

Correspondence.

FROM OUR TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT IN THE WEST.

MONMOUTH, Ill., Nov. 25th.

DEAR EDITOR:—I am rusticiating in Northern Illinois at present, and have found few things more striking than the contrast between this part of the State and the Southern part. The difference can only be accounted for by a reference to the circumstances connected with the settlement of the two regions.

Southern Illinois was the first part of the State to be settled by white men. The French colonies along the Mississippi, and especially at Kaskaskia, existed when all to the North of "Egypt" was a wilderness and an Indian Reservation. The traces of French occupation are still seen in the names of places.—Prairie du Rocher, Grande Cote Prairie, &c.—although the gay-hearted, merry, French trappers have resigned the lead to soberer and more melancholy settlers of Saxon and Teutonic stock. These latter came in for the most part, while the North of the State was still closed to them. Poor whites and persecuted whites from the South settled on the prairies and river-bottoms, around Cairo, and spread up through the land to pass it and to till it, while the aristocratic planter passed on to the blaker and richer soil of Missouri. The soil did not suit slave labor, or Illinois would have been a slave State, for slavery was defeated by only a few votes in the Convention that framed the first State constitution.

But the Indian's days in Northern Illinois were numbered. By the gigantic swindles, perpetrated by government officials, which led to Black Hawk's war, the whole body of the Indians were to be removed to the West of the Mississippi on an appointed day. The war itself, and the transactions which led to and followed it were stains upon the national honor, which, as told in the Autobiography of Black Hawk, must make every American cheek tingle with shame. The practical result was the opening up of the rich prairies of the North to civilized agriculture. For weeks previous to the day fixed by the treaty, the borders of the reservation were crowded with expectant colonists waiting to enter into the Promised Land. Every Eastern State contributed its quota, and when the time had expired they poured in like a flood. Never was State so speedily settled; farms were enclosed and towns and cities sprang up as if by magic. Chicago is a type of the whole country in the matter of its marvellous growth. The scarcity of food consequent upon this hasty incursion forced the people to "go down into Egypt to buy corn," hence the name of the latter.

The surface of the country here is as different from that of Egypt as is its history. The minerals are very much the same. The underlying coal bed runs through the whole State up to a strip of territory running from Chicago to Rock Island, where a new geological formation breaks its continuity. The quality is much the same,—bituminous and sulphurous. Stones are as scarce as in Egypt, where it is easy to get nuts, but very hard to get anything to crack them. But the abundance of wood which supplies its place for most purposes in the South, does not exist here. The view across these wide prairies is never broken by groves of "timber," and lumber must be brought down from Minnesota, or across the State from Chicago. Attempts have been made to supply this radical defect by planting groves, especially of locust trees, but for the most part, the "borer" worm has ruined these for lumber, without killing the trees. As a consequence of this scarcity, the style of fences is very different here from that in the South. The rail or snake fence gives way to the upright or board fence, and in many places thick wire is substituted for cross-pieces. The Osage Orange hedge is cultivated here, as in Egypt, but its liability to decay, its need of constant attention, and the space occupied by its roots, are great drawbacks.

The Northern and Southern soils are very different. The Egyptian soil is just like that to which we are accustomed in Pennsylvania, light brown in color, and moderate in strength. But farther North, the soil is a rich black loam, friable and porous, almost too strong for some crops. The winter wheat and castor beans of the South give place to spring wheat, and above all, corn, for which the soil is much better suited than for wheat. Corn grows here to an amazing height, and yields very large crops. Fruit is not so abundant as in the South, peach trees yielding about once in five years; but peaches are brought up in great quantities by the Illinois Central, especially during this last summer.

The people here depend mostly on cistern water, preferring it to the hard limestone water of the wells. The country is drier than the South, having fewer streams, and yet it stands the drought better, as it does not bake and crack for want of moisture. As might be expected, ague is less common, though not entirely unknown; but even in Egypt it is abating and no longer shakes the weather boarding off the house, nor the patient's teeth loose, as of old.

In point of material "improvements," the North leads the State. Railroads are far more numerous, and nowhere are you so far from them as to have to travel for days in that torment, a country stage—called here a "hack." In spite of the want of timber, quite considerable advances have been made in manufactures, a much better sign of progress than Railroads. The latter carry off the wealth of the country, the former double it. Educational Institutions abound. In the town from which I write, the United Presbyterians have an excellent college, with an academy or preparatory department; and there are, besides, quite a number of public schools of good standing. I found some persons in Egypt, who were proposing to let out their farms, and move, for a time, up to Monmouth, for the sake of insuring a good education for their children. Fifteen miles to the East lies Galesburg, where, as you know, there is the New School Presbyterian "Knux College" and where the Universalists have "Lombard University," an educational institution of some reputation.

That the North has beaten the South in this matter, although the latter has had so much of "a start" in the race, is largely to be attributed

to the different dispositions of the ruling classes in the two sections. The poor white element in the South elects the Democratic ticket, and mismanages the schools. Even where fair teachers are employed, there is a want of active support on the part of "the powers that be," and if a teacher, by the enforcement of discipline, offends a parent or a "big brother," he is left to fight his own battles. In many instances the directors employ the teacher who offers to take it at the lowest rate, without much regard to merit.

Intellectually, the South is more European, the North more American. The first is characterized by great inequalities, the second by great equality. In Egypt, there is a very high degree of intelligence among the few, in the North there is an average measure of it in possession of all.

Monmouth is a large and growing country town, straggling over a large space of ground, and built mostly of wood. The churches are numerous, orthodox, and influential, the United Presbyterians taking the lead. The presence of their college here gives them a local prestige, and the town seems to be a "dry dock" for their idle preachers. About a dozen of them attend the services in one church, and added my informant, "there is not a good preacher in the lot." Indeed, I myself have often been struck with the pulpit mediocrity that characterizes the pastors of this denomination. I have heard a good many of their biggest guns, very respectable preachers, too, but none of them could be accused of having too much of "worldly eloquence." Is it because their church position and policy drives men of intellectual power and independence from their communion?

Galesburg is a large town, with a much more miscellaneous population. Yankees and other heretics abound, as might be expected from the presence of a Universalist Institution, and I noticed in several shop windows an invitation to Norwegians to walk in and patronize the establishment; while a sign announcing the locality of a "Robert Emit (sic) Circle," indicated that Paddy had got there before the school-master. The main matter of local stir is an attempt, on the part of some extra-liberal people, to get rid of a municipal prohibitory law, which the local authorities are doing their best to enforce. To this end a new weekly paper—the *Liberal*—has been started, and from the contents I should judge that the theological "liberals" are co-operating with the spirituous "liberals" in the matter. The mayor, however, who seems especially obnoxious to the clique, was formerly a Universalist preacher. Parallel to this and apparently co-operating with it, is an attempt to establish a Liberal "Cottage Prayer-meeting," at which a Rev. Mr. Beecher figures quite prominently. Its object seems not so much to bring down blessings on the participants, as to demonstrate that the "orthodox" have no monopoly of the piety of the place. A similar attempt was once made by Dr. Bellows in New York, and fell through. We wish this one better success,—better even than his adherents wish for it.

Manufactures are springing up in these country towns and bid fair to make them local centres of importance. One in Monmouth is especially interesting as a sign of the times,—a Co-operative Factory. Its supporters have made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the theoretical principles and practical working of similar institutions in Europe, so far as these can be learnt from books. We wish them all success. Co-operation must prove a benefit in every part of the land, but especially so in the West, where the want of large accumulations of capital is a great obstacle to the development of local resources. "Many little make a mickle," and a plan which enables many workmen to combine their little, and gives every workman an interest in the success of the work, cannot but work well, if honestly managed.

Yours, &c.

ON THE WING.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN CONNECTICUT.

WATERBURY, CONN., Nov. 15, 1867.

This state has 280 Congregational Churches. Most of them have a history running back to the origin of the communities among which they are located. The organization of a new church, except in the cities or growing manufacturing towns, is unheard of now. The Congregational churches are as strong and powerful for good as they ever have been—but relatively to the growth of population, and of other ecclesiastical bodies, they are falling behind, and the prospect is not encouraging. A few facts will illustrate the foregoing statement: It is found that there are at present only 300 more members in connection with these churches than there were in 1858. Had it not been for special revivalist efforts by Rev. J. D. Potter, in different parts of the State, mostly in the weak parishes, we should be fallen far behind our numbers ten years ago. His labors for three years past have been greatly blessed, and the last year about 3,000 were added to God's visible people—mostly by profession. During this same period of ten years, while the 300 nett addition makes an increase of only seven-tenths of one per cent., the Methodists have increased at the rate of four per cent., the Baptists fifteen, and the Episcopalians over thirty. At the same time, the population of the State has increased at the rate of 10,000 per year, leaving these ancient churches of Connecticut far below their former condition of power and influence. At the same time, much has been done to stay decline, and promote their prosperity and usefulness. Home Evangelization is prosecuted with growing skill and vigor. The churches seem to be waking up to a new life, and to be casting about for ways and means to meet their responsibilities—both to the increasing population, and to the Master.

In order to take a new survey of the whole field, and make preparations for more vigorous endeavours, an informal conference was held in New Haven, in September. It was called at the instance of the Directors of the Connecticut H. M. Society, and was composed of about fifty ministers and laymen from all parts of the State, including the directors aforesaid. It was an earnest meeting. The questions on all minds, and made prominent in the discussions, were: What are the churches doing to fulfil their great commission to give the gospel to the whole population? What can be done to augment the life and aggressive power of our churches? It appeared clearly that here, as every where, is lack of power in the churches of Christ, resulting from a

monstrous deficiency of individual personal consecration to the Saviour, and to his service among men. What could be done to increase this form of Christian character? The experience of individuals, the success of measures tried in different places, these were brought forward—and much good seemed to be done in the way of information, and deepening the purposes of those present to stir up Christians, and provoke the churches, throughout the State, to good works.

One result of the Conference was the appointment of a Committee to make arrangements for a meeting, at an early day, of the representatives of the District Conferences, and Association of the State, to consider the same general questions, and, if it should be deemed best, to organize a permanent conference of the Congregational Churches of Connecticut. That Committee performed their duty, and the proposed convention has just been held in New Britain, on Tuesday and Wednesday of the present week. It was one of the best meetings of the kind it has been my privilege to be in. It was characterized by great practicalness of Christian purpose. There was a deep and earnest sense of personal responsibility, as connected with the coming of Christ's Kingdom, and the diffusion of the blessings of the gospel among the masses of our people; and prayerful dependence on God for wisdom, and the strength of faith, to go forward and meet the demands of the Lord in this time of growing domestic heathenism. It cannot be that these pious purposes of God's servants, in which there is so deep and painful a feeling of both duty and dependence, will not end in a higher style of church and Christian activity. Indeed there seems to be a general expectation that the coming winter is to be one of more than ordinary revival interest.

The most important work of the Convention at New Britain, was the formation of a General Conference of the Congregational Churches of the State, which is to hold an annual meeting in October or November, to promote the union of the churches, and their fidelity in the work of the Lord committed to them. Two practical subjects were also brought forward and ably discussed.

- 1. Best methods of home evangelization.
2. Proper relation of our churches to Y. M. C. Associations, and to other similar organizations.

On the whole, we believe these movements in Connecticut mean work. Is it not the sad fact all over our land, that the masses of the people are living without the gospel, and that the churches are content with labors to preach it to "every creature" within our spheres only, which can never meet the approbation of the Master?

Two of the churches in New Haven are yet without pastors—the Center, late Dr. Bacon's, and the College St. We understand that Mr. Clark, of the North Church, declines the call from Philadelphia. He seems to be a successful preacher of the gospel to the people. His church is crowded on the Sabbath, and numerous accessions to it have been made from month to month by profession. Dr. Daggett has recently returned to his childhood's home, and his early ministerial associations as pastor of the church in Yale College. He enters on this most important field of labor with earnest hope and prayer that he may be successful in it, and prove to be "the right man in the right place."

E. W.

UNION CONVENTION OF THE SYNODS OF WISCONSIN.

A Convention of the ministers and churches of the Synods of Wisconsin, (O. and N. S.) convened at Fond du Lac, on the 3rd of December, and was opened by a sermon from the Rev. S. Mitchell, District Agent of the O. S. H. M. Board.

The Convention had been called by a joint committee from both Synods, for the purpose of prayer and conference for a revival of religion within our bounds. The permanent organization of the Convention was effected by the choice of the Rev. W. Alexander, of Beloit, for President, and of the Rev. Warren Mayo, of Lodi, for Secretary.

The following questions were introduced for discussion, and as affording proper themes for earnest prayer:

- 1. How shall we make the ordinary means of grace more efficient?
2. Should special services for the revival of Christians and the conversion of sinners be held in our churches?
3. If so, When?
4. How shall we overcome the evils of indifference?

5. Is it the duty of lay-members to engage in direct labor for the conversion of sinners?
6. Family visitation, or the duty of preaching the gospel from house to house.
7. The basis of union adopted at Philadelphia. The Convention adjourned on Thursday, but the interest culminated on Wednesday evening in the discussion of the fifth and sixth questions. The utmost harmony prevailed in its deliberations, and the prayers all breathed the same ardent desires for the revival of God's work in the hearts of his people, and for the salvation of souls. The melting influences of the blessed Spirit were present, and so operative in the hearts of his servants, that the thought of the different schools was swallowed up in the greater thought of the glory of Christ in the salvation of souls.

Many experiences in labor for Christ were detailed, but only as they bore upon the important questions before the body. The importance of lay effort in winning souls to Jesus was brought out with great force. How much may be accomplished, and how easily, by the well directed efforts of a brother or sister, by speaking a word for Christ to a friend or neighbor; by circulating tracts, containing pungent appeals—either distributing them from house to house, or inclosing one or two—well selected, in an envelope—perhaps with a word indicating the interest of the sender in the welfare of the person to whom it is addressed.

There are neighborhoods where the Gospel is seldom preached, or a prayer-meeting held. Let a Christian man get up a load of praying men and singing women, and go into such a neighborhood, with a force sufficient to secure a good meeting, even if there is not another person to take

part in it, and how much good may be done. Is it not the duty of God's people to do this? And then in finding out cases of special interest in the congregation, and reporting them to the pastor, how much may be done by lay-members. Some pastors are highly favored in this regard. They have a few members who are watching for souls, and they have a special aptness in detecting the presence of any unusual interest—though it may be slight, which they at once report to their pastor. How much they help him.

The duty of Christ's people, under the commission "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," whether ordained or unordained, male or female; to preach the gospel, each in his appropriate sphere, and according to the ability received of God, was discussed at length. But the other feature, the privilege of working for Jesus, was not forgotten. Would not the working force in our churches be largely augmented if our lay-members thought more of the privilege of laboring for him, and less of the duty? What a privilege to be numbered among those who "turn many to righteousness." There were some present who felt as never before the greatness of it. Another thought was brought out with some power—not a new thought, nor a modern discovery—the absolute dependence of the laborer upon the Holy Ghost for success.

The object of the Convention was to do good; and we shall be greatly disappointed if a blessing does not attend the efforts of those present, on their various fields; partly because of new zeal kindled by the burning words heard there. Absent brethren were earnestly and affectionately remembered in prayer.

This point was also reached; brethren of both branches sat together as they had never done before, and in their views of each other they were, on Thursday, A. M., a little in advance of what they were on Tuesday evening. Here they counselled, and prayed, and sang together, and shared in common the presence of their blessed Master.

Little was said on the seventh question, but when it was read, it was moved that the basis of union adopted at Philadelphia be approved, and the motion prevailed without a negative vote.

The Rev. S. Mitchell introduced the following: "Resolved, that the Convention recommends that Presbyterians in this State, of both Schools, cordially co-operate in sustaining the churches of either School where Providence may cast their lot," which was unanimously adopted.

The usual vote of thanks, to the people, by whom we had been so hospitably entertained was passed, also to the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien, Milwaukee and St. Paul, and Milwaukee and Minnesota Rail Roads for half fare tickets to members passing over their routes.

LETTER FROM ST. LOUIS.

"A STREET OF CHURCHES."

I have lately seen a statement, under the above caption, to the effect, that Broad Street in Philadelphia extends eleven miles in a right line, and contains thirteen church edifices. Locust street in St. Louis is one of the streets running due west from the river, and situated about midway between the northern and southern ends of the city. On this street are the following churches: United Presbyterian, 2d Baptist, St. George's (P. E.), Central Presbyterian, 1st Congregational, Union Methodist, Christ Church (P. E.), 1st Presbyterian, 2d Presbyterian (new edifice, foundation just commenced), 1st Methodist (new edifice in process of erection). Here are ten church edifices on one street, within two miles of its extent—nine of them within one mile—more than one for every two squares. On the four streets nearest to Locust and parallel with it, i. e. within two squares, are six other church edifices, viz: Trinity (P. E.), Pilgrim (Cong'l), Pine Street (Presb'n), the "Disciples" Church, the "Church of the Messiah" (Unitarian), and a large Jewish synagogue now in process of erection.

It happens that within this zone there are no papal churches, though they are everywhere else in the city, and their number constantly increasing. Whether such concentration of churches, in large cities, can best secure their thorough evangelization, is a fair question. We have, however, a good number of Protestant churches besides these. Our North Presbyterian Church is on Chambers street, a mile north of Locust. Our Pratt Avenue Mission, which we hope will become a church, is several squares further south. Our brethren of other denominations have both churches and missions in different localities, extending still farther both north and south.

S. S. INSTITUTE.

The S. S. Teachers' Association of St. Louis is holding a Teachers' Institute this week, in the 2d Baptist Church. Rev. H. C. McCook presides. Essays are read, or addresses delivered, on topics assigned, followed by open discussion in five-minute speeches. These discussions are animated and interesting. This is the first "Institute" held here. It seems likely to give a good impulse to the Sabbath-school work. We hope it may do something to give it wise and right direction.

H. A. N.

PROGRESS IN SOUTH AMERICA.

There are remarkable indications of great changes going on in the Republics of South America. A few years ago, freedom in religious worship and the free circulation of Protestant publications was unknown. But now Protestants almost everywhere enjoy freedom in worship, and their publications are to be had in all parts of South America. A resident of six years in Chili writes to the American Tract Society, that "a great field is opened here for religious truth. Your publications may be circulated in this country with the greatest freedom." The Roman Catholics have lately made several attempts in Chili to prevent Protestants from enjoying privileges of worship, and the free circulation of their books. But there is no disposition on the part of the Government to favor the Catholics. In response to an attempt to prevent the circulation of the Tract Society's publications, an officer

replied, after examining the books: "These are good books. In Valparaiso there is a store full of just such books. They have passed the Board of Censors and can be sold here as free as pins and needles." In Valparaiso, a priest made application to the mayor to close a Protestant chapel, saying that it was "shameful that such meetings should be allowed." In reply the Mayor said: "By our laws the Protestants are now allowed freedom in their religious worship. I shall not close this chapel; and if there arises any trouble, I shall even send an armed force to protect the worshippers."

"Surely the door is open. The encouragements for the future are still greater than those for the present. Every one of the South American Republics is surely tending towards an entire separation of Church and State. Whenever this takes place there will be an extraordinary demand for Protestant instruction. While the preacher and the teacher can come in personal contact only with the few, your books and tracts will enlighten the many." In Buenos Ayres the Government is establishing Sabbath-schools wherever it can be done, and the Superintendent is using his power to extend the circulation of the Spanish issues of the Tract Society. Bible colporteurs have gone over nearly the whole of Buenos Ayres, and have everywhere been met with the request for other books. An eminent citizen writes from Rio that a great change has come over that country within a few years. There is now nearly a universal indifference to the authority of the Roman Church among the men. The tendency is toward infidelity, and good religious books are greatly needed as an antidote. Similar information comes from other parts of South America. The Tract Society are making efforts to do a great work in those countries the coming year. There ought to be no lack of means to enable it to push its operations to the utmost extent wherever the field is open.

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