

Correspondence.

FROM OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT.

DEAR BROTHER.—This time last year I was in your city. We were then in all "fears and dreads" of Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania. I remained long enough to see strong, bearded men embrace each other on the street, like children, and thank God for the great deliverance. I left Philadelphia on the 4th of July for Gettysburg; and heard, as the cars rolled out into the green fields, the ringing bells and shouting multitude behind.

How much has been crowded into the year! What hopes and fears; what triumphs and defeats; what judgments and mercies; much to mortify and humble us; more to lead us to distrust all human wisdom and might.

FORTRESS MONROE AND HAMPTON.

I have just returned from the Army. I have had the pleasure of relighting on many scenes with which I became familiar in the campaign of 1862.

The appearance of the Fortress and environs has greatly improved since those days. The debris, crumbling buildings and shanties are all gone. The streets are widened, the mud-holes filled, and the houses painted. Within and around the Fort are many beautiful houses, covered with vines and surrounded with flowering-trees and shrubs of Arabian fragrance.

Two miles from the Fort is "old Hampton." This, until the commencement of the rebellion, was one of the most beautiful towns of Virginia. It has a venerable antiquity, being the spot to which the cavaliers fled from the pestilence of Jamestown, and commenced a village here as early as 1610.

Hampton had grown to be an opulent commercial town of seven or eight thousand. It is surrounded with the finest agricultural fields in Virginia. It has an interest of its own; as being the place in the Old Dominion where the first cargo of slaves was landed and sold; from whence came "death, and all our woe." The town, in the midst of serenity, was burnt, by order of General Magruder, to prevent our using it for winter quarters. But one house escaped. When I first saw Hampton it was a most striking and novel spectacle. The strongly-built walls and chimneys had refused to yield to tempest and storm, and were standing, the grim memorials of the past. Then no one lived in the ruins of Hampton; now there are not less than four hundred cabins of the Freedmen. Their little houses, built at the base of the tall chimneys look like bird cages. The streets are clean, the old gardens cultivated, and the fields around the town are green with corn.

This city is about eighteen miles from Fortress Monroe, and contained, previous to the war, above twenty thousand inhabitants. It has one of the finest harbors on our coast, and will, in time, be one of the great cities of the country. Its people lived in a style of commercial opulence. The houses are large, and surrounded with flowering trees. We found the fig tree full of fruit, and nearly as large as in Syria; and the tropical magnolia, with its rich leaf and its golden, lotus-like flower, is the glory of every garden.

NORFOLK.

The population of Norfolk, generally, sympathized with the rebellion, and when the place was taken by our forces many families left for Richmond and Petersburg. But three-fourths of the people remained, and most of these, in time, took the oath of allegiance; especially the men. But, in the mean-time, the fire has not gone out; it is only the slumber of the volcano. The old inhabitants, as far as possible, refuse to have anything to do with the officers of our army, and the teachers of the schools.

The churches are mostly closed. The Rev. Dr. Armstrong, of the Presbyterian Church, has been sent a prisoner to Fort Hatteras. After taking the oath of allegiance, he showed that in heart and counsel he was still an enemy. In his church there is now no Sabbath worship; this is also the case in the Episcopal and Baptist Churches, on account of the defection of the pastors. This is a most disastrous state of things, for in the meantime the foundations are broken down, and the young people grow up without the restraints of Sabbath worship and teaching.

There is, in Norfolk and Portsmouth a population of 20,000. But few of

these are now slaves. Some of them are paid wages to remain in the employ of their former masters.

COLORED SCHOOLS.

The colored schools of Norfolk and Portsmouth are the best I have ever seen. The progress of the pupils in the high schools astonished and delighted all visitors. In less than a year of instruction, hundreds of mere children have learned to read. They have thrown off their African rudeness of tongue. Many others write a good hand, and a great number display in their acquisitions a brightness and an aptitude for learning fully equal to those of any white children in our best schools. The American Missionary Association and the National Freedmen's Association have each a corps of teachers laboring here. They are doing—in a field where they are as much alone as missionaries in a foreign land—a most noble work. And those who are about them may deride and scorn their mission; but God, who pitieth the poor, will remember them.

In the neighborhood, on the farm of General H. A. Wise, the government has placed one hundred families of freedmen. There, cabins have been built for them, and the fields have been parcelled out to them in lots of two and three acres; each of which becomes the home and property of a family. The Taylor property, which is a finer estate than the "Wise," is occupied in the same way.

In their new houses, and with the new motives to virtue and industry, the slaves will escape from many of the vices of slavery.

RECRUITS FROM REBELDOM.

One of the things which most interested me in Norfolk was a full regiment of United States troops who had all been in the rebel army; but having escaped from it, or being taken prisoners, had taken the oath of allegiance, and were now serving under the old flag. They are all true men. I preached to them on the Sabbath, and certainly I never addressed a more devout body of troops. In the drill, they were perfect; and in person as fine a body of men as I have seen. I was told by their officers that they are much more easily governed than our troops. They never question the wisdom and propriety of any command, but obey with unhesitating alacrity. It is thought by their officers that they can be trusted in the most perilous positions. Their intelligence and education are evidently much below those of the regiments from the Free States. They have much of the languid, unimpassioned look and manner of the poorer classes in the South. But they are now in a great school.

WASHINGTON, July 1st, 1864. J. J. M.

CHAPLAIN STEWART'S LETTER.

Battle-field, six miles South from Petersburg, Va., June 23, 1864.

RIFLE PITS.

DEAR BRO. MEARS:—Much is said and written at present concerning their structure and use. The term has become a rather general one, designating almost any military construction, for offence or defence. The term was, perhaps, first used during the Crimean war. As the earthworks of the French and English were advanced against the Redan and Malakoff, they were accustomed, by night, to advance their pickets in front, who would dig round holes in the ground in which three or four sharpshooters would conceal themselves and thus be able to annoy the Russian gunners and sentinels. These holes were called Rifle-pits. Now, however, the term is used to designate not merely a round or square hole in the ground, but a ditch, breastwork or embankment miles in length.

NUMBER AND EXTENT OF THESE STRUCTURES.

The whole country between this and the Rapid Anne, has been made literally a region of Rifle-pits. In the construction and use of these, the rebels have evidently excelled and we have been forced to take lessons from them. Whenever and wherever we have advanced against them, we have invariably found them hidden in ditches, burrowed in pits and ensconced behind formidable earthworks. During our present campaign it has been the almost invariable practice, when in close proximity to the enemy, and before proceeding to attack, to throw up rifle-pits the whole extent of our front, often four or five miles in length. This, in general, not for use, but as a precautionary measure. Being the invading army, we are still compelled to make the assault. These rifle-pits are constructed so that in case of any repulse or disaster, they are a ready and concerted place in which to rally and repel an advancing enemy. In various instances already, they have proved a wise precaution.

FACILITY OF CONSTRUCTION.

This would altogether confound railroad builders, canal makers, ditch-diggers and shovelers generally. A section

of country quiet and unbroken at even-tide—by nature's arrangements and a little careless farming—will, by morning-light, witness a rifle-pit from three to six miles in length, constructed through woods and jungles, over hill and dale, across field and farm; not in a direct line, but zig-zag, in order to suit, in military judgment, the nature and inclination of the ground. The next morning-light, may witness a similar structure erected as if by magic a hundred yards in front of the first, then another and another, until the enemy's works be finally reached, or the place quietly abandoned for some new scene of operations and fresh construction of rifle-pits.

MODE OF CONSTRUCTION.

A number of wagons filled with entrenching tools always accompanies the army. But to facilitate matters, each brigade has usually a number of mules with pannicles and these stuck full of axes, picks and shovels. There are also various pioneer corps, in which each man carries a chopping or digging tool. When a rifle-pit is to be constructed, each regiment is usually ordered to perform the labour on that portion in its own front. If no timber be available, a simple ditch is dug, say three feet wide and three deep, the dirt thrown in front—the side next the enemy, thus making with the ditch a protection as high as a man's shoulder, and over which he can point and rest his gun at an approaching enemy, his head only being exposed.

Should rails or small timber be available, short posts are driven into the ground close in front of where the ditch is to be dug, and a rail or small tree laid on the ground and against the posts on the outside. As the earth is thrown over and rises, a second rail or log is laid on the first, and also against the posts, and thus continued until an inner wall of wood strongly flanked by earth on the outside, is raised to the desired height. Such a structure is much more neat and more conveniently used than a mere erection of earth. Not unfrequently have I seen houses, barns, sheds and outhouses torn down and the fragments converted into such structures in a space of time that would astonish the uninitiated. The work is performed by detachments, each commanded by a proper officer whose duty it is to see that all the work is properly done and that each soldier does his duty. These detachments are relieved every half of whole hour, thus enabling the work to progress uninterruptedly and vigorously. Considering the amount of labour and drudgery actually performed by our army, the query may well be started; "How do our brave soldiers endure all these sleepless choppings, diggings, marches, fatigues and battles?" They do indeed seem to be made of iron.

IMPROMPTU RIFLE-PITS.

A week since, when the advance was made on Petersburg, our regiment with others was advanced as skirmishers to within about half a mile of the city, and far within the outer works of the enemy which had been captured. On ascending a rising ground, they found the rebels in an open field and within direct rifle range of heavy earthworks behind which the rebels were strongly posted, and from whom volleys of Minnie bullets came singing and whistling in such a manner as to kill and wound almost at once, over twenty of our regiment. To advance with but a skirmish line, was to instant death, to fall back was against orders. All at once, fell flat on the ground which was dry and loamy. Without pick or shovel, each soldier immediately commenced a rifle-pit on his own hook, using his bayonet, if need were, to loosen the earth and his tin cup for a shovel. One had no tin cup and worked away lustily with his spoon. The officers, for once at least, found convenient use for their swords in the construction of these hasty life-preservers. The position was held, and in a few minutes, each one had a little pit, fronted by a small bank of earth, in and behind which, as true Northern mudsills, they lay comparatively safe from the continued shower of rebel bullets.

DUST.

Long have I been familiar with a kind of metaphorical expression, kicking up a dust, used when some sudden disturbance or miniature row was extemporised. No occasion for metaphors or other figures of speech here, Mr. Editor. A real dust is kicked up, with every step, man, horse or mule ventures to make, as well as at every rotation of a wheel. This sacred soil of Virginia, on which we are at present trying to exist, seems made of dust. If memory serves, it has not rained for a month. The weather is intensely, awfully, roastingly hot. All moisture has seemingly left the soil, and it has become much like a newly burnt bed of ashes. Wherever our immense host of men, animals, wagons, ambulances and Artillery goes, the ground is at once worked into the finest dust to

the depth of from three to six inches—which rises and spreads itself, like the ashes of Moses, *smo' dust n' a' the land*. As movements of infantry, artillery, cavalry, wagons, and ambulances, are constantly going on, there is, in consequence, an unceasing cloud of dust.

Everything seems turning to dust. All things, yourself included, assuming the color of dust. You see nothing but dust—you smell dust, you eat dust, you drink dust. Your clothes, blanket, tent, food, drink, are all permeated with dust. You walk in dust, you halt in dust, you lie down in dust, you sleep in dust, you wake in dust, you live dust—you are emphatically dusty. Adding largely to our comforts amid heat and dust—the region affords no adequate supply of water for such a host. Long trains of horses and mules are daily seen led by their drivers for miles, in search of water for the thirsty animals. Squads of soldiers, with empty canteens, wandering everywhere through fields and woods, and often vainly in search of water. Quite comfortable and romantic, dear reader, this soldiering business. Yet one seeming marvel is connected with it all: these brave, noble generous union soldiers are cheery and hopeful under all these terrible discouragements.

A. M. STEWART.

FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

CORRECTIONS.

In our last we were in error in regard to the name of that clergyman in England, upon whom the doctorate was conferred by Ingham University—it is Rev. Josiah Crofts, not Cross, as we at first understood it; and we beg pardon. It may be important that the honor should fall on the right man.

And then the types made us say that the business of Gloversville, in the manufacture of gloves was \$1,000 a year—it should have been \$1,000,000. These cyphers were evidently left out by some slip, and would make quite another statement, if they were only there.

PRESBYTERY OF ONTARIO.

This body convened in its Semi-annual meeting with the Church in Livonia, on Friday afternoon, the 28th ult., and was opened with a sermon by Rev. A. L. Benton, of Lima. The object of the sermon was to set forth the importance of a more perfect evangelization of every parish. It happily showed the hearers, ministers and people, how they may work for Christ in cultivating the home wastes. What more important theme could have been presented? The church needs the work for its own spiritual life and health; and thousands are perishing every year, right here in this Christian land, because so little of this work is done.

After the sermon, Rev. L. Conklin, of East Bloomfield, was elected Moderator, and Rev. P. F. Sanborne, of West Bloomfield, Temporary Clerk. But this meeting of Presbytery was not confined to the mere routine of ecclesiastical business, and was one of unusual interest and profit. In the first place, an unusual number of the elders of the churches, were in attendance. And then by a happy thought the pastor of the church in Livonia had invited the ministers and elders to bring their wives to the meeting. A goodly number of these had accepted the invitation and were in attendance; and it was very plain to see that this added much to the interest of the occasion.

Another part of the Pastor's admirable arrangement, was to have a good, old-fashioned temperance meeting on Tuesday evening. It was well attended, and earnest, and interesting, addresses were made by Revs. Dwight Scovel, J. R. Page, and L. Parsons, Jr. These speeches took a hopeful view of the subject. All is not lost. True, there has been some recent increase of intemperance; but we have by no means gone back to the place from which we started but a few years ago, in this glorious reform. Then drinking was universal; now vast numbers touch not, taste not, handle not. Then there were ten lawyers, judges, ministers, physicians, or men in other high places, accustomed to indulge too freely in the use of intoxicating drinks, to one now. The earnestness and eloquence of these speeches showed, at least, that there were some that still understood the subject, and were ready to lead off in a new effort, if necessary, to put this reform again upon the ascending grade.

The reports also, which, by the grace of God, these pastors were enabled to bring up, in regard to the state of religion in their respective fields of labor, were most cheering. We have, in former letters, spoken of revivals in several of their churches; but the grouping of the facts into one brief summary, gave them renewed interest—in Mt. Morris, fifty conversions; in Genesee, thirty or forty; in East Bloomfield about the same number, twenty-nine having been received to the church at the last com-

munion season, twelve of them receiving the ordinance of baptism at the time; and ten are to unite with the church in Livonia next Sabbath.

Rev. S. M. Day, pastor of the church at Honeoye, was received into this body from the Presbytery of Chemung. On Wednesday afternoon, came the usual celebration of the Lord's supper,—the business all having first been disposed of. And then, before parting, all were invited to repair to the parsonage to partake of a bountiful collation, prepared and served by the worthy people of the place. It was a very social time, and a pleasant conclusion to a very interesting and profitable gathering.

The next meeting of the Presbytery of Ontario is to be held in Nunda. May we be there.

A GOOD DEED PLEASANTLY DONE.

They are caring for the little orphans in Auburn. The Asylum contains about eighty inmates. The annual festival in aid of its funds was recently held, realizing \$550. But the incident to which we wish more particularly to refer, was the visit of the Sunday-school of the Central Presbyterian church in a body to the Orphan Asylum, each one of the children bearing some precious little gift of such things as they could spare from their own wardrobes at home, for the benefit of the little homeless ones.

Rev. Mr. Fowler, pastor of the Central church, addressed the orphans in a few happy words, and made the presentation of the children's gifts and his own; to which one of the orphan boys responded in a very neat speech, evidently furnished to order, of which we give a few words:

"Friends of the orphan, we hail with joy this day of gifts and kind remembrance. We welcome you to our Asylum home. You come to us on an errand of love. May the benefits of the visit be mutual. * * * * *

"Again, dear friends, we thank you for your kindness to us. We receive it as a fresh token of God's remembrance of the orphan. You give to us of your abundance; we give to you in return our grateful prayers that God's blessing may rest on you and yours, and that in the last day the God of the fatherless may say unto you, 'Well done;—inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.'"

This pleasant interview was enlivened also by sweet singing, by the children of the Sunday-school, and by the orphans. It was an interesting and memorable occasion, and must have left a sweet influence upon the minds of all the children, which time will not so soon efface. It was a happy thought of the ever fertile brain of the pastor, or of some one else, to suggest such a visit. The contributions were as follows: fifty yards of cloth, donated by Mr. Bailey, Superintendent of the Sunday-school, and made up into shirts and pillow cases by the young ladies of the Central church, besides a good pile of little pantaloons, jackets, dresses, undergarments, shoes, and some seventeen dollars in money. Surely that was a deed twice blessed, blessing those who gave, and those who received.

And Auburn is always astir with good things. On the same evening, we believe, a grand concert was given, under the direction of Mr. Thomas, a member of the senior class in Auburn Theological Seminary, for the benefit of the Ladies' Soldiers Aid Society, it being the third given for the same object, and under the same auspices, within the last six months. We do not know how much money has been realized in this way, but it must be considerable, and the sick and wounded soldiers, will get the benefit of it.

IN BUFFALO also they are constantly doing for the same praise-worthy object. They have established a "Soldiers Rest." A building has been erected under the auspices of the ladies of the Sanitary Commission, near the Central Depot, and formally opened for its charitable purposes, by the raising of the old flag, and by addresses and prayer. Here the weary, worn, and wounded veterans of the war may find a place of rest, and care, and kind attention, when passing through Buffalo.

The ladies of the Christian Commission in the same city have also been moving to add to their means of helping to care for the soldiers. They planned an excursion on the lake; chartered two fine propellers for the purpose; crowded them with passengers, and had a fine time last Saturday, sailing singing chatting, and cooling off, on the Niagara river. The proceeds of the excursion must have been handsome, and all again for the soldiers.

So our thoughts are constantly in exercise for the brave defenders of our country's liberties. God give them the victory, is our prayer without ceasing. We are anxious just now, but hopeful. We will not, can not, despair of final success. A great victory, or a great decline in gold would give us special cheer.

WESTERN N. Y. BRANCH, U. S. C. COMMISSION. REV. S. HUNT, who has passed some

time with the Army of the Potomac, and who knows the wants of the soldier and can plead his cause, has been appointed Secretary and General Agent of this Branch of the United States Christian Commission. He enters upon the duties at once, and all communications and supplies for this branch should be directed to him, at the rooms of the Christian Commission in Buffalo.

GENESEE. ROCHESTER, July 2, 1864.

LETTER FROM REV. JOHN C. SMITH, D. D.

WASHINGTON CITY, June 23, 1864. REV. THOMAS BRAINERD, D. D., Moderator of General Assembly:

My cousin Geo. H. Smyth pastor elect of Sixth Church and myself called on the President this morning, and handed to him the letter which you wrote in the office of the Executive mansion, when you with other members of the Committee appointed by General Assembly, called to present the resolutions of the Assembly. The President was unexpectedly absent on a visit to General Grant, when the Committee were here.

With your official letter, we presented the resolutions of the Assembly beautifully transcribed on parchment, signed by Thomas Brainerd Moderator, and Edwin F. Hatfield, Stated Clerk.

The President gave respectful and earnest attention to the reading, and said that he would write his reply if he could find as much time. He was evidently much gratified with "the document," and though oppressed with special calls at the close of the session of Congress, he was cheerful and said kind things, especially to my young relative, who was charged with "the resolutions," while I read (with difficulty) the letter in the hand-writing of my noble friend and honored brother of "old Pine street." May God bless him and his loyal church a thousand fold more and more, with all in our consecrated brotherhood. Always, JOHN C. SMITH.

PROGRESS IN MICHIGAN.

At a late meeting of the Presbytery of Marshall in Homer, interesting revivals were reported at Battle-creek, Marshall, Lansing and Mason. At Marshall 70 conversions in seven weeks, 50 of whom had already been received. At Lansing a second church had sprung up, with 64 of a membership—40 on profession. At Okemos and Delhi, in the same pastorate, churches had been also organized under favorable prospects, and church buildings in progress. The First, Lansing, though severely tested, are determined under God, to go forth from the crucible *thrice purified*, and as a three-fold cord that cannot easily be broken! Their success during the last eight years has been a triumph.

S. B. S.

Religious Intelligence.

Presbyterian.

Presbyterian Union.—The Presbyterian Standard, contains the following significant and suggestive editorial:

At the late meetings of the General Assemblies at Newark and Dayton, the spirit of union was manifested in a very gratifying degree. The same thing was true of the highest Judicatories of the other Presbyterian bodies in our country. Who can tell, but that one grand purpose which God intends to accomplish by the war, is the bringing of all the Presbyterian churches in our land, now separated by unjustifiable partitions, into closer proximity, if not actual Union! This result many expect, and for it, tens of thousands of Christian hearts, that have long mourned over the divided body of the Lord Jesus Christ, are fervently praying and pleading. With a view to favor and facilitate such an issue, as far as the influence of the Standard is concerned, we offer the following

PREMIUMS.

for essays on the subject named: For the best essay on "The desirableness of the union of the various branches of the Presbyterian Church," twenty dollars. For the best essay on "The practicableness of uniting the various branches of the Presbyterian Church," twenty dollars. For the best essay on "The most effectual means for securing the union of the various branches of the Presbyterian Church," twenty dollars.

Ministerial Changes.—Rev. J. Moore, of Williamsburg, Pa., has resigned his charge to succeed Rev. Dr. McCurdy in the management of the Mantua Female Seminary. Rev. J. S. Doolittle, pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Flatlands, Long Island, has been elected Professor of Belles Lettres and Eloquence in Rutgers College, at New Brunswick, N. J.

Fitting Testimonial.—Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckenridge, while attending the late National Convention at Baltimore, as a delegate from Kentucky, was presented with a beautiful and massive silver pitcher, bearing on one side the inscription "Robert J. Breckenridge, D. D., of Kentucky, for the Illinois Delegation to the National Convention," assembled at Baltimore, June 7th, 1864." And on the other side the emphatic words, "God and Liberty."

Moravian.

The Moravian says:—Our Norwegian Missionary, Rev. A. M. Iverson, after a faithful and acceptable service of a good many years at Ephraim and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, has accepted a call to become the pastor of two congregations in La Salle county, Illinois, at Leland and Mission Point. His new charge will consist of three or four hundred souls. He will continue as heretofore in connection with the Home Mission Society at Bethlehem. His successor at Ephraim, Rev. Greenfield, of Denmark, is expected in this country by one of the first vessels arriving from Europe.