS FOR THE ARMY

We shall be compelled, next week, to cut off from our gratuitous army list a number of copies sent to chaplains; and the funds contributed for a number of other copies, disposed of in like manner, will then be very nearly exhausted. Persons interested in keeping up this supply should send on their contributions promptly; so that the necessary arrangements with the Post Office Department can be made with the commencement of the quarter.

THE RECEIPTS OF THE AMERICAN BOARD for February, from all sources, were \$46,588. The legacies were large—\$10,906.38. We are pleased to note the liberality of the old First Church in this city to the Board, its contributions this month being over \$2500; a sum greater than the aggregate contribution of any State in New England, Massachusetts excepted; or of any State out of New England, New York excepted, during the same period.

## A BROTHER'S TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED SISTER.

On Monday afternoon, March 21, 1864, it pleased God to remove from the trials and conflicts of time to the fruition of the joys and triumphs of the Christian's home in heaven, MRS. SARAH J. HUTTER RYAN, the beloved wife of John W. Ryan, Esq., of this city, and youngest sister of the writer of this notice. Born at Allentown, in Lehigh County, Pa., October 29, 1826, she was permitted to sojourn here 37 years, 4 months and 21 days. In early infancy she was consecrated to the Lord in holy baptism, administered by the Rev. Conrad Yaeger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Forming in the year 1843 a most happy marriage with her now bereaved husband, she soon after attached herself to the church of her preference. She was received by Rev. Dr. Brainerd into the communion of the old Pine Street Presbyterian Church, of which she continued a consistent member to the period of her death, and by the faithful ministrations of whose beloved pastor her last conflicts were beautifully lightened and cheered.

Next to a mother's love, and that of a wife, none is so sacred as that of a sister. None on earth is, or can be, purer. Affection's bias may incline us, in these relations to be blind to faults, and over-vigilant in the discovery of virtues. But none that knew her, over whose departure we are now sorrowing, will dispute the fidelity of our portraiture. In characters like her's the skeptic might claim to have discovered a confutation of the foundation-doctrine of the Gospel, which teaches the original and universal sinfulness of the human heart. She was made amiable, generous, guileless, kind, by the plastic hand of Nature herself. And what nature did not, and could not accomplish in her behalf, was wrought by indwelling divine grace, viz: *humble, heartfelt, sincere Christian humility*. Neither by prosperity, nor by adversity, were the uniform meekness and simplicity of her character interrupted. She was instinctively candid, confiding and sincere—loyal to God, to conscience, to truth, to duty, and to all her human friendships. To the large circle that loved her, and whose love she so lavishly repaid, her doors were ever open—her hearth and heart were always warm. These will never forget the cordial welcome that ever greeted them—the genial cheerfulness which never failed to impress them, that in her house, and in her presence, they were "at home."

None ever left her doors, without regret—none ever returned to them without delight. And never was there a tenderer wife, or a more devoted mother, for she knew how rightly to divide the time, and assign to each duty its relative importance. And not alone did she excel in the charity of the hand, which dispenses liberally to the poor, but she excelled, even more, in the rarer charity of the heart, which "suffereth long and is kind," which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." She was never an evil speaker, never a harsh censor, but habitually believed of all the best, and when it was not possible to speak good of another, preferred to say nothing. She was especially marked by a deep and abiding sense of gratitude. Not the smallest favor rendered her was received indifferently, or forgotten. For benefits received, she had a tenacious memory—for benefits bestowed, she had no memory whatever.

To crown it all, she was exemplary in piety—an ardent lover of the Bible, the mercy-seat, the sanctuary, and all the appointed means of grace. Never had a pastor a more devoted friend. Oh, what delight it afforded her, always to speak of "dear Dr. Brainerd"—to express sympathy in his behalf, when he was sick—regret, when he was absent—delight on his return, and with what reverential attention did she not listen to all his utterances, whether in the sanctuary, or in her own home, pondering them in her mind, treasuring them, like Mary, in her heart—and seeking to exemplify them in her life. And how grateful, too, for the least service rendered by her pastor—and how moderate her expectations. Exactions she was too kind ever to make.

Delightful recollection, too, her deep penitence in the last days of life, that she had not been a better woman—had not been kinder to her many friends—had not done more for Jesus, who had done so much for her. How simple and how child-like, withal, her trust in Him. Then, as memory brought the past in swift review, she had no other confidence, expressed no other hope, trusted to no other foundation. Among her last declarations were these: "The writer said to her: 'Sister is there any thing more we can do for you?' 'Oh yes,' was her prompt reply, 'dearest brother, fold both your hands into mine—so—and then pray to Jesus to forgive my sins, and then take me to heaven.'" Then again she said to one dear to the writer, and who has been to her both mother and sister: "Oh, dearest Elizabeth, I am going to die, now pray to the Saviour to have mercy on me, and when I am gone, have an eye on my dear little girl." To her pastor's inquiry, whether she had faith in Christ, she replied strongly in the affirmative. Her sickness, although not protracted, was yet attended with much suffering. But her pains were happily much alleviated by the presence of husband, mother, child, sisters, brothers, pastor, physician, neighbors, friends.

Great is the void in the family and

social circle, occasioned by the departure of our dear, sweet sister Sarah. Time alone and the consolations of our holy religion will be able to assuage our sorrow. What is our loss, God be thanked, is her unspeakable gain. Let it be our's, by every effort, with fervent prayer, to follow her, as she followed Christ—that so, when it shall be our time to "lie down in the dust," it may be our's to be with Jesus, as she is.

"SISTER! Thou wast mild and lovely,  
Gentle as the Summer breeze,  
Pleasant as the air of evening,  
When it floats among the trees.

Peaceful be thy silent slumber,  
Peaceful in the grave so low,  
Thou no more wilt join our number,  
Thou no more our songs shalt know.

Dearest Sister! Thou hast left us;  
Here thy loss we deeply feel!  
But 'tis God that hath bereft us;  
He can all our sorrows heal.

Yet again we hope to meet thee,  
When the day of life is dead,  
Then in heaven with joy to greet thee,  
Where no farewell tear is shed."

Philadelphia, March 28, 1864. E. W. H.

## Editorial Items.

## MR. MURDOCH'S READINGS.

The readings of this gentleman continue to draw remarkably good houses. There is a combination of circumstances which upholds public interest in them, partly personal, partly religious and patriotic, partly historic. Mr. Murdoch, if not a Christian man, is one who practices some of the highest virtues, regarded as Christian. He has for the time, abandoned a lucrative profession, and devoted himself unselfishly to the good of the soldiers, to whom he appropriates, through some channel, the entire proceeds of his readings. He has given two sons to the army, one of whom has fallen, while the other has been permanently disabled in the service. He seeks to stir up the patriotic feelings of the people. He selects from the choicest treasures of literature, such pieces as embody or illustrate the manly sentiments which should animate his countrymen in the struggle of to-day; and throwing his whole soul into them, with all the power of his art to aid, he communicates them to the crowd and rouses and inflames their patriotic sympathies. We go to hear as critics and admirers of good declamation; we come away better patriots and ennobled in every way. Mr. Murdoch reads us quite a lengthy discourse on "Providence and Love of Country." We did not go to hear him as we went to hear Miss Dickinson, for our expectation was fixed not so much on what he should say, as upon his manner of saying it. Yet we quite forgot the declaimer in the patriot, and doubt not, the mass of the audience felt as we did.

We do not know why Mr. Murdoch persists in reading Mr. Janvier's "Gettysburg." It is but a passable performance. The first line: "Two hostile hosts," gave us an idea of its poetic merit which we did not find occasion to alter. Mr. Boker's pieces are incomparably superior. His "On board the Cumberland" was given with the effect which its extraordinary merit deserved. We never experienced a more vivid sense of reality under any representation of the kind. The last shot from the pivot gun was almost re-enacted before our eyes. "Our Heroes," a new piece was admirable; so was Bayard Taylor's "Scott and the Veteran." Whittier's "Barbara Frietobie" is also among the best which Mr. Murdoch recites. He did not give us this at the Academy.

We never heard Mr. Murdoch do better than in these recitations given on Tuesday of last week; and we came to the conclusion that his popularity is based on more permanent grounds than those of many passing favorites of the pleasure loving public. Long may he continue by his pure and delightful readings, to supply a stimulus to the heroic and loyal sentiments of the country, and at the same time, to aid in securing its suffering defenders.

On Sabbath evening last, Mr. M. read selections from Scripture in Green Hill Church, by invitation of the pastor.—The exercises were opened and closed with prayer, and entire solemnity prevailed. A large collection for soldiers' families was taken up.

## UNDEVELOPED RELIGIOUS FEELING.

That excellent preacher and pastor, Dr. Ichabod Spencer of Brooklyn, gives an interesting item of experience in regard to what he terms the "Spirit's unconscious presence." He entered with some reluctance, a gay home, and addressed the young ladies on personal religion. They began to weep, and said they had been anxious, and waiting for christian counsel. This outburst of feeling was the beginning of a work of grace in the congregation.

We recollect a still more striking case. An earnest and highly cultivated minister, had observed a serious tenderness among his people, but no decisive result. On one occasion, a brother who had been favored with considerable expe-

rience in revivals, suggested, that following a direct appeal, all interested in their own salvation, be invited to remain after service with Christian friends for conversation and prayer. To the pastor's surprise, before those who left had passed out, nearly thirty of the youth present, came together near the desk, some of them sobbing audibly with distressing conviction of guilt and peril. For several weeks the harvest of souls was great. Is there not an unbelief and timidity often unconsciously present, which sadly hinders the Spirit's working? And is it not just here where a true evangelist succeeds frequently, when a pastor fails—by daring to move forward when the Holy Ghost goes before him? To be in entire sympathy with Christ, and thus made "wise to win souls," instead of walking in the "light of sparks of our own kindling," hesitatingly and weakly, is surely the high and glorious work given us to do.

## REV. MR. HAMMOND IN NEWARK, N. J.

A remarkable work of grace has begun in connection with Mr. Hammond's labors in the above named city. Rev. Dr. Parker writes as follows to the *New York Observer*, March 21st:

Mr. Hammond came to Newark and held his first meeting in the Park Presbyterian Church on Sunday afternoon, the 18th inst. An immense audience of children was assembled, and a deep and tender impression was produced.

The next day, at 4 P. M., the meeting was held in the First Baptist Church (Rev. Dr. Fish's). It is the largest audience room in Newark, and was filled to repletion at an early hour. At the close of Mr. Hammond's address, a meeting of free conference was held in which not less than 600 children remained for conversation and prayer.

The feeling was deep and overwhelming. Ministers and Christian people engaged freely in these conversations. Each day from that time to this, similar meetings have been held in several churches.

The Evangelical ministers in union have agreed upon a continuance of the children's meeting daily at 4 o'clock through the week.

The meetings, thus far, have grown in interest from the first, and the hands of the pastors are full of work in their separate congregations, for many children, and adults too, are inquiring what they shall do to be saved.

Scenes of great interest are every day occurring. We saw, in the side room of one of our churches, sixty boys on their knees, one after another praying with solemn, quiet earnestness, and with as much order as a Fulton street prayer meeting. Mr. Hammond says he has never seen a work of such power in this country.

## DUTIES TO THE FREEDMEN.

Rev. Dr. J. N. McLeod of New York City, has an able and hopeful article on this vital subject in the last *New York Observer*, in which after referring to what the Reformed Presbyterian Church has done in this field, he calls upon the R. D. Church and the two Presbyterian General Assemblies inquiring "whether the time has not come, when they may effectually use their power of social position, learning, piety, and numbers, to aid the freedmen of the country, to elevate and comfort a down-trodden race, and save immortal souls."

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, through one of its most respected pastors, has full warrant by its own zeal and forwardness in this great work, thus to endeavor to stir up others—"to provoke unto love and good works." For one of the Assemblies we can testify that a lively degree of interest prevails on this subject among the members which needs but to be organized to make it an, effectual working power. The General Assembly to meet at Dayton next May, will give the matter the attention it demands.

## SUDDEN DEATH.

On Thursday the 10th inst., as the venerable father of Rev. C. Earle, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Catsaqua, took his seat in the chapel to attend the preparatory lecture, his head dropped on his breast, he gasped, and was gone. The son had just risen to announce the hymn. The good man was ripe for the "temple not made with hands." He had not passed his seventy-fifth year. The remains were taken to Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Rev. Mr. Earle is very happy in his pastoral relations, having a tasteful sanctuary, free from debt, a fine new parsonage which soon will be, and a united people to frequent both.

REV. E. E. ADAMS, of North Broad St. Church, preached for the first time since his recent illness, last Sabbath morning, on John xii: 23, "the hour is come." It is not expected that he will at once resume his usual duties. In the course of the sermon he stated that during the past year, fifty-one additions had been made to the membership of the church and over \$31,000, contributed to various benevolent objects by the congregation.