

THIRD ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION,

HELD IN THE

ACADEMY OF MUSIC,

PHILADELPHIA.

Tuesday Evening, Jan. 31, 1865.

Immediately following the great national meeting held in the Capitol at Washington, the third anniversary of the Christian Commission was celebrated also at Philadelphia. The latter meeting even exceeded, in some respects, the former. The number in attendance was larger, because of the greater capacity of the Academy, which is one of the most capacious buildings in the country, holding, when filled, about 5,000 souls. This was crowded. The demand for tickets, which were gratuitous, was beyond all precedent. We are informed that 5,000 tickets were distributed, and that at least 5,000 applicants had to be turned away disappointed. Some of the resident officers and employees of the Commission even, were obliged to go begging for themselves and their families. Premiums were freely offered of \$5 and \$10 for tickets; and so great was the press, that many who held "reserved seats" were unable to reach them. We state these facts not as "sensational" items, but in order to convey some conception of the interest that is excited in the public mind by these meetings of the Commission.

The Academy was gorgeously decorated. The Stars and Stripes hung in rich festoons from every prominent projection; while the more than one thousand jets of light flooding the whole with noonday brightness, made a scene of surpassing brilliance and splendor. At 7 o'clock, Mr. George H. Stuart, President of the Commission, took the Chair, and announced as a hymn of praise to God,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,"

which was sung by the vast congregation standing, the "Carl Sentz Orchestra" assisting. Opening remarks were then made by Mr. Stuart, as follows:

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN.

In commemorating our Third Anniversary, the Christian Commission desires before this vast audience to raise its Ebenezer and to say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and to thank God for all the favor which he has given it with the churches and the people who love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and with the Government, which has allowed it so many facilities for ministering to the noble men who are fighting the battles of our country. I trust, my friends, that a spirit of hearty thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God shall characterize all the exercises of this occasion, from the opening of the doors, and that we shall have the manifest presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit. A great day is before us. Let us rise to its grand significance and import. God is marching on in the resistless course of his Providence, and is working out great problems while the world is looking on with wondering awe. It would be wrong in me to withhold from this audience the news which has just reached me within the last few moments, and which will send a thrill through patriotic hearts all over the land. It is a telegram from the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House, and an active member of the Christian Commission. He says "The Constitutional Amendment has just passed! (Yeas 119, nays 56! It has already passed the Senate, and it has already passed the Yeas, and it has proclaimed LIBERTY to all the land, and to all the inhabitants thereof!"

Exultant cheers and shouts, scarcely repressible, greeted this announcement. When quiet finally settled over the assembly, the Rev. Dr. Cranth, of Philadelphia, was called to offer a prayer of thanksgiving. The Rev. Dr. Bomberger, also of Philadelphia, followed in the reading of the 49th Psalm, "the grand national Psalm of David," beginning "God is our refuge and our strength." Charles Demond, Esq., of Boston, being introduced as one of the earliest and most efficient executive officers of the Commission, then gave a brief abstract of the year's work. This abstract was but a plain statement of figures, but they were so vast and suggestive that the speaker could not refrain from apt and striking comments as item after item was read. We have already published most of these items, which will appear in full in the Annual Report of the Commission, nearly ready.

The Rev. Alex. Reed was now introduced as the first speaker.

ADDRESS OF REV. ALEXANDER REED, OF PHILADELPHIA.

A little more than eighteen hundred years ago, the God-man came to earth. He came not to save men by his death, but to save them by the ministrations of his life. He left on earth a Commission. It was that of doing good to the bodies and souls of men. This was Christ's commission to mortals, or the Christian Commission in its broad and inclusive sense, and the origin and authority of all work contemplating the glory of God in the work of man. The United States Christian Commission was instituted with this authority to do good to the bodies and souls of the soldiers and sailors of the Republic. In attempting to show forth its work and its worth, the speaker wished briefly to answer three questions: First, do these soldiers and sailors need the Christian Commission? Secondly, does the Christian Commission accomplish the work which it proposes to do? Thirdly, do these soldiers and sailors deserve the ministrations of this Commission?

First, do they need it? He would not argue such a question before a Philadelphia audience. These men do need something supplemental to the Government aid in hospitals and on battle-fields and on shipboard. If we admit that man has a body and a soul, and that both body and soul go upon the battle-field, plainly both need to be ministered to. If it was claimed that man was a mere machine, then the speaker gave up the argument. But if man is immortal as well as mortal; if he has affections and sympathies and emotions, they must be ministered to. We are asked, however, why not divide the work, and let some one agency assume the supply of the spiritual, and some other agency of the temporal, wants of these brave men? For the best of reasons. We do not, in the first place, because this is a Christian Commission, and it would be un-Christian not to minister to the bodies of men; and in the second place, because, even if it would be Christian thus to put asunder what God hath inseparably joined together, we would lose the strongest lever of influence upon the heart and affections and upon the sympathies of the soul, by neglecting the wants of the body. To illustrate:

MINISTERING TO BODY AND SOUL.

In December of 1862, just after the renouel of Fredericksburg, the delegates of the Christian Commission aided in caring for the multitudes of wounded. They loaded them upon the cars at the station on the railroad; filled up the crutches in the cars; put straw upon the floors; laid the men tenderly and carefully down; then

were praying for my soul, I began to think it was time for me to be helped for myself! And he did pray, and God heard him, and he became a converted man. This is but fulfilling the command, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." And the speaker verily believed that the Christian Commission, in this way, was "melting down" and conquering our enemies. This is something of the spiritual part which supplements the labor of faithful chaplains. The warmest friends of the Commission in the army are the chaplains. They aid them in every respect. "But are there not chaplains enough in the army?" No. The testimony of generals here tonight would be that there is not more than one chaplain to five or six regiments. In the Fifth Corps there are thirty-seven regiments without chaplains; in the Second Corps thirty-eight regiments without chaplains; all batteries are without chaplains; many hospitals are without chaplains—and the Christian Commission comes in as supplementary to this wide-felt want, and to an important degree, fills it.

WHO ARE THEY?

The speaker now came to the third point proposed, Are these men, the soldiers and sailors of our country, deserving of the help thus afforded them? Who are they? Are they hirelings, Hessians, mercenaries? No, no! They are as good as we are. They are our sons, our brothers, our fathers. Said a soldier to a delegate, "I had a father and a mother and four brothers when I enlisted. Three brothers went into the army and are now dead; and have enlisted for three years more." "Why," said the delegate, "you might well feel that you have done your part. How came you to re-enlist?" "O, sir, the nation wanted men, and I would rather fill a soldier's grave than that the cause should fail, and that flag come down!" (Applause.) Is that mercenary? The speaker answered, "I do not know. I have a brother nearly three years in this war; sir, I have a little family; my youngest child has died; another child is a cripple; my poor wife has been sick for years, and I have not seen the face of my kindred for a long, long time. But as for me, I will stand by the flag, sir, as long as God shall give me life and strength!" (Applause.) And those poor fellows, suffering in the prison camps, and in the barracks, who were not even a President telling him "not to back down an inch in the question of exchange, though all of them should die!" (Great applause)—was that mercenary? Never! He appealed for the rank and file of the American army, and appealed to the record with a patriot's pride, to show that whenever and wherever our soldiers had been wronged, they had never faltered. (Cheers.) Look at Lookout Mountain! He had climbed it eleven years before, and looked out from that high perch upon five States of the Union. He could hardly reach its summit on horseback. And yet, up that mountain side, in defiance of the bristling bayonets, our men climbed and fought, and fought and climbed, until they got above the clouds, and victory crowned them there. They got down upon the Atlantic coast, and set their military work of human skill and art, bristling with defiance, at Fort Fisher. Last month it was inspected. It was said that it was very strong. Yes, it was very strong. Officers said "that there was no such work on the continent." "It was stronger than anything captured in the Crimea." "Soldiers never took such a fort as that, and soldiers never can," were the confident assertions of the contractors. The contractor tried, to take it. (Applause.) The command went forth that it must come down. The army sailed there. It was landed on the beach. The fleet came round. The best Porter began to pop! and day after day it did pop, and right lively too! (Laughter.) The brave soldiers and the gallant marines were appointed to their fearful work. Did they falter? Never!

THE "CHRISTIAN LIGHT ARTILLERY."

Let us take one simple means of doing good, originated by the Commission—the "cooking-wagon." Just after the explosion of the mine at Petersburg, it made its appearance in camp. The men wondered what it meant. It was an odd-looking thing. It went on wheels, and was not unlike a cannon wagon, in front was a large chest with divisions for the coffee, tea, sugar, chocolate, and condensed milk, which were stored away in it; then there were three tall chimneys or smoke-stacks; with boilers and furnaces, and place for fuel underneath—and the strange thing came down the camp puffing and steaming and smoking and distributing coffee, tea, and chocolate among the weary, hungry men, at the rate of ninety gallons every hour, which was its cooking capacity. We are told that the contractors, who were gathered in this fashion: "I say, Bill, ain't that a 'bully' machine?" Well, it was! (Applause.) Another said, "Why, stranger, that's the greatest institution I ever saw; you might call that the 'Christian Light Artillery,' eh?"—(applause.) "But it's got a good deal pleasanter ammunition in it than the Rebels gave us yesterday!" I said another, "I say, doctor, what do you think of that?" "I think that God's will! all I can say," responded the medical man.

The speaker now remarked generally upon the points he had already adverted to. The inconsistency and folly of attempting to separate the bodily from the spiritual care was well shown in a familiar rehearsal of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest might have preached a sermon, or read a portion of the law to the poor man who lay along there; he had needed it; but he wanted more. The Levite might have had a heart of pity, and looking down upon the wounded sufferer he said, "Poor fellow, he must be badly hurt; now, if I was only a surgeon, or if I lived near here, if I was not Levite, if I was in my line (applause), I might do something for you!" Because he felt that his work was a distinct one, he passed by that loud call of our humanity. A like folly and crime would they be guilty of who should confine the work of the Christian Commission to the care of the soul only, because ministering to the spiritual necessities was in its line of duty and of privilege.

RELICS.

On the question of the value and practical success of the Commission, the speaker referred to the soldiers themselves as the most worthy witnesses. What do they think of the Christian Commission? A captain went into the Commission's office in Boston, the other day, and said, "Here's my contribution. I owe my life to the Christian Commission. Under God, I am here to-day because of the help it afforded me." Many times have soldiers said to delegates, "We owe our lives to you." A sick soldier in Armory Square Hospital said, "Thousands of us would have been in our graves, but for the Christian Commission." A soldier of the Army of the Cumberland, as he lay dying, took out a five dollar greenback and said, "It's the only thing I have on earth, and I leave it to my last legacy to the best friend on earth—the Christian Commission." An old lady, weeping bitterly, brought two dollars to our worthy agent, Mr. Chamberlain, of Cincinnati, and said, "It's the only thing of value that was left in poor John's clothes, and as he was brought to Christ through the instrumentality of the Christian Commission, I want to give it to give it to aid in his good work." A dying Michigan boy, to whom the Commission had kindly ministered, gave fifty cents in postage stamps to a delegate, and said, "My dear sister sent them to me, but I cannot write to her any more, so I give them to you—it is all I own on earth." [These precious relics were held up by the speaker, before the audience, which strained to gaze upon them, and were moved at their simple story.] Thus, continued the speaker, does the Christian Commission go from a million hearts at home to a million hearts in the army, and from a million of hearts in the army back to the loved ones at home, who sent it down in its holy work among the wounded and the dying.

"THE PEST MAN IN THE ARMY."

A German soldier, on being asked, thus endeavored to describe the Commission: "To Christian Commission? Yes, he is the best man in our army! When we was town in Ireland, a lying there two days and nights, no bread, no water, no doctor, no nobody—the Christian Commission came home; he take us all up; he give us water; he wash our face; he bind our wounds; he is the doctor himself; and he is so many. He bring us all to time. He is the very pest man in the army. Yes, he work all the time, just like a nigger!" These were homely, broken words, but expressive of an honest soldier's experience. And even the rebels themselves have an experience to offer. At Gettysburg they said, "We can stand your bullets, but we cannot stand your Christian Commission—it brings us down." (Applause.) One rebel soldier said, "I am a rebel. When you washed my face so kindly and nursed me so tenderly, Oh, I did feel so bitterly that I had been fighting against you!" Another said, "A man came to me when I was wounded and helpless, and he spoke kindly to me, though he knew I was a rebel, and he prayed, yes, he prayed for the salvation of my poor soul—and he help me enemy." I tell you, sir, from that time I did feel that of nothing else; for if my enemies

lar Presbyterian call from the rank and file to be their preacher, the officers sanctioned it, and he found himself in the army. But he soon discovered that the quarter-master could not supply the want of good reading. There was a member that for twenty years, while engaged as a Sunday-school missionary under the auspices of the American Sunday-School Union—that noble institution that honors Philadelphia—by making its home there—he used to ask for and they gave them to him, and he felt sure that they would still honor the requisition of their old missionary, now a chaplain in the country's service. And they did so. He found, too, at the very start, that they needed something like the United States Christian Commission in the army. They had groped in the darkness until, by-and-by, God called this great agency to be a light to them. He believed that the Christian Commission grew out of the great revival of 1858. It was born of the spirit of prayer and union begotten by the union prayer-meetings held in that favored hour, when those mighty waves of revival rolled over the land. The Commission sprang from a good source, and God had given it a most noble mission to perform. How well it had performed it he had in many places seen, and could testify.

The speaker then drew upon his experiences. On the battle-field of Perryville he had been privileged to go among the men and distribute bibles. He found at Hospital No. 1, which was in a church, 2,400 brave men suffering from sickness and wounds. Instead of the pews filled with attentive hearers, were stretched before him rows of bleeding, dying men. He went to the first one on whom his eyes lighted, and saw that he had had an arm amputated, and was still lying in the soiled and clogged garments of the field. Most of the men are equally destitute. He commanded their attention, and bade them all cheer up, saying that their friends at home were near at hand to do them good. Having asked the men who needed clean garments to signify it by raising the hand, or if they could do that by speaking, he then went from one to another with his shirts and drawers and socks, and needed articles, giving to each the benefactions which were intended to reach him by the kind hearts at home which had provided them. When they had passed through one hospital in this way, they went to another, and then to another, doing the same grateful work. One poor fellow, on being greeted with clean garments, said, "I don't know who sent you here with these nice clean clothes, unless the Lord!" "Certainly, that's it; the good Lord and the women of Ohio—they were the partnership!" was the reply.

TEA AND TOAST.

One Hoosier boy, not over twenty years old, lay sick, with a touch of the fever and ague—an affliction which he had sometimes suffered from at home. The speaker, comprehending the case, said to him, "What did mother do for you when you had these spells at home?" "Oh, she used to make me a good cup of tea, and such nice toast." "Why, that was very good for you. I don't know who sent you here with these nice clean clothes, unless the Lord!" "Certainly, that's it; the good Lord and the women of Ohio—they were the partnership!" was the reply.

Charge! I was the Captain's cry. Theirs not to make reply. Theirs not to reason why. Theirs but to do or die. As into the jaws of death Bashed those brave hundreds.

Canon to right of them. Cannon to left of them. Colored and thundered. Stormed with our gall. Bravely they fought, and fell.

All the world wondered. Yes, they fought and fell, and they will be remembered when Tenyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" shall have been forgotten. On the 25th of September, 1862, they were gathered peacefully in our sanctuaries, or were sitting in the quiet of our homes, these brave soldiers and sailors were battling, hand to hand, with traitors at that fort. And they gained it! The American flag went up to its place, and a long, loud, wild huzza of triumph went out over that main, proclaiming that the whole line of American coast was ours! (Applause.) But, Oh, what cost did these bleeding soldiers gain the victory for us! And what they owe to the sympathy and succor, and comfort that they need from the homes and hearts of the people for whom they are bleeding and dying? These are our soldiers; and this is the work of the Christian Commission to comfort them thus. And they deserve it. Does not every impulse of pity, of piety, and of patriotism lead us to help this good work? Patriots, philanthropists, and men of a humane and noble mind, lend a hand, and the hand of cause of God, of country, and of truth! (Protracted applause.)

Mr. Stuart now introduced Mr. Philip Phillips, of Cincinnati, remarking that, although his friends said that he had no ear for music, he was not ashamed to say that he had eyes that could weep with President Lincoln and the members of his Cabinet, as Mr. Phillips sang his touching hymn before them at the meeting in Washington. The hymn "Your Mission," was then sung with such sweetness and power that the audience called for its repetition. The singer favored them, however, with a happy selection entitled, "Won't we be a Happy People when the War is Over" which created much good humor, and was encored again and again by the delighted audience.

Mr. Stuart introduced the Rev. B. W. Child, a well-tried veteran in the Sunday-school army of America, who had come from a little place called Wales!

MR. CHILD'S ADDRESS.

More than forty years ago, when a child, the speaker stood with his father on the side of a lofty mountain, near their home in the Principality of Wales. His father held his handkerchief to the breeze, and said, "That's a fair wind to take people to New Zealand. He asked what America was. His father replied, "That it was a great country, far off beyond the ocean, where the people had a good government, where poor boys could go to school and get an education, and where they had plenty of apples?" The last idea the speaker fully comprehended at the time, and he inquired why his father did not take them there to live. "By and by, my boy," he replied, "when the Lord opens the door, we will go." In a year the door was opened for their emigration, and now for forty-five years the speaker had enjoyed the advantages of a great country and a good government, of free schools and free institutions; and when armed treason assailed the life of such a nation, and threatened the integrity of such a government, he felt that, with the good hosts of the West, he had a duty to perform. He and the Welsh boy who had shared so largely in the blessings afforded to the poor and the oppressed of the climes, must go and take a hand in the fight, too! (Applause.) But he had always had a natural difficulty when a boy in the woods of Ohio. He could never shoot, because he had to close his eyes when he looked through the muzzle of the rifle, he could cheer the boys on and pray for them. The brave boys of the Thirty-ninth Ohio gave him a regu-

lar Presbyterian call from the rank and file to be their preacher, the officers sanctioned it, and he found himself in the army. But he soon discovered that the quarter-master could not supply the want of good reading. There was a member that for twenty years, while engaged as a Sunday-school missionary under the auspices of the American Sunday-School Union—that noble institution that honors Philadelphia—by making its home there—he used to ask for and they gave them to him, and he felt sure that they would still honor the requisition of their old missionary, now a chaplain in the country's service. And they did so. He found, too, at the very start, that they needed something like the United States Christian Commission in the army. They had groped in the darkness until, by-and-by, God called this great agency to be a light to them. He believed that the Christian Commission grew out of the great revival of 1858. It was born of the spirit of prayer and union begotten by the union prayer-meetings held in that favored hour, when those mighty waves of revival rolled over the land. The Commission sprang from a good source, and God had given it a most noble mission to perform. How well it had performed it he had in many places seen, and could testify.

The speaker then drew upon his experiences. On the battle-field of Perryville he had been privileged to go among the men and distribute bibles. He found at Hospital No. 1, which was in a church, 2,400 brave men suffering from sickness and wounds. Instead of the pews filled with attentive hearers, were stretched before him rows of bleeding, dying men. He went to the first one on whom his eyes lighted, and saw that he had had an arm amputated, and was still lying in the soiled and clogged garments of the field. Most of the men are equally destitute. He commanded their attention, and bade them all cheer up, saying that their friends at home were near at hand to do them good. Having asked the men who needed clean garments to signify it by raising the hand, or if they could do that by speaking, he then went from one to another with his shirts and drawers and socks, and needed articles, giving to each the benefactions which were intended to reach him by the kind hearts at home which had provided them. When they had passed through one hospital in this way, they went to another, and then to another, doing the same grateful work. One poor fellow, on being greeted with clean garments, said, "I don't know who sent you here with these nice clean clothes, unless the Lord!" "Certainly, that's it; the good Lord and the women of Ohio—they were the partnership!" was the reply.

Charge! I was the Captain's cry. Theirs not to make reply. Theirs not to reason why. Theirs but to do or die. As into the jaws of death Bashed those brave hundreds.

Canon to right of them. Cannon to left of them. Colored and thundered. Stormed with our gall. Bravely they fought, and fell.

All the world wondered. Yes, they fought and fell, and they will be remembered when Tenyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" shall have been forgotten. On the 25th of September, 1862, they were gathered peacefully in our sanctuaries, or were sitting in the quiet of our homes, these brave soldiers and sailors were battling, hand to hand, with traitors at that fort. And they gained it! The American flag went up to its place, and a long, loud, wild huzza of triumph went out over that main, proclaiming that the whole line of American coast was ours! (Applause.) But, Oh, what cost did these bleeding soldiers gain the victory for us! And what they owe to the sympathy and succor, and comfort that they need from the homes and hearts of the people for whom they are bleeding and dying? These are our soldiers; and this is the work of the Christian Commission to comfort them thus. And they deserve it. Does not every impulse of pity, of piety, and of patriotism lead us to help this good work? Patriots, philanthropists, and men of a humane and noble mind, lend a hand, and the hand of cause of God, of country, and of truth! (Protracted applause.)

MUSTERING THEM IN.

At another time the speaker went into a deserted tavern, used as a hospital. Seventeen noble fellows lay on the floor. He ministered to them in the gospel of clean clothes and some of the gospel of Christ. One man lay on a straw pallet, with a terrible wound in his thigh. He said that when a boy twelve years old, in a Sunday-school in Stark county, Ohio, he had been hopelessly converted to God, but that he had never professed his faith in Christ, and that he did not know that his comrades had professed their faith in Christ. He declared that he would do so, and when the speaker made some remark about his going home on a furlough—a returned Christian soldier—to testify of Christ. But he said, "O, chaplain, I don't want a furlough; as soon as I am able I want to join the regiment and help the boys!" These are our soldiers. Faith has made heroes of them. It is making heroes of our Sunday-school boys, of our American youth in the army of the U. S. It is making heroes of the Ohio boy; "what church would you like to join?" "The Church of Jesus Christ," he said. As a recruiting officer of the Captain of Salvation, the speaker stood ready to muster in this new recruit. He talked to him about the articles of war, tried to tell what it was to be a faithful soldier;—that he must not be a drunkard, and run to the women;—and then, on the avowal of his faith in Christ, he baptized this Christian soldier, and welcomed him into the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. On leaving that cot, and passing out of the room, a poor fellow pulled the speaker's coat, and said, "Chaplain, I am a deserter!" "O, no, my friend; you have served your country too long, and there should too much blood for it. You have lost his heart—it was a deserter." "Yes, I am," he persisted. "Three years ago I professed religion in Indiana, but I have deserted the standard, I have wandered from God. O, I feel like consecrating myself anew to him to-day—won't you muster me in, chaplain?" This is the labor that is done for the soldier—in his army of the U. S. It is to strengthen his faith, to encourage his hope, and to cheer his heart. And the work was full of reward to the Christian. To point the dying soldier to Jesus, to hear his pious ejaculations, to see the brightening eye and radiant face lit up with the glory

of the vision of heaven, to hear the rapturous exclamations of those who are dying in the triumph of faith—O, these are ample rewards for all the toil expended. And ample reward for the noble work that is done by those who supply the want of good reading. There was a member that for twenty years, while engaged as a Sunday-school missionary under the auspices of the American Sunday-School Union—that noble institution that honors Philadelphia—by making its home there—he used to ask for and they gave them to him, and he felt sure that they would still honor the requisition of their old missionary, now a chaplain in the country's service. And they did so. He found, too, at the very start, that they needed something like the United States Christian Commission in the army. They had groped in the darkness until, by-and-by, God called this great agency to be a light to them. He believed that the Christian Commission grew out of the great revival of 1858. It was born of the spirit of prayer and union begotten by the union prayer-meetings held in that favored hour, when those mighty waves of revival rolled over the land. The Commission sprang from a good source, and God had given it a most noble mission to perform. How well it had performed it he had in many places seen, and could testify.

The brave General Fisk, of Missouri, was now introduced, as one who, at the breaking out of the war, was superintendent of the largest Sunday-school in the city of St. Louis, and who, in his military career, had proven himself to be not only a true, zealous Christian, but "a soldier, every inch of him."

ADDRESS OF GEN. C. B. FISK, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

The General was received with much applause. He said: "Mr. President, friends and fellow-citizens in the bond of Christian fellowship and patriotism: Not until the great day when God shall make up his jewels, can we tell you of the benefactions of Christian Commission. This great army of figures rests by the brother from Boston; the narrative of Brother Reed; the stirring scene depicted by our Brother Childlaw—these do not, cannot, show what the Christian Commission has done for our soldiers. We who are in the army, who are the recipients of its kindness, to whom it comes with its blessed ministrations, even we cannot tell you all that it has done. But in the day when all hearts shall be uncovered before God we shall begin to understand and estimate fully the worth of such an institution. He thanked God that good men ever thought of originating it, and that it had never served its term of enlistment, the first three years of its useful career, and was ready to re-enlist as a veteran for the war."

A NOVEL CHORISTER.

The General had seldom seen such an audience as that before him in the Academy of Music. But he had been in the Academy of Music that the Christian Commission had originated in the grand armies of the Union, where he had seen 500,000, and sometimes even 10,000 men gathered to sing praises to God, and to hear words of Christian comfort and encouragement. His mind was carried back to such a scene on the banks of the Yazoo, amid the swamps of Mississippi, where they sang the songs that brothers, sons and fathers used to sing around the family altars, before they enlisted in the defence of the unity and freedom of their country. And oh, such singing! He would like to take his audience there to hear it and to join in it; but he could not. Yet he would ask them to imagine themselves in a tent on a hillside for a few moments, and to imagine themselves to the scenes of a war of a thousand miles away from home, and join with him, heart and soul, in singing the good old hymn, "Come, thou Fount of every blessing!"

At this unexpected invitation, the whole assembly rose to their feet, and united in the hymn of praise. It was a novel and a grand sight to see a general of the Union army leading an audience such as graced the Academy of Music that night, in sacred song. And they did sing! The fretted roof rang with exalted praise. The effect was elevating, inspiring, grand. On taking their seats the General resumed:

We have had a good song. The American Academy of Music never heard anything better. He had sung that song with thousands of soldier boys who would never sing it again this side of the dark waters; but he could hear them now as they were singing it on the shining shores of deliverance.

"Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love."

Ah! that expressed the too sad experience of the men in the army, and for that very need the Christian Commission had been raised up, to keep wandering feet from straying, to encircle the lonely ones in the arms of friendship and sympathy, and throw around them the memories and restraints of home. This was the key-note of the Commission's work. The organization of the Commission, the merging of the Young Men's Christian Association of the land, when their work had seemed to be accomplished, into this new and wonderful agency, were alluded to, and the following incident, illustrating the need of the Commission's work among men who had long been removed from the better influence of the Sabbath-schools and sanctuaries and altars at home, was related:

JOHN SHEARER.

An old soldier of the General's command had left his home in patriotic Iowa, and had gone down into Arkansas with them, to plant the old flag along the banks of the noble Mississippi. They had come in from one of their fruitless expeditions, in which they had been trying to "climb up some other way" into Vicksburg, when they ought to have gone in by the door. They had been removed for a month from their lines of command. Of course, they had had no letters from home. As a matter of course, as communication had been reopened, the first thought was of the mail. The General went at once to the post-office tent, and received his precious budget from home—the letters from his wife and children, and his pastor and Christian friends at home, from the children of his Sabbath-school—who he had been *retarded* from the rank of Superintendent of the Sunday-school to become a General in the army! (Applause)—and he sat down on a log by his tent to read these messages of love. He had read them through and through, and was about to rise, when an old soldier seated near him on the same log accosted him with, "Old fellow, I want you to read my letter for me!" The General had nothing on to indicate his rank. He turned and looked at the man, and then reached for the letter. It was addressed to "John Shearer, Helena, Arkansas." The address began in the upper corner and ran diagonally across the cover to the lower corner—"Can't you read it yourself, John?" "No," "Then I will, of course; but why don't you know how to read?" The fellows that don't know how to read ought by rights to be found only on the left Davis side!" But his having been born in a slave State might have helped somewhat as his excuse, added the General. The letter was from John's wife. After speaking of the gathering in of the crops, and entering into all the little affairs of home—mentioning even the new dress of Susie, the new boots for Johnny, and the cunningest wee bits of socks for the baby! the faithful wife began to read a sermon—a good deal in this wise: "John, it was quarterly meeting last Saturday, and the presiding elder stopped at our house. He told me that a great many men who went into the army Christians, came back very wicked; that they would learn to swear and gamble and drink, and that they were guilty of many of the vices that go straggling through our camps. Now, John, I want you to remember the promise your made me as you were leaving me and our children, that you would be a good man." Ah, the old soldier wept as he listened; and as he came to the dear name that closed the precious letter, he raised the sleeve of his old coat, brushed away the great swelling tears, and said, with a full heart, "Bully for her!" It was the soldier's *Armen*, and eloquent and expressive "Well, how did you do, good man, John?" Then came the sad story of drunkenness, and gambling, and profanity, into which John had been led, and the humble confession that he had forgotten his vow, but would renew it, and, by the help of God, would try to keep it. The General discontinued his reading at that point.

Weeks passed, and the horrors of the war—digging on the Mississippi, where thousands of

brave men were laid low in the swamps, passed over them, sweeping to death's realms six hundred of his men. Here, low with the fever, among the hundreds of victims, lay John Shearer, he of the post-office incident. The General, sent for, went to see him, received his words of faith and trust for the home beyond, his last message to his wife and children, and by his side the sweet hymn, "Jesus can make the dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are," and closed his eyes in death. Thus his army officer was doing it his privilege to act as the delegate of the Christian Commission, performing the office of the Christian minister and friend to the sick and lonely sufferer.

THE COMMISSION EVERYWHERE.

The work of the Commission in its wide extent was next eloquently discussed upon by the speaker. The Commission had crossed his path in every direction, and upon every side of glory, there too had the Commission raised the banner of the Cross, with the star of Beth-lehem and the stripes for our healing. Its kind offices had been felt and owned in the midst of discouragement and disaster; it had cheered and sustained in the dark hours; it had flamed down into the thickest of the clouds and flames of conflict; it had visited the dens of starvation and horror, to relieve the torments of our suffering captives; it had followed our victorious troops from Cairo to the Gulf, as our gallant Western freemen heaved out their path with their gleaming swords, and with their bayonet points turned every bolt in the locks that the rebellion had placed across the great Mississippi; and when the "Father of Waters," the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven upon our arms, went once more unvexed to the sea, it lifted its voice on field and flood in grateful song of praise to God, at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, with Sherman's grand excursion to the sea-side, and amid the storm of iron fire on the Atlantic coast, so lately hurled, when "try again" gave us the victory over defiant Fisher; the blessing of heaven