

Original Communications.

LETTER FROM WEST AFRICA.

GABOON, WEST AFRICA,
October 20, 1868.

DEAR BRO. MEARS:—I doubt not, the extreme hot weather that prevailed in the United States in July and August, when the last mail left, reminded you and many of the readers of the PRESBYTERIAN, of this Equatorial region, where, beneath a torrid sun, we are laboring to transform a portion of Africa's moral Sahara to a spiritually fruitful field, where the plants of righteousness may flourish and the Rose of Sharon bloom. In many respects it is a hard field, and a difficult and arduous work, that sorely tests the faith and patient endurance of those who have long "borne the burden and heat of the day" in a temperature ranging but little lower all the year, than that referred to during the hot days last summer. Although the sun seldom inflicts a fatal stroke here, and the willing, scorching influence of its rays is modified by alternate land and sea breezes, and frequently by a hazy atmosphere in the day, and frequent showers in the wet season,—yet it must be admitted that the continual heat, from month to month and year to year, with scarcely a perceptible variation, is debilitating, causing one to sigh for the tonic air, and even frosts and chilling blasts of a northern clime. These you will be enjoying when this reaches you.

Thus rapidly the seasons succeed each other, and the wheels of time roll the years around. Almost seven have passed, since my last interview with you, when, if I remember correctly, you asked me to write you after my return to this mysterious land concerning which you heard me speak at the Presbytery meeting in Delaware. As I take my pen to comply, at this late day, with your request, I am reminded of that meeting, where we consulted respecting the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in Christian and in heathen lands; not forgetting the welfare of our imperilled country, then engaged in a life and death struggle with slavery and rebellion. These were memorable times, that stirred to their depths the hearts of Christians and patriots, and incited to deeds of heroic faith and valor.

So deeply had I become interested in those scenes, during a visit to my native land, it was no small trial to respond to duty's call to return, and resume the moral warfare in this land, in which I had enlisted a score of years before. But confident of the final triumph of our glorious cause, on which depended the welfare of America, and, in a great measure, the redemption of Africa, I returned to her dark shores, from which, from year to year, I have witnessed the grand results that have followed: a crushed rebellion, a restored union, the emancipation of millions of bondmen, and their subsequent enfranchisement, and last, but not least, the suppression of the nefarious Slave Trade. With emphasis, may we say, "among the heathen," "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad."

The great things which God in his wonder-working providence has wrought in the United States, have a world-wide influence; but more especially have they a bearing upon the welfare of Africa, and upon her sable children on her soil, and wherever they may have been scattered and peeled among the nations. This influence for good is beginning to be felt, and will go on accumulating power, until Africa, throughout her vast domain, shall have been enlightened, and her down-trodden and despised sons shall stand up in their restored manhood, and occupy the place among the nations to which they were designed by the Creator, who hath "made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell upon all the face of the earth."

The abolition of slavery in the United States, and the suppression of the slave traffic along this coast, has already placed the native African in an entirely different position from that which he occupied but a few years ago,—different in the eyes of white men, and in his own self-estimation. Formerly he was regarded too generally only a little above the brute creation, and valued only in proportion to the price of human bone, and flesh, and sinews, at the slave factory on the coast, the slave mart in Cuba, or the plantation in America; and so long had he been depressed and chattelized, that to a lamentable degree he had learned to acquiesce in this view, and to consider himself only as the lawful prey of the white man. I never met with a practical slave trader who seemed to have any compunctions of conscience for trading in men, any more than in monkeys or goats; but now, even those who would gladly enrich themselves by the base trade, if they could with impunity, regard the matter in a different light; since they have no longer the moral influence of Christian, Republican America to sustain them; and the natives themselves have learned to look upon themselves as men, possessed of inalienable rights which even white men must respect.

No longer a commodity of trade himself, the native is beginning to develop the inexhaustible riches, in various valuable resources, of his native land, and furnish them to commerce, which is rapidly increasing, and is destined to rival that of the most favored portions of the globe. Thus the act of mercy and justice that has, may

hope, saved our beloved country from ruin, and dried up Africa's tears, and turned her wail of woe to thankful songs of joy, is reacting, by enriching the world. Not only do vessels from almost every commercial nation visit this coast to bear away her oils and gums, her dye-woods and India rubber, her ivory, and golden sands, but steamers are traversing her rivers and lagoons, and two lines of monthly steamers from Europe now pass up and down the coast, and the third is expected to commence its trips in a few months. And as under these auspices, together with missionary enterprises, Africa becomes known and valued for her rich natural treasures, multitudes of her scattered children and their descendants will return from their dispersions, laden with the knowledge and riches of other lands.

Thus God in his providence is favoring Africa and causing the fulfillment of prophetic promises, upon which her friends have trusted during her long night of weeping, lamentation and woe. And with this dawning of a brighter day, the Church is called upon to renew and increase her efforts, to cause the Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in his wings, to bless all her benighted tribes and nations. In the dark period of the past, amid perils and death, a few devoted pioneers, with martyr spirit, have planted the standard of the Cross at many points along the coast, from the northern tropics to the equator, and unfurled its peaceful banner over many interior wilds. There, as every where, the gospel has been the power of God and wisdom of God unto salvation to many. It has wrought wonders already, and is destined to triumph over Mohammedan bigotry, and the dark and bloody systems of superstition that prevail—to banish the bloody customs where human blood has flowed in streams; demolish juju altars and temples, lined and paved with human skulls; destroy the cannibal's savage appetite, and spiritually change the tiger to the peaceful lamb.

In a limited degree, all this has been witnessed as an earnest of its universal completion. But now all these missions are languishing through lack of men and means to carry them on, and prayer and faith to give them greatest prosperity. Will not Christians awake to the wants of Africa, and pray that Ethiopia may not in vain stretch out her hands unto God, and that the cry, "Come over and help us," from her toil-worn and weary missionaries may not longer be unheeded?

Fraternally yours in Christ,
ALBERT BUSHNELL.REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS.—XXVII.
White Pine District, Nevada, Nov. 1868.

SQUATTER SOVEREIGNTY.

This peculiarly American institution has already received several brief notices in my communications; yet would not a volume serve to exhaust all its curious and interesting developments. In its operations a series of amusing incidents are at this time occurring in the expansion of Treasure City.

It will be remembered that the United States Government claims an original title to all new and unsettled territory; yet offers none for sale until regularly surveyed. This has not yet been done in Nevada; owing, perhaps, to its location being so distant, its boundaries so extensive, or perhaps from the impression that the land is too valuable to pay the expenses of survey. Under these conditions, the Legislature of Nevada has exercised a kind of State Sovereignty and made quasi laws concerning land settlements; guaranteeing to the original occupant, that when Uncle Sam does come along with his claim, the squatter shall have the first refusal. Another law has also been enacted, authorizing any certain number of men to form a company, and wherever desired within the State, lay out a town or city and sell the lots, subject to the original jurisdiction of the United States. Such a company laid out Treasure City, and claims State authority to sell the lots.

A few days since, several hundred sovereigns imbibed the notion that Treasure City was about to become a large concern; and that if they were not Uncle Sam, they were at least part of the old Gentleman; and moreover, that Nevada laws and self-constituted committees for locating cities, were a humbug. Acting on these premises, a simultaneous rush was made for every vacant place called a lot in or near the embryo city. Presently a "Sovereign" could be seen on each space of ground, twenty-five by a hundred feet and claiming it as his by virtue of squatting—jumping, it is here termed. We betide the person who should attempt to interfere! Not only the individual squatter objected to, but all the squatters combined, would rise against the counter-claimant.

For days and nights together these jumpers remained upon their locations—a bare piece of rock perhaps—until they made improvements thereon, understanding that by this process their titles would be fully established. The word *improvement* is one of the most indefinite in our whole vocabulary. Some dug small ditches around their new premises; others laid rows of stones; some stuck in small stakes and drew a cord around—here was a hole in the ground, there a few boards, and yonder an old tent. These were all "improvements."

On the morrow after the location has been completed, the lot is offered for sale and soon has a purchaser. The buyer paying according to location from fifty to a thousand dollars in coin—money always in hand before the squatter leaves.

For which sum he gives his own individual sovereign quit-claim deed.

LAWLESS YET LAWFUL.

Here is a mixed multitude hastily thrown together, with conflicting interests, in a new and far distant section, almost without the semblance of civil officer or regular administration of statute law. Keen, active, intelligent, selfish, unsanctified; and each too independent and self-willed to be directed by his fellow. And yet there is order amid this confusion, with security of life and property; and no more outbreaks, or acts of encroachment or violence than in a similar number of our Eastern communities.

Five hundred voters were in the new city on Presidential election day, with five hundred more too recently come to vote. There was no mayor, sheriff, constable or police. Political matters ran high; yet no outbreak, no act of violence; no actual disorder occurred.

These things speak volumes in behalf of our American institutions. Those rugged, adventurous men are characterized by a ready obedience to law. There is a guiding power and influence which prompts and directs any number of Americans, when beyond the reach of former jurisdictions, immediately, without noise, bustle or confusion, and seemingly without effort, to put in motion all the elements of a Republican government; and to yield obedience to the powers that be, though no written law may designate their codes. Very hopeful this for our future as a people.

OH FOR GOSPEL LEAVEN!

The only element lacking in order to rank this mass of intelligent, open-hearted, energetic men in the highest scale which humanity has yet reached, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ with its convicting, converting and sanctifying power. Nor are there any more barriers between the ambassador of Christ and these strange, money-hunting communities than others—not even so many as in most. The minister of Jesus must however come to these men with the simple, earnest Gospel message—nothing else. Unfortunately, there is scarcely an important mining-camp in Nevada, in which the minds of the people have not been poisoned against the Gospel by professed ministers of Christ, coming as scientific men, as agents for Eastern companies, as prospectors or mine-brokers; and in order to help their worldly business, preaching occasionally. The Lord forbid this traffic in the Gospel. Even the true messenger of Christ on account of these things is at first looked upon with suspicion.

A. M. STEWART.

INSPIRATION.

I have long ago observed that the passage rendered "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c., has a Greek reading which omits the *axi* (and); and doing so, the original may very literally be rendered "Every God-inspired writing is profitable." Should the *axi* be retained, it may be rendered; "And every God-inspired writing is profitable," &c. Such a rendering will agree better with the punctuation given by Griesbach, which is entirely different from that in the common version, and it serves to connect it with the preceding verse: "In that verse the writer tells Timothy, that from a child he had known the holy writings, and then he adds "Every God-inspired writing is profitable." In this place our translators have more closely followed Bézä than the original. I find that the translations of the Vulgate, Erasmus, De Saey, the Spanish translation, and others agree with me. They had then, as we have now, writings which were not God-inspired. Those which were; whether the language was that of God; angels, men or devils, give us a true, faithful, God-inspired record: The record is true and faithful, whether that which is written is true or not. If the language is God's, it is true; if the devil's, it is like himself; if men's, it may be true or not, but in either case, the record is a faithful, God-given one.

In the New Testament, the expression is common, "That spoken through Isaiah" (Math. 8: 17, &c.); "Through David's mouth;" *διὰ σαμουηλ* (Acts 1: 16, &c.). *Διὰ*, with the genitive, denotes the relation of efficient cause: Man was the instrument, God the speaker. He spoke through the mouth of David, and through the mouths of the prophets, as a man speaks through a speaking trumpet, or as he plays a tune through an instrument. The player was the efficient cause, the organ the instrument. The tune is as really his, as if he had sung it. So, in Inspiration, the prophet was the instrument, God the efficient cause of the speaking and writing. Hence the Bible is God's word, and God's writing. Hence we are told of those holy men, that they "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Peter, 1: 21). The preposition used in the original is one which points out the agency or causation as the Spirit's. The Greek scholar will also observe that the word "moved" is not strong enough to express the force of the original.

Ordinary Christians are taught, illuminated, and it may be, directed by the Holy Spirit, but not inspired. They may utter great and glorious truths, but we cannot say the Holy Spirit speaks through them. They are not mere instruments of the Spirit.

Revelations were usually made to men in an ecstatic or pneumatic state: *En ecstasi, et in pneumatici*, are the terms used to express that state. It seems to be a kind of an electroid state.

We are told by scientific men, that everything in nature, even electricity, emits a something which is analogous to electricity—an electroid or magnetoid. Hitchcock says, "It is most manifest in powerful magnets; next in crystals, and exists in the human body, the sun, moon, stars, heat, electricity, chemical action, and in fact, the whole material universe. Those most sensitive to its influence are persons of feeble health, especially somnambulists; but it is found that about one third of individuals, taken promiscuously, and many in good health are sensible of it." There are parts of the earth where streams of this electroid have been constantly sent forth as at Delphi. "Sheep and goats coming near that particular spot were sensibly affected by it."

The ecstatic state appears to have been one in which the subject is more or less under the influence of this electroid—an electroid state. As Dr. Hitchcock states, some persons are more susceptible, or more easily thrown under its influence, than others. There are times when electroid derangements appear to be epidemic. Also times, places and circumstances appear to be productive of it. Thus the place where the tripod at Delphi was placed appears to have been certain to produce ecstasy. The mountains are more so than the plains; and where there was great subterranean chemical action than where there is none. When in the presence of ecstasies there were those who were liable to fall into that state, viz., Saul among the prophets.

When more or less in that state, the person becomes subject to the will of another, or is liable to become so. When in the electroid or ecstatic state, the ecstasies become the instrument, and the one with whom they are in rapport is the agent. When in that state, wicked spirits if permitted of God, would speak through them. Hence a wicked spirit, being permitted, became a lying spirit in the mouth of all of Ahab's prophets. The prophets of Baal, when calling on him from morning till noon, became so ecstatic that they prophesied.

The true prophets, when in the ecstatic state, were moved by the Holy Ghost; but false prophets were moved by fallen spirits. As there was a similarity in the ecstasy, the people were often at a loss to know whether a man was a true or a false prophet. As Baal had prophets who were really ecstasies, and spirits spoke through them, many thought Baal must be a God. In ecstasy lay the power of paganism.

As to the marked characteristics of style, &c., in different writers it may be said that, however ecstatic they may have been, there was always something of his identity to be seen in his writings, or in the Revelation made through him. So, the most skilful musician may play a tune on an organ, then on a piano or any other instrument, and you have no difficulty in distinguishing the instrument. The performer may be the same, the tune the same, and yet there is a marked difference between that played on the organ, and that played on some other instrument. No skill of the musician can conceal the instrument. So, though it was the same Holy Ghost that moved and spake through Peter, John, Paul and others, you have no difficulty in telling the one from the other. JAMES KERR.

TWO PARLORS.

I have been lately in two parlors, which left an impression on my mind, each in its own way. Not exactly as extremes, for I can imagine far greater contrasts in style than these rooms presented—but as each conveying in its silent language, a lesson to the heart that would receive it. Let me describe them.

In both these parlors, I chanced to be left alone long enough to look around me pretty thoroughly, and to deliberate upon what I saw. The first one which I will describe, was what would be called a very handsome room. The carpet was rich and soft—the chairs and sofas were comfortable in slope, and elegant in carving and upholstery—tables of marble and rosewood stood here, and there—a large mirror with rosewood frame hung above the mantel, and pier-glasses filled the spaces between the windows. Various smaller articles of beauty and value were scattered around—nothing was there which was common or offensive to refined taste. Heavy curtains fell from handsome cornices, and swept the floor with their rich folds. Good taste, order, and elegance prevailed. Yet I was not pleased.

Well, Dorcas, somebody says, then you must be hard to please, that is certain. What more would you have?

I will tell you what I would have. Two things—one of which is in my view indispensable, the other almost so. The first is LIGHT, the second PICTURES—good paintings if possible, if not, good engravings, photographs, something. But light, God's sunlight, is the *sine qua non* in my humble estimation. The parlor I have been describing was dark and gloomy. For a few moments after I entered, I could hardly see, any object distinctly, so little light was admitted through the curtained windows. It had no cheerful, home like, happy look. Bare walls stared at me on every side so blankly, that I longed to cover them with something that was pleasant to look at. I could not help thinking that any man who was able to furnish a parlor as this one was furnished, could surely afford a few good pictures of some kind. I wonder if he has the least idea how much more cheerful his parlor would look. Then if that excellent wo-

man, his wife, would let in a little of God's blessed light—she need not fade her complexion she is judicious—so that people can see her pretty things, (and the pictures when they come,) I, for one, shall be better satisfied.

I know that parlors, as a general thing, are not to live in; that up-stairs or out of the way somewhere, there is a cozy, comfortable little room where the family live—where their real tastes and habits are manifest, and where all that makes home is to be found. But still I would have the parlor attractive in its cheerfulness for those who come in from outside; and sublight and pictures are wonderful helps to this result.

But I must not forget that I spoke of another parlor. In this room there was no rosewood, not much marble, there were no bronzes, no handsome mirrors—the furniture was old-fashioned, though comfortable—the carpet was bright and pretty, but not costly, and there were no ornaments of much value about the room. I will tell you what there was, however, that was more beautiful in my eyes than all these things put together. The sun looked in at the windows, and was not forbidden; he was only restrained from too great boldness by a light curtain; and he touched everything with his gentle finger, and it smiled back at him. A vase of fresh flowers, though it was late in the autumn, stood on an old fashioned pier-table, and a basket of growing plants hung in one window. A number of engravings and photographs, with two or three fine old portraits, gave the walls a voice in the general welcome with which it seemed to me the whole room met me as I entered. Am I very hard to please, when all this suited me so exactly? In which of these two parlors would you yourself rather pay a visit?

And bear with me a moment longer, while I put in a word on a subject closely connected with this. I mean the custom of shutting out every ray of light from house where a death has taken away a member of the family. It may be well and suitable to darken the house at the time of the death and the funeral—it accords with the feelings of the mourning family, and with the hush and the shadow that is over the house, suspending many of its usual occupations. But to shut out God's beautiful light for weeks and months, making darkness and gloom to reign within, depressing every one who enters the doors, inclining the stricken hearts which are trying to return to their customary life, to look continually at the loss and the sadness, rather than to the tender mercies of the dear Father above, who afflicts only for our good—where is the propriety or the good effect of a custom which does this?

Especially is it unfitting, where the one whom God has taken was a believer in Jesus, and has gone to be with his Saviour in a home of bliss and glory. We believe he is far happier and better in that blessed world. We mourn for the loss of his companionship here; but would he have us, or would the blessed Saviour to whom he has gone, have us make the earthly home which he has left as dark and gloomy as possible?

Let us rather admit the cheering light of day—look up to the heaven whence it comes, and while we listen to Him who says, "I am the Light of the world," let us open our hearts and our homes to the material light which he has made to bless us. At all times, in sorrow and in joy, let us do this, and we shall be better and happier for it. DORCAS HICKS.

TAKE heed to thine own heart; there thou wilt find all evil; there only canst thou meet with God, and with all good.—Wm. Law.

Romanist.—The correspondent of *The London Times*, says in a recent letter from Madrid: "I believe the reaction is fully as much against the Roman Catholic religion as against the Bourbons." It is singular that the reaction against the priests is even stronger here than it was in Italy. There numbers of the priests were with the people, and joined in their processions and rejoicings. Many who were known to have been zealous in the American cause naturally abstained for a time from going out, or from taking any part in the public rejoicings; but as a whole, the priests identified themselves with the people. Here, as I have said, the reverse in the case, and I have not seen a single priest abroad since the movement began." This last statement must evidently be qualified.—The Government of China has recently restored to the Jesuits all the estates which were confiscated when they were driven out two hundred years ago. Their position then was high,—and with the increased value of this property, they have now become by this act possessed of incalculable wealth.—The Romanists are erecting in Canton a cathedral which is to cost \$3,000,000, and another quite as magnificent and costly in Peking. The Jesuits there are numerous, and adopt the full Chinese dress and habits. They shave the forehead, and not the crown, just as the Chinese shave theirs. Sir John Bowring says that Romanism stands a fair chance to gain possession of the whole country.—A statistical work, of some authority, recently published by M. Ch. Sauvestre, and entitled "Les Congrégations Religieuses," states the number of females in French convents to be ninety thousand, "more than before the Revolution." The same writer also says that two millions of children out of four are educated in schools belonging to these establishments. The number of converts is twelve thousand and four, according to the official statement of 1861.—The people of a certain parish in France were complained of for their lack of zeal in benevolent enterprises; to which they replied: "We have no priests to take the lead, and tell us how to act. Our priests are excellent men in their way, but they cannot step out of their routine."—The Court of Rome gave notice, through the Nuncio at Madrid, that it is opposed to the establishment of religious liberty in Spain. In return for the compliance, the populace burned the Concordat in front of the Papal Nuncio's Palace at Madrid.