

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM THE HOLY LAND. X.

BY REV. EDWARD PAYSON HAMMOND.

It is astonishing what vast numbers of pilgrims annually visit the Jordan prior to the Holy Fire festival of the Greek Church. Joseph Dupuis, formerly a vice consul in Tripoli, states that in 1853 he joined a party of these devotees, chiefly members of the Greek and Russian Churches, which numbered about eight thousand. The custom is still kept up, and several thousand every year, on the Monday of passion week, press their way down the hill pass from Jerusalem to the site of ancient Gilgal. They are accompanied by the Turkish governor of Jerusalem, or his deputy, with an armed escort to drive away the robbers,—who still, as in the days of the "Good Samaritan," prowl along the road-side in search of plunder. The great number who thus visit the Jordan can but remind beholders of the scene witnessed eighteen centuries ago, when "John did baptize in the wilderness, and there went out unto him, all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." The travellers, having bivouacked the first night at Gilgal, long before the break of day, thousands of torches are seen amidst the darkness of the night, moving slowly towards the banks of the Jordan—to the traditional spot where Christ was baptized by John. There, after having, most of them, clothed themselves in white robes, which they ever afterwards sacredly preserve for their winding sheets, they plunge into the swift current. If these robes shroud their dead bodies, they are sure of entering Heaven. Alas, we fear that few of them are taught of the wedding garment, which Christ has wrought out, and without which they can never be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Fathers and mothers are there seen, with their little ones, and often with a tender infant in their arms solemnly immersing, one by one of their offspring, in the sacred waters. If these parents had the Bible in their hands from which they could read: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," would they not spend more time in telling their little ones of that "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," and less time and money in useless pilgrimages to the Jordan?

On the fifth of December, with the warm bright sun shining upon us, we turned our faces towards that part of the river where it is believed our Lord was baptized. Our way led through a pleasant vale called the valley of Gilgal; but, though Joshua speaks of "Gilgal in the east border of Jericho," yet, neither at Riha nor at any place east of it, could we discover any vestige of Gilgal, but it was pleasant to reflect that we possibly passed over the spot where the Tabernacle was first set up, after the children of Israel reached the Land of Promise, and where it remained until it was transferred to Shiloh. (Josh. xviii: 1.) Where also Saul was made king, and where the tribe of Judah came to welcome back David from his wanderings. (2 Sam. xix: 15.)

Although in Deut. xxxiv: 3; Jericho is called "the city of palm trees," yet neither upon its site nor in all that part of the valley of the Jordan did we discover a single palm tree. The only one we remember to have seen was at Tiberias on the sea of Galilee. I should have mentioned that we drank that morning of the sweet waters from the "fountain of Elisha." This spring is named for the Prophet because it is believed that through his agency it was miraculously sweetened. (2 Kings. ii: 19, 22.) Having arrived at the banks of the Jordan we were first struck with its swift and muddy appearance. We could well see the significance of its name Jordan, which means "the descender." We were also impressed with the greatness of the miracle, when its waters were suddenly arrested, that the children of Israel might pass over on dry land, and when the potent manna of Elisha and Elijah divided them. As the Jordan has so often been compared to the river of death, it was natural that when we beheld it, we should have been reminded of that river which all must cross ere they reach the shining shore of Heaven. Several of us joined in singing the well-known hymn—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood Stand dressed in living green, So to the Jews old Canaan stood, While Jordan rolled between."

We followed the example of nearly all visitors to the Jordan, by bathing in its turbid waters. As the weather was extremely mild, we expected to find the water corresponding, but to our astonishment it was as cold as ice-water, and as we turned our eyes away to Lebanon, covered with snow, we were made aware by that chilling bath that the waters around us had but recently left their wintry home, off that cold mountain side; nevertheless we were entirely immersed beneath the waves. We did not, however, venture in the centre of the swift current, where too many have lost their lives, but contented ourselves in remaining in the more shallow waters.

We could not fail to notice the effect produced by "the swelling of the Jordan," for all along its banks where the water annually overflows, vegetation is quite luxuriant. In Joshua iii. 15 we are told, "Jordan overfloweth all his banks

all the time of harvest." This overflowing, however, is not at all like that of the Nile. The banks of the Jordan are rather filled than overflowed; in fact the word translated overfloweth in the passage just quoted from Joshua is literally filleth. After filling a bottle with the Jordan's water to show to our friends in America, and gathering a few flowers and smooth stones, we turned south to the Dead Sea. It was as warm as summer, and we could hardly realize that you in America were muffled in furs amid winter snows. The valley which we were then passing, is reckoned by some modern geologists to be the lowest land upon the face of the globe, of course not including the bottoms of mines. One writer makes it 3000 feet lower than Jerusalem, and 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. This accounts for its excessive heat during the summer months.

After a delightful ride of a few hours, over a level plain, we reached the sparkling waters of the Dead Sea. We had not expected to see such beautiful, transparent water. Having read that no bird had ever been known to fly across this sea and live, we were surprised to see standing upon its edge a large and beautiful bird, Michael, our dragoman, made an unsuccessful attempt to shoot it. Startled at the report of the gun, it spread its broad, red-lined wings, and sailed away over the sea, to the opposite shore. We never stood on the beach of the Atlantic, upon a warm day in summer, when its waters looked more tempting, and we were not long in deciding that we would, each of us, ladies included, enjoy a cooling bath. We were soon among the breakers, which the strong south wind rolled in upon us. From the accounts we had read of the excessive density of those bituminous waters, we had expected to find it difficult to keep beneath the surface so as to be able to swim; but I did not find the least difficulty in enjoying a good swim. Without some effort, I am inclined to think I should not have found it easy to float upon the surface. Suddenly, in the midst of the ablutions, a wave, higher than the rest, dashed over my head, and had innumerable needles at that time penetrated my eyes, it seemed to me I could not have experienced more severe pain. I quickly turned and swam to the shore, almost frantic with pain. Meanwhile, Dr. Smith was lying upon his back with his Testament in his hand and trying to read it while floating upon the water. He called me to get an AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN from my coat pocket upon the beach and see if I could do likewise. I was foolish enough to attempt it. While thus, side by side, upon the water, with our reading matter held high up in our hands, all at once Dr. Smith found himself rolling over, and in the twinkling of an eye his *New Testament* was beneath the waters of the Dead Sea, and his eyes smarting so severely that he cried aloud in agony. I could not refrain from laughing at his ludicrous appearance, but before I knew it I found myself in as ridiculous a position. Convulsed with laughter, I found it impossible to "keep right side up with care," and in a moment the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN was beneath the waters. We did not attempt a second time to read while bathing in the Dead Sea. Such was the peculiar nature of the water that that paper did not become dry for several weeks; some of our clothes, also, were many days in drying. Nevertheless we all enjoyed our bath extremely. We did not forget to secure a bottle of this peculiar water, and also some of the beautiful pebbles from the beach, which glisten like diamonds in the sunshine.

A word or two about this wonderful sheet of water, of which so much has been written, may be new to some of your readers. It is about 50 miles long and 12 broad, so Dr. Robinson says, but Prof. Porter states that it is but 40 miles long and 8½ broad, narrowing to 5 miles at its northern extremity, where it is in some places 1300 feet in depth, whereas the ten miles to the southern end are only 13 feet deep. The doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is supposed, stood upon that, southern level. It is probable that when the earthquake took place, which very likely accompanied the rain of fire from heaven, the deep waters of the sea north of Sodom suddenly flowed over the subsiding, burning cities with their surrounding country. Some, indeed, have believed they could discover the remains of cities far down in the deep toward the southern shore.

"By this sea's dark shore as the wanderer strays, When the soft, bright eve's declining, He sees the round towers of other days, In the waves beneath him shining." Oh, how solemn and vivid appeared that description in Gen. xix: as we read it upon the borders of the Dead Sea. How sad must have been the heart of Lot, when in spite of all his entreaties to his sons-in-law, pleading with them to escape for their life, he "seemed to them as one who mocked." But when "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of Heaven, and overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities," then they realized the terrible truth of their father's warning.

Every where in our journey through Palestine, we had seen how deeply the curse of God rested upon the land, but nowhere had we felt this so strongly as during our visit to the Dead Sea. God grant that we may be ever mindful that this world in which we live is one day to be destroyed by fire. May we heed the warning:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall

melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye may look for such things be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Peter, iii: 8, 14.)

FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

ANOTHER LABORER GONE.

Mrs. Marietta Ingham, one of the founders of the Ingham University at Le Roy, departed this life on Monday last, at the age of 69 years. She was born in Lyme, Ct.; lived for a time, in her early womanhood, in Pittsfield, Mass., but came in 1835, with her younger sister, now Mrs. Staunton, the Principal of Ingham University, to Attica to establish a Female Seminary. By her own exertions she had educated this younger sister, and had gathered means with which to start the school which together they had projected.

After laboring two years successfully in Attica, they were induced by the earnest entreaties and offers of pecuniary assistance from citizens of Le Roy; to remove their school to the latter place, and there it soon grew into large proportions and great influence; and there it has continued for thirty years, until the graduates of its entire course number 250, and more than 4000 pupils have been under instruction within its walls.

Mrs. Ingham was endowed with strong mind, great force of character, and remarkable business capacity. She was the treasurer, provider, and general manager of the Institution, while her sister, Mrs. Staunton, had charge of the department of instruction; and so the two have labored together, with unwearied fidelity and devotion, until this large and flourishing Seminary is the enduring monument of their life-long consecration to the cause of female education.

Mrs. Ingham died of consumption, and was a great sufferer for many weeks before the end came, yet she retained her faculties, and her interest in all the things around her, almost to the last. She was buried on Thursday, the 6th inst., in the family burial spot of the Seminary grounds, attended to her last resting-place by the scholars of the school in mournful procession, as well as by citizens of the place, and by friends from abroad. A very admirable funeral sermon was previously preached in the chapel of the University, by Rev. Dr. Parsons, a professor in the Institution, which was highly complimentary to the character of the deceased, of whom we should gladly write much more if our limited space did not forbid. Some able pen will doubtless do justice to her memory in some more enduring manner.

HOUGHTON SEMINARY.

The catalogue of this excellent and flourishing Seminary for Young Ladies, located at Clinton, has come to hand, and shows that something over one hundred students have been in attendance during the past year. Its annual examination commences on Monday, 24th instant, and its Anniversary exercises at 10 o'clock on Wednesday. The address before the Barrett Browning Society is to be given by Rev. Dr. Hawley, of Auburn.

THE ROCHESTER AGENCY.

The fourteenth annual report of the Rochester Agency of the American Tract Society has just been issued. It shows receipts from donations and legacies in this field of \$19,616, being an increase of \$1000 over the previous year. Publications circulated, nearly twenty millions of pages, valued at \$40,000. The total business of the agency amounts to \$60,000, being \$12,000 over the preceding year. The store is in charge of O. D. Grosvenor, as usual, who is also the Superintendent of Colportage. Rev. W. V. Couch is the District Secretary, and Rev. E. F. Owen General Agent in the same field.

COMMEMORATIVE.

The "Half Century Commemorative Exercises" of the Presbytery of Ontario have been published from the office of the *Rochester Democrat*. It makes a beautiful pamphlet, of fifty-four pages, containing the sermon preached on the occasion by Rev. Joseph R. Page, of Perry; sketches of some fifteen or twenty speeches by other clergymen who were present, together with two original hymns sung at the time, and original music to accompany one of them. Altogether it makes an attractive pamphlet, and will be especially valuable to all in this region for future reference.

The good people of Canadagua are moving toward the building of a new Congregational church. The plan is to have one worth about \$60,000, to be located, we believe, on the site of the old one. Several meetings have been held on the subject, and some progress made toward plans and subscriptions for the purpose; but the last we heard, it was not probable that the house would be built this year.

The Congregational church in Henrietta are also planning to build. It will be remembered that their church edifice was burned down, last winter. The new one is to be built on the old site, the same size as the one burnt, 40 by 60, and to cost about \$7000. The job is in the hands of Mr. Hiram Kingsbury, an experienced builder of this city.

Rev. Sylvester Cowles, of Randolph, is about to take charge of the Presbyterian church of Gowanda, in the same Presbytery.

Rev. Dwight Scovel, of Lakeville, has received and accepted a call to the Presbyterian church of Mendon, and is to enter at once upon his labors in the new field. GENESEE. ROCHESTER, N. Y., June 7, 1867.

FRAGMENTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF A MISSIONARY TOUR IN INDIA. V.

DECEMBER 22.—In exploring the villages of a mountainous region to-day, quite upon the summit I came upon an old monastery of large dimensions. I did not measure its outer walls, but they could not have been less than 250 yards square, with interior rooms and accommodations for at least 1000 inmates. It enclosed beautiful and costly temples to the gods Samba and Sideshwar, all in a perfect state, uninjured by time; only a few broken images showed the innate hatred to such gods, of the Mussulman iconoclasts, when they prevailed in this part of India four or five centuries ago.

The Swami or chief occupant of the monastery was absent, and from his dull disciples I could gather nothing of importance of the history or former object or uses of the monastery; and I have seen no allusion to it in any published statements or historical records of this part of India. Among the villages visited to-day was Girgav, whence a band of 200 men rushed down to Kolapoor in the mutinous outbreak of 1857, armed only with reaping hooks and a few rude weapons, but ready to peril life and every thing in a mad attempt to banish or destroy their British rulers. Only a small audience gathered to hear me in Girgav, but these seemed impressed with the truth, and freely admitted their convictions.

Native offerings to the idols, in the form of rupees imbedded in the temple steps, are very common in all this region. At the village of Yewti were 12 rupees imbedded in the temple steps of the god Jotiba; at Baley, 10 rupees. At Hirawdey, 25 rupees to the god Nursoba. At Hasoor, 4 rupees, with new and costly brass idols by the side of their old stone gods. At Shirol, I counted 47 rupees in the temple steps, and at Bhampta, 200 rupees, inlaid not in the stone steps, but in costly and most durable wood, arranged permanently just in front of the god Jotiba in a very large and costly temple. I wonder if it is capable of clear demonstration that Christianity inspires more costly gifts and sacrifices in its behalf than Hinduism does?

HURDI, December 23.—Perhaps by this time you are able to appreciate our remark made in the beautiful bungalow at Kagul, at the outset of our tour, that if you would gain an accurate idea of touring life in India you must join our party, not for a day or two, and in such a delightful garden merely, but keep with us and share our varying fare month after month.

How nice it would be to have a dear old friend like yourself along with us on such a tour as this. And then the stern realities of the work, the burning sun and many discomforts of the way, whether travelling or halting, the hard toil of this downright grappling with heathenism in its strongholds,—all come thronging up to remind me how very superficial are the best views of this work ever obtained by the best of men, who make only a temporary visit to our missions, limiting observation mainly to gathered churches and the larger stations, and shielded from all exposure and discomfort by the ceaseless care, kindness, vigilance, and forethought of loving hearts, whose generous hospitality too often leaves a false impression on the minds of their guests for the balance of their lives.

Don't think me opposed to "Deputations." I wish with all my heart I could have the senior brother of the ablest deputation that ever visited us from America kept close by my side through such a tour as this, both when able to find shelter from the sun, and when exposed to its burning heat, sharing in our village fare, and the unceasing mental and heart exercise of trying to enlighten these dark-minded idolaters, and bring God's truth to bear on their minds and hearts to their conviction and salvation. If he could devise means for this object more effective than we have yet discovered, would we not thank God on his behalf? And if he came to feel that our best hope is with the young, and find his heart yearning to bring these more pliant minds under the daily teaching of God's truth, would we blame him? O for men of earnest souls and true zeal and love, to give themselves to this work, and bring God's blessed truth in any and all ways to bear on the minds and hearts of these idolaters so that they shall believe and be saved.

At this village of Haldi, our best shelter from the burning sun is a small, low temple of the goddess Ambahac. Though the great shrine of this goddess is in Kolapoor, yet she has a temple, larger or smaller, in almost every village of the Kolapoor kingdom. This is so low that we have knocked our heads cruelly against the roof, but are most grateful for its protection from the intense heat.

Despite the deep innate and inwrought superstitions of the people in all this region, we are struck with their readiness to let us occupy their temples and come in contact with their idols to an extent never tolerated in strictly British territory. Here we all are in this little temple—the

priest himself swept it out and got it ready for us. We eat our fowls, (when we can get them) and common food here, wear our shoes and boots—a great defilement of the temple in Hindu estimation—our children sit down on the carved stone, just in front of the idol, to count the nine shinning rupees imbedded in it, as native offerings, and our little boys sit upon it to eat his dinner, innocent of any harm in so doing; and with all this before them, neither priest nor people take any offence.

And yet, when touring some years ago with brother Munger in the Ahmednuggur field, I remember he was violently assaulted, abused, and thrust out of a temple by an insolent Brahman, merely for stepping inside to look at it. Why this difference? Is it the excessive deference paid by the British Government and officials to Hindu idols and superstitions? Have the Hindus learned to take advantage of this deference to magnify their gods and temple-rites? By this needless, foolish deference, as well as by its official acts, and large patronage, has the British Government fostered and warmed these vile superstitions into a measure of vitality they never otherwise would have had. It is sad to think so, but if this is not the reason of the difference in question, what is?

DECEMBER 25.—Beard.—This is the first capital of the Kolapoor kingdom of which we have any knowledge. Here old Yising, a Chutruk king, held his court nine centuries ago. It is now a small town, of not more than 2000. An audience of 52 men gathered to hear me, and listened most attentively to my preaching. At the neighboring village of Mhia, I observed another instance of deification. The temple is small and not imposing in finish or appearance, but the principal idol being evidently a modern figure and of recent workmanship, led me to make inquiries, which elicited the fact that Sukoji Patil built it and had his statue enshrined in it just before his death, a few years since—that his immediate friends and family were the only worshippers for a time, but now all regard it as a veritable god, and make offerings and worship as to any other shrine.

FEBRUARY 4, 1867.—Sumbhapoor.—You will note the long interval from our Christmas at the old capital at Kolapoor and the date here given. The explanation is simply that we can work faster than we can write—make journals faster than we can record them. By the way, you must emphasize *Fragments*, in the running title of these sketches.

We spent our precious "Week of Prayer" with our little band of Christians in Kolapoor, and manage to keep up most of our station duties there though still prosecuting our village work. I say a word of this village; Sumbhapoor, because I find here an instance of human deification a little more notorious than any I have before mentioned. The temple is very large and costly, the idol, of brass, very large and imposing, being the statue of a king in his royal robes. On either side are the statues of armed attendants, and on each side of the outer door of the temple are statues of several soldiers in full armor, as if still standing on guard. I find the solution of all this to be that a former king of Kolapoor, named Sumbhaji, great-grandfather of our King Shivaji, just deceased, died on this spot after a reign of 34 years. He had been visiting some of the more distant towns and provinces of his kingdom, and was returning to his capital, when diseases of long standing increased in force and he died in his tent, pitched on this spot. Among his dying directions was the choice of an heir to succeed him, with strict injunctions and arrangements for the building of this temple, the preparation of the statues, the consecration and installing of his own statue, as also an annual grant to pay the priests and servants of the temple and secure the performance of his daily worship in perpetuo. His commands were executed—the temple built at enormous expense, the statues made, consecrated and enshrined, the present village of Sumbhapoor soon sprang up around the temple, taking its name from the deceased king, and though Sumbhaji died 106 years ago, everything has been perpetuated—priests, attendants and daily worship—and the annual allowance is continued from the treasury of the Kolapoor Government. The bearing of such cases on the origin of the Hindu gods, such as Krishna, Rama, Marooti, and others, is obvious, and should have its effect on the minds of intelligent Hindus themselves. But it is just as true of them as of President Johnson, that

"A man convinced against his will Clings to the same opinion still." I find the heat increasing, and am admonished not to risk exposure in the villages much longer. In the service of the Gospel, Yours sincerely, R. G. WILDER.

CONVENTIONS IN CARLISLE, PA.

DEAR SIR:—We have been trying to find time to send you an account of our Conventions. First, we held on April 23d, a Temperance Convention, composed of delegates from the churches and various Temperance organizations in the Counties of Cumberland, Perry, Mifflin, and Juniata. On Wednesday, P. M., the meeting in our church, of the various Sabbath Schools was exceedingly interesting. Among them was our colored school of nearly two hundred members. The Pledge has been signed by all of our white and colored Sunday Schools, with the exception of six members.

We supply our school with the *Temperance Banner*, and have obtained some fifty names for the *Temperance Advocate*. We feel the influence of the Temperance Revival, which is passing over the land, and desire to fan the flame.

Our County Sabbath School Convention opened May 1st, at 10 o'clock, A. M. Mr. Walton, of Philadelphia, was with us. Mr. Harland, of the Sunday School Union, and Mr. Purdee, of New York, were our principal speakers. May we long feel the influence of the truths they uttered, and the enthusiasm they kindled. Many clergymen and Superintendents of Sunday Schools were in attendance from different parts of our county.

The gathering together of our Sabbath Schools on Wednesday, P. M., was a great success. With them came our Freedmen's School, which led off in both singing and answering questions. I mention this to you, sir; for I know your heart is in our work. We may seem to move slowly, but we are doing what we can. Respectfully, P. M. Y. WING.