

Original Communications.

LETTER FROM INDIA. THE BRAHMO SOMAJ.

DEAR BROTHER MEARS:—Some six months ago I gave you a brief account of a lecture in Bombay, by Baboo Keshub Chunder-Son, the acknowledged leader of a Society of educated Hindoos called the "Brahmo Somaj." The Baboo continues active and persevering in his efforts, and shows no tendency to back-slide from the bold position he has taken against idolatry, caste, and many of the more patent superstitions of the Hindoos. In a recent lecture he advanced his sentiments in words like these, viz.: "The Brahmo Somaj recognizes the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man as its fundamental principle. What else do we want in India, but to break down the thousand partitions and barriers of sect, caste and race, which separate man from man, and bring all unto the feet of the one true God? And this the Brahmo Somaj will accomplish. Its membership is, at present, small; but it is steadily multiplying. The day will come when it will extend over the length and breadth of the country, and on all sides the name of the Most High will be chanted with national thanksgivings." Urging his fellow countrymen to enlist under the banners of the Brahmo Somaj, he says: "Are you not impatient to save yourselves and your families from the curse of moral and social evils? Are you not impatient to abolish early marriages and polygamy; to promote widow-re-marriage and inter-marriage; to reform your domestic and social economy? And, above all, are you not impatient to obtain purity of heart and spiritual peace? \* \* \* Come, then, brethren, let us all unite to worship the one true God, and abjure idolatry. Pray unto him daily; pray with sincerity and humility, and the living God will bless you."

ORIGIN, DIVISION, PROCESSION.

This Brahmo Somaj was organized some 38 years ago, but on a basis far below the principles here advanced. In its onward progress the Society has been rent into two parties, and the principles and aims here advanced are those of the minority only. And yet, at their recent anniversary in Calcutta, this minority, mustered, in a morning procession, at daybreak, to the number of more than 200 Brahmoo, while the public interest in the movement was attested by a great crowd of spectators. On their banners were emblazoned, in letters of gold: "Truth will triumph," "Only the grace of God availeth," "God is one, without a second." As the procession moved slowly along the principal streets, they chanted Sanscrit and Bengali hymns, embodying sentiments like the following, viz.: "Come, brothers! the weight of our sorrow is gone at last, and the name of God resoundeth in the city. Who hath faith he shall find salvation. There is no thought of caste. To scatter error and superstition and the gloom of sin, Hath the religion of Heaven come to earth."

The special object of the procession was to lay the foundation stone of a new place of worship of the Society. In doing this, the Baboo made a consecrating prayer, and followed it with a short address. The first words of his address were: "We have assembled here to lay the foundation of a building in which the one true and holy God will be worshipped in spirit and in truth." Its closing language was: "We place our fervent faith in Him; and we pray that He may reveal His infinite presence in this house of worship, and save from sin and sorrow the souls of those who come to worship here."

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVEMENT.

These Brahmoo do not distinctly recognize salvation by Christ alone, and yet they make direct allusions to His holy life and example, and speak of imitating Him by "blessing them which curse us." Though conscious of the points in which they fall of coming up to the true spiritual standard of the Gospel, I cannot but regard their movement with very great interest. Their Society is, in some respects, a good exponent of the power and progress of the Gospel in India; and has itself become a power for breaking down Hindu caste and superstition. They have organized branches—churches they choose to call them—in the Punjab, North-west Provinces, and other parts of India. We need not cherish too sanguine hopes of rapid and marvellous results from the efforts of these educated young Theists, but they furnish evidence that the labors of humble Christian Missionaries are accomplishing a mighty social and religious revolution in this land, even outside the Christian churches and communities they have gathered. And their existence may well incite the Christian Church to more earnest and persevering efforts to bring them, and all these millions of idolaters into the clearer light and full liberty of the Gospel of Christ.

KOLAPOOR—CHURCH OF TWENTY MEMBERS.

We would gladly express our warmest thanks to the dear children of your Sabbath Schools and the other friends who continue to remember our dear mission and help us with their gifts and their prayers. We find it beyond our power to write to them individually, as we long to do, so many and urgent are the mission duties which press upon us constantly.

We are holding on to our work far beyond the five years proposed when we came back to our mission; but how can we think of leaving these idolaters with no one to care for their souls, or this little band of converts, who have believed through our word?

Including a pupil of Mrs. W.'s girls' school, who was received to church-fellowship at our last communion, we have now a little church of twenty adult converts and six baptized children. The influence of this church for good is becoming more manifest, and some of the converts will soon be able to render us valuable help in our work. But they need the strongest possible Christian influence every day, with unceasing care and efforts to teach and train them more perfectly in the ways of truth and holiness. Two of my best hours of labor I give daily and exclusively to this work, and the remaining hours are filled with such a pressure of teaching, preaching and conversing with those out of the church, that very little vitality remains for the correspondence and incidental work that must not be neglected. And now approaches our cooler season, when I long to be sowing "the good seed of the kingdom" in the regions beyond. But whenever I am absent, our city church is unavoidably closed, and home audiences and work suspended.

NEED OF HELP.

Do we not need some strong, earnest young workers to help us in this field? Is it not needy enough and promising enough to justify the outcry? Is there not some young man and woman in your churches of the requisite zeal, energy and love to Christ and souls to enable them to find the joy of their lives in this work? And have you not some single church in Philadelphia, which would be richly blessed in blessing these perishing idolaters with such laborers, by furnishing their support? If not, and they are ready to come, tell them not to wait for any guarantees; but, heeding only their "marching orders," come, trusting in God. According to their faith shall it be unto them. O for more faith! How speedily might the Christian Church rise up and possess the world for Christ.

In the love of Jesus and the souls of these idolaters, yours sincerely, R. G. WILDER.

ITEMS.

Our petty war in Hazara (Northern Frontier), for chastising the offending chiefs and tribes, has resulted in more casualties than occurred in the whole "Abyssinian picnic;" but the offenders are suing for peace, and there seems every probability of a speedy adjustment of difficulties.

Did you notice the murder of old Synd Thowajee, Inaam of Muscat, last year, by his wretched son, Synd Selim, who thus made his way, through blood, to the petty throne of Ooman? Vengeance has just overtaken him,—his chiefs and people having risen against him in such force that he has had to fly for his life.

One of our recent public telegrams came from Washington, D. C., to Bombay, in less than forty hours. Several recent telegrams sent from Bombay, have reached London during the same day. Isolated and engrossed as we are in our daily work, we cannot repress our interest in our beloved country. We watch the pending political and ecclesiastical issues with eagerness, diminished not at all by our distance. W. Kolapoor, India, Oct. 22, 1868.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTH DEMIURGIC DAY, OR THE TERMINATION OF THE SECONDARY FORMATION.

Up to this point the rocks present the remains of no species, which now exists: Those that have been, have all passed away: Their remains and tracks alone inform us of their existence, and of what they were. The fact of their having had an existence, is just as certain as if we had actually seen them. We can no more doubt it, than we can the existence of the man whose tracks we have seen in the snow. All those species passed out of existence long prior to the Adamic period. No members of any existing species lie entombed with them. Thus far, we have passed through miles of rocks—the graves of the past, all of which have been deposited since the original command was given, which uplifted the mountains, and caused the dry land to appear. They contain myriads of organic beings, of almost every form and variety, except mammals and birds. Of mammals, there may have been a few marsupials (order of the opossum), and of birds; only a few rare, gigantic specimens; and yet not a single specimen of all those countless multitudes which now have an existence. They lived, they feasted, they were happy, and showed their Maker's glory, when there was no man to praise Him—when, of intelligences, only "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

But the close of the Chalk Period marks the boundaries of the past. It is the "termination of that period in the history of the earth's structure, to which the character of antiquity belongs." In the succeeding period, we shall find all the fossils are either resemblances or types of existing organic creatures." How solemn the thought! In the history of this earth, we have, as it were, arrived at one of the standpoints of eternity. From this point let us take a brief survey. We look forward, but of all the past animate creation, there is naught. We look around us; but only the silence of death reigns. We turn our eyes up the

stream of time, and we behold an endless profusion—a countless variety of species, which was, and is not. But as in following a majestic stream, it insensibly diminishes, until it becomes an insignificant rill, and finally you arrive at its source—it is lost, so we ascend the stream of animate life—it is wide, deep, majestic, awful; but it diminishes—we arrive at its source—it is lost, for we have arrived where only God was.

Again, by the light of inspiration, we look to the future, and we see that though the day cometh, "which shall burn as an oven," yet the whole earth's future will never witness a perfect parallel to this point in the past. No! Glory be to God, and eternal thanks to the Lamb that was slain, for through his atonement, our existence shall be as eternal and immortal as our Maker's; for, "thanatos and hades having been cast into the lake of fire, there shall be no more death." Hence during the whole ages of ages—the eternal future—it can never be said of man, he was, but is not—his whole history is in the past—the earth's rocks contain his only remains. For, though another, a new creation awaits this earth, when it shall have "waxed old like a garment," yet in that creation, the saint, instead of passing out of existence, shall be perfected in existence, put on the vigor of immortality—"be equal to the angels," eternally equal to them, for he was only "made for a little while lower than the angels." (Heb. ii. 7, margin.)

Were it not for God's promises, the rocks would only proclaim degradation and death to man; they would spread the mantle of eternal night over him; for in the past, he would read his own future. But for the light of Inspiration, he would be justified in writing on his own tomb, "death an eternal sleep." And even now, let him reject that Inspiration, or neglect the Saviour it reveals, and he rejects the promises; and they cannot reach him, and the blackness of darkness forever, alone hangs over him, a death worse than that which at the close of the fifth day, blasted all existences, and spread death every where. It will be a night of death, a night of eternity that will know no morning, and no day star of hope, for it will be the night of despair. JAMES KERR.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS.—XXV. SILVER SPRING, NEVADA.

Preaching the gospel, if preached at all, in a new and excited mining region like this White Pine District, must needs be under novel conditions. This three thousand people have not hurried to these far away mountains in order to ask for, or even listen to the gospel. To obtain a hearing, Christ's ambassador must push; watch his occasion, use common sense, and be neither ashamed of his mission nor afraid of men.

In a previous letter, mention was made as to the manner of introducing the Gospel into the Treasure City. Four miles down the western slope of the mountain from this place, and four thousand feet below, from a romantic nook of a canyon, flow out a number of beautiful springs. Much water is needed in the various processes of crushing the ore and extracting the silver. There being no water higher up the mountain, various quartz mills are here erected, or in process of erection. Here also a compact little city of about five hundred people, has sprung up during the past four months, and on account of its waters has received the pleasing appellation of Silver Spring.

THE SALOON.

In this, as in almost every mining town, the first, even seemingly indispensable necessity is a large, long room, having a bar on each hand as you enter, with gambling and billiard tables farther back. This at once becomes the assembly room of such towns, after the toil and bustle of the day. Few of the miners and laborers have any comfortable place of their own in which to spend their evenings. These saloons are always kept in an inviting condition; comfortably heated and cheerfully lighted. How wise in their generation are the children of this world! Would that the operations of our Young Men's Christian Associations, with their blessed and appropriate work could extend thus far and potentially enough, to have a reading-room with appropriate library, and heated and lighted every evening. It would, no doubt, be the means of saving from wreck and ruin scores of strong men, who are far from home, and any former helpful influences, and exposed to such fearful temptations. If spared to re-visit San Francisco and our eastern cities, this matter will be earnestly pressed upon their vigorous associations of Christian young men, so that if possible there may be one example of a pleasant and free reading-room in the great American Basin.

PREACHING.

This large saloon in the new city of Silver Spring seemed the only available place for preaching. On application to the proprietor for license, his answer was, "Certainly, preach, if you can." By far the most thronged evening of the week in these places, is that of the Sabbath. At 7 P. M. and without any previous notice, the crowd of talkers, swearers, smokers, drinkers, gamblers, and silent lookers-on, was entered. Walking through the mass to the rear of the saloon, announcement was made in a voice loud enough to be heard by all, that through leave of the proprietor I was about to preach. "Wait, says one, till I get a drink." "Certainly, we'll wait."

A text was then taken, and without any delay or formality my message was delivered. The money was presently gathered from off the tables, the drinking stopped, the talking ceased, cigars were put out; and a quieter and more attentive audience, minister never had. Bread thrown upon the waters. These rugged, intelligent men, if rightly approached, will listen to the story of the cross.

When through, inquiry was made as to whether the way would be opened for preaching at another time. The proprietor answered; "Whenever you please to come."

Before closing, a man standing in the crowd says; "Mr. isn't there going to be a collection?" My reply was, that I came to preach without any thought of money.

"But, Mr., you would not object to a collection, would you?"

"Certainly not." Through the crowd he started, hat in hand, into which the coin jingled most encouragingly. When through, he came to my little stand table, and with a loud rattle emptied upon it the contents of his hat, saying, "There, come again and preach to us sinners, for we need it."

A. M. STEWART.

HOPEWELL CHURCH.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—A heavy calamity has fallen upon Hopewell Presbyterian Church in this village, in the loss on Friday morning last, at 2 A. M., of our house of worship by fire. It was a fine old church, in which the late venerated and beloved Rev. John McCampbell, D. D., had preached for many years. What now adds to the heavy burden of the calamity is the fact, not without much circumstantial evidence, that the church was fired willfully by an incendiary. When first discovered, the fire was outside in the open vestibule, far removed from the stoves or chimneys. During the previous two days, a Teachers' Institute, numbering nearly fifty teachers in connection with the State Free Common School System had been in session.

Shall we arise and build? Our necessity and our desire encourage us. The sympathy of all good men in the community likewise assures aid. Hence, assured that God will help those that help themselves, our purpose is already well formed, not to sit in the ashes of despondency, nor to be crushed by any of the influences which may have wrought our temporary overthrow, but, chastened by the permission of Him who loves us, to pray and labor so that speedily our loss shall be made our gain.

Trusting that this notice may bespeak for us the sympathy and prayers of many readers of the PRESBYTERIAN, that we may be sustained in this hour of sore trial, we are yours, "CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED." Tenn., Dec. 8th, 1868.

Editor's Table.

Publishers will confer a favor by mentioning the prices of all books sent to this Department.

HARPER & BROS.

J. ROSS BROWN, perhaps the greatest traveller even of the locomotive Americans, has just given the public another of his inimitable volumes, this time upon the Apache country, including Arizona and Sonora, with notes on the Silver Mining Regions of Nevada. Such broad inexhaustible humor and good spirits, were surely never before combined with such powers of observation and description. Much valuable and quite novel information on these out of the way people and places is given; on the Indians and Mexicans; on the original discoverers and miners; on extraordinary natural phenomena, and wild and remarkable adventures; all in an unassuming strain of vivacity, sometimes not free from a trace of coarseness, and yet with no purpose inconsistent with good morals. The illustrations, novel, interesting and well executed, appear on almost every page. 12mo. cloth, bevelled, 535 pages, \$2. Lippincott.

DR CHAILLU, the African Explorer, one of the smallest of full grown men, says at the close of his new book, that he "will always be happy to call himself the boys' and girls' friend." There is a great heart in that small body, which can compass the perils and hardships of the exploration of the vast wilderness of Equatorial Africa, with its strange and monstrous beasts, and bring to light animals that had been lost to sight for eighteen centuries, and yet turn without effort to tell his story in the most familiar terms to "Young people." This last is the aim of his "WILD LIFE UNDER THE EQUATOR," just published by HARPER & BROS., and which with its numerous, large and spirited engravings, will prove one of the most charming of juvenile books. 12mo., cloth, gilt, bevelled edges, pp. 237. \$1.75. Lippincott.

CARLTON & LANAHAN.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD explained and applied, by Rev. Francis Bourdillon, M. A., is an American reprint of an English book—a sort of thing very common in the trade. And it has this merit—that it is well worth republication. The M. E. Tract Society have issued it in handsome shape, the print paper and binding being extremely well-suited to general use. It does not pretend to the scholarship of Trench's notes on the Parables, but in a clear, simple, earnest way, it gives all modern results. The author writes

tersely, often originally and always spiritually. Among many similar works this will never fail to attract notice, prove interesting and do good. 12mo. pp. 327.

THE GARDEN OF SORROWS; or, The Ministry of Tears, by Rev. John Atkinson, consists of nineteen essays, or, perhaps, meditations, on the sorrowful things of earth. The style of its composition is that of ordinary sermonizing—adapted more to the ear than to the eye. In consequence, it rather lacks condensation. It frequently causes one to feel that certain moral reflections were put in as "padding." It shows a straining after effect—not in the poetry, but in the introduction of it. And this effort appears, too, in the typography, for large and small capitals and italics are numerous. On the other hand, tinted paper and beautiful press work, as well as the real thought and true Christianity of the book will doubtless secure it a welcome in the homes of grief. 12mo. pp. 203.

RELIGION AND THE REIGN OF TERROR; or, The Church during the French Revolution—

from the French of M. Edmond de Pressensé, by Rev. J. P. Lecroix, A. M. M. de Pressensé's name is sufficient to stamp this history with approval even in an abridged and translated form. A careful thinker and keen student of times and men, he has taken a dark page of the story of Christianity and cast light upon it. From 1789 to 1802 there was an hiatus in our religious knowledge of France. Evil then came uppermost and it is concerning evil that we have been best informed. But underneath all, and in spite of false forms of faith, religion still survived. And although the record must be for the most part one of Romanism and not of a purer system, this record is calmly and fairly made. M. de Pressensé's love of liberty and love of France, have not interfered with his love for Christ, and he who would look upon that desperate struggle for human rights with a desire to know why it failed, cannot have a better guide. Out of such chaotic masses of right and wrong this skillful and enthusiastic author has built a structure which reproduces, for the first time, the inner forces of the conflict. And when we have added that the book in type and pages resembles a volume of "D'Aubigne's Reformation in the time of Calvin," we have said enough to bespeak purchasers for it. 12mo. pp. 416.

FROM SEVENTEEN TO THIRTY, is the Title of a Lecture addressed to the Young Men of London, by the venerable Thomas Binney, and here expanded into a small volume. It is a most delightful offering of Christian maturity, experience and sympathy to the young. It is based upon the history of Joseph, and it handles that precious portion of Scripture with freshness, spirit, and wholesome practical aims. Few more suitable books can be found to put into the hands of young men, going abroad into active life.

THE LITTLE CRIPPLE is one of Mrs. S. C. HALL'S Stories, illustrating and commending manliness in boys, especially as, enduring misunderstanding and as subjected to peculiar trials. It is printed in very large type and well illustrated, with a handsome illuminated cover. New York: Carlton & Lanahan.

THE STORY OF A DIAMOND just reissued by the AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION, relates much that is interesting and valuable about the private and social life of the Egyptians, and the difficulties in the way of missionary effort among them. It is presented under the form of a story of various adventures supposed to have befallen a diamond and told by itself, a device which must add much to its popularity with the children. 16mo., pp. 295. Illustrated.

FANNY LIGHTMAN'S CHOICE, by Mrs. MARTHA E. BERRY, is a temperance story just issued by the American Tract Society, New York. Poor Fanny Lightman, at a time of great religious interest, instead of coming out on the Lord's side, linked her fortunes with a reformed drinker, who also refused to make Christ his refuge, and the result was a life made wretched by the return of the husband to his drinking habits, after a very few years of sobriety. The lesson is a most salutary and needful one, and is presented in a way to interest and affect the reader. The book is handsomely printed and illustrated. 18mo., pp. 343.

J. C. GARRIGUES & Co., have added to their excellent stock of publications, "STELLA ASTON; or, Conquered Faults," by Mrs. C. Y. Barlow, already popular as the author of Helen MacGregor. It is a good book for the household, presenting traits of character which children will readily recognize as life-like, and holding up the only true Scriptural way of conquering faults. Beautifully printed and illustrated. 18mo., pp. 264.

NOTHING BUT LEAVES is one of Miss H. B. McKEEVER'S very best stories. It shows the contrast between pretensions, empty profession and the beautiful and powerful reality of humble piety. The story is skillfully constructed, the scenes varied, and the whole volume full of interest, especially to young readers. 16mo., pp. 232.

ELEANOR'S LESSONS, by Miss S. G. CONNELL, Author of "Carl's Home," is an original, ingenious and instructive story, the lessons being such as emphatically to reprove the hasty and censorious.