

Original Communications.

LETTERS FROM THE HILLS.—II.

NEWCASTLE, PA., Sept. 13, 1869.

This manufacturing town is advancing in prosperity, as may be seen by many indications. Its position at the junction of the creek, canal and railroad give it considerable advantages as a centre of activity in the iron business. Its advance has been greatly retarded by want of capital. The first settlers were poor men, and the place had to fight its way up. This is the great need in most of the early settlements, here and farther West, and it is a want that will greatly retard the development of the whole country unless co-operation becomes general. That grand social invention of this century goes on the principle that "many micksles make a mickle," and uses the collected contributions to the best advantage, giving surety of increase. What folly for a town to set up no factory, or mill, or workshop, because no one man has money enough to start it, and the few who have money have it too actively engaged in their own business to be able to withdraw it and subscribe for shares! If, these who would expect employment in such a concern would first unite their savings, they would find that they had enough to start it, without waiting for the capitalist. Yet hardly a town in the West—there are some exceptions on the prairies—has had the enterprise to try co-operation.

Some of the new iron-furnaces erected in this region are queer-looking affairs. Instead of going straight up like a big square chimney, with a lid on top, they have a broad round collar, like a platform, built about six feet below the top. One new one at the entrance to the town has a steam fan, and in general, the whole business is now conducted with better apparatus and on a larger scale. The iron men complain that only those who mine the ore are making money at present in smelting and rolling.

Coal oil is still a profitable business in the counties north of this, because it is now a more regular and understood business, and less a field for gambling. There is still a good deal of chance in hitting on wells, and here spiritualist mediums do a lively stroke of business. A medium charges \$75 down, and say one thirtieth of the oil as his fee. If the enterprise fails he hears no more, and the public hears nothing. If it succeeds the fact is noised abroad over the whole region, and the fools who employ him multiply. Poor Johnny Steele is hauling oil from the wells to the station, driving another man's team. Yet he is not quite out of luck yet. When he started "to see the elephant" in our Eastern cities he gave his wife \$30,000 to get rid of her. Mrs. Steele held fast to this little sum, while her liege lord went through much larger ones, and now takes him back on promise of amendment.

After preaching yesterday morning for Mr. Wylie, I rode out some miles over the hills to Mahoningtown, where he was to preach in the Campbellite meeting-house. Mahoningtown is also on the creek, but not so favorably situated as Newcastle, and is much smaller. This summer it is sorely afflicted with chills. One lady told us, that in the three houses, of which her family occupied one, six had "the shakes" every day. Chills were unknown in this region until the making of the canal gathered a large body of stagnant water—a fact which must be regarded as one of the drawbacks of the canal system.

The little Campbellite church was well filled, largely by "the disciples" themselves. The hymn-book which we used was that compiled by Campbell himself, and revised by the more cultivated part of the denomination. It is now really a good selection of hymns, as such things go, although containing a fair share of doggerel. That the church belonged to the wing represented by Rev. Isaac Errett and *The Christian Standard*, was manifest, not only from the loan of it for Presbyterian preaching, but also by the presence of a harmonium. Mr. Wylie certainly gave them a good strong dose of sound Calvinism, and that on the point on which they are especially adverse to Calvinism—the work of the Spirit in regeneration.

As we drove back to Newcastle, Mr. Wylie pointed out the scene of his winter labors. In three of the school-houses along the road, between the two towns, he had preached four nights of every week, mostly spending the afternoons in visiting around the neighborhood and gathering in the people. Often the roads which he traversed were almost impassable with mud, and the weather most inclement. This, he it remembered, was volunteer work, in addition to supplying his own church in Newcastle. As a result, some forty-four persons were gathered into the churches, or are yet to join them. Of these, thirty-five are to his own church in Newcastle. The hundred church members—fifty Covenanters and fifty New School (or Free Churchmen)—over whom he was installed two years ago, are now two hundred, and are better trained in Christian activity and liberality than most churches. He now leaves them for a more western field, having accepted a call to the O. S. church at Bellefonte, in Centre county—a town about thirty miles from Tyrone, on the Pennsylvania Central road, and on a line of railroad connecting Tyrone with Sunbury. He will not withdraw from the Pittsburg Presbytery, how-

ever, until after the meeting of the Assemblies at Pittsburg, but expects to be at work in his new field by October first.

In the evening, as it was the day of special prayer for Reunion, a joint meeting of his and Dr. D. X. Junkin's congregations, was held in the place of worship of the latter. The two pastors presided, alternately calling on members of their respective churches to lead in prayer, and closing with exhortations to unity and peace.

Dr. Junkin's speech was the first that I had ever heard from him, and was certainly remarkable. He began by confessing that he had been so far opposed to union, that he had opposed with voice and pen—every plan previously proposed to accomplish it. [Your readers will remember what a warm friend of Union he was two years ago, when our correspondent classed him among the opponents of Union. We observed, however, that in an Old School man it is enough for him to say that he favors Union, though he oppose every plan proposed for its accomplishment, while a New School man, though he support every plan proposed, is called anti-Union, if opposed to any plan that might possibly be offered.]

Dr. Junkin had opposed Union because it had been urged on wrong grounds and proposed on wrong terms. It had been urged as a fulfillment of Christ's intercessory prayer, that they might all be one, but until he was ready to give up the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, he could not accept that interpretation, that organic [he meant outward] union was meant there. When he called attention to the blasphemy of the notion in the Philadelphia Convention, faces turned pale around him. He had also opposed Union because the old plans were saddled with conditions which would hinder the exercise of discipline on unsound members, and thereby revive the old quarrels of 1834-8. He did not wish to see General Assembly spewed out by city after city, as it was in those days. Not that he had ever regarded the great body of his New School brethren as unsound. He regarded most of them as all right on this head, and in particular, he was sure that his brother Wylie was as sound an Old School Presbyterian in theology, as he was himself. To make this Union sure, there must be no boasting. If New School kept saying to Old School: "You have surrendered to us," and Old School saying to New School: "You have come over to us," then all the mischief begins again. It is not in human nature to stand such talk.

The Doctor branched off into a dissertation on the Federal or Representative system, and danger of centralized government, which we recognized as sound democratic doctrine, but did not quite see the ecclesiastical bearing of. At first it sounded as pointing towards a plan for the confederation of all the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of the land, and, in time, of the whole world, into a great representative confederacy. Towards the close, it seemed to mean the reconstruction of the policy of the omnipotence of the Assembly so long adopted by the Old School. He warmed up here, until he was quite cordial. His New School brethren were sounder on this great topic, than were the majority of his own Church, and they would come into the Union pledged to the overthrow of the omnipotence of the Assembly. He closed his remarks with an exhortation to peace and union between the two churches in Newcastle, expressing the hope that the two would speedily grow to three or even four, as they might do in this very year, for joy for the restoration of the Union.

Mr. Wylie spoke mostly in the strain with which the Doctor closed. He pleaded for the promising field of labor in which he had found so much to do in the previous winter, and urged the establishment of a church in the field. On the various other fields around the city, there are equally promising fields, white for the harvest. Why should they be unoccupied? He trusted that this Union would not be used as an occasion for boasting. From that spirit the Assemblies had been wonderfully free. "My Church!" was a cry that had been a curse to many a soul, when set up as a motive for work. "My Saviour" was the true watchword; the constraining love of Christ the true motive. He was glad that his last act as a pastor in Newcastle was to address this meeting.

It was quite late before the meeting adjourned, and we were glad to know that a good many U. P. brethren evinced their interest by their presence. One elder of that body seemed much troubled with a refractory lady companion, who would sing hymns, although he got the book away from her two or three times.

ON THE WING.

AN OBITUARY.

Died, in West Philadelphia, on the 8th ult., after a short illness, in the fourth year of her age, Polly

She was a native of Africa, and, like thousands of those born there, she was captured, and was destined to perpetual bondage. She fell, however, into the hands of the Rev. Albert Bushnell, of the Gaboon Mission, by whom she was sent to this country, where she found, in this city, a hospitable home. Her gentle, innocent, winning manner, her quiet temper, and her sweet voice, secured for her, in the family where she was located, friends, who became greatly attached to her, and who cherished the hope that she would

have a long and a happy life. She had lost in a great measure, her slight acquaintance with her native language, but was making steady progress in acquiring a familiarity with the English tongue. She had no "original sin," nor was she guilty of any "actual transgressions," for she had violated no law, human or divine. Yet she sickened, suffered, and died—and died with no apparent evidence of a hope of a better life, or even of an existence beyond the grave.

Will some learned theologian explain why it was, under the divine government, that she was subjected to suffering and death; and how the fact that she thus suffered and died, can be reconciled with the idea of a just and benevolent administration? Why should she suffer at all? Why die? Why not have a recompense in a future state? And will some Old School divine, who teaches, as they did at Erievton fifty years ago, that all suffering is of the nature of penalty, for sin, and that death in our world has been always caused by sin, explain how it was so in this case?

THE ROCK OF THE CHURCH—IS IT CHRIST OR ANTICHRIST?

The Pope is a great personage, though often a very bad man, and always an unchristian potentate. He is a priest, and the head of a priesthood of unlimited extent; whereas the Gospel, instead of acknowledging a ministry, rejects it implicitly by the institution of one, entirely and irreconcilably different. Not do he and his exemplify the prevalence of Gospel influences. Under a Papal priesthood and hierarchy, all manner of evil things have found encouragement—formalism, superstition, fraud, corruption, crime. It would take a volume to inventory the abominations of the convent. The world has been flooded with enormities of every hue, from the poisonous fountain of the priestly office. Mammon was not more greedy, Lucifer was neither prouder nor more ambitious, and it would be hard to find a lost spirit more unscrupulous, than some of the wearers of the triple crown.

But these things, it is fondly said, do not affect "the succession." And as the Church was founded originally on St. Peter, descendible to his "successors," heirs, good, or bad, it is, of course, the same Church now as at first; the same under a priesthood and a papal hierarchy, as under the simple organization and ministry of the apostolic age. So they prattle.

Founded on Peter, was it? What makes you think so? Because Peter was the "curious and swearing" apostle, who showed his petrous solidity and firmness of principle by protesting, "I know not the man"? Probably this is not your reason. You think you have a better one in those words of the Saviour, "Thou art Peter, and I will build my Church upon this rock," the conceit being, that the term "Peter" is synonymous with "rock," and that the latter is introduced simply as a verbal alternative, to avoid the inelegance of saying, "I will build upon this Peter."

The whim is plausible, but it is only a whim, although adopted by some self-styled Protestant writers. Translation gives it all the grace it has. "Peter" in Greek is *Petros*. Let us keep for a moment to the word the Saviour used. Had He meant to take the Apostle personally for his foundation, He would doubtless have said so unequivocally, however inelegant; for He came to teach truth, not rhetoric. He would have said, "Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *Petros* I will build," &c. Instead of which He chose, for the latter avowment, quite another subject of predication, saying, "Thou art *Petros*, and I will build my Church upon this *petra*."—a cognate term, but of another form and sound, another declension, another gender, another meaning, too, in substance and force. At any rate *petra*, and not "petros," was to be the foundation rock. We have it from the lips of Christ Himself; and who shall undertake to amend His phraseology? Who dare affirm that by a feminine of the first declension He meant, not metaphorically but literally, a masculine of the second?

I will put a question to "the infallible church." Was Peter ever known or heard of by the name of *petra*? For if not, one thing at least is clear—it was not upon him personally that Christ proposed to build. And so, to all Romish interests, the point is settled.

But let us go a little further. There is a fact of great importance to be noted. *Petra*, which had never been appropriated to the apostle of the circumcision, nor applied to him in any way, was under full appropriation to his Master, ages before the church-building announcement was made. We see this all through the Old Testament in dozens of successive iterations; and the idiom descended into the language of the later Scriptures; evangelists, apostles, Peter himself, using it without reserve—the word of designation being never "petros," invariably *petra*. See Matt. xvi. 18, Rom. ix. 33, 1 Cor. x. 4, 1 Peter ii. 8. So habitual is this application of the term, that from being at first metaphor it becomes, as I have called it, idiom. I may almost say, that from being a figure of speech it becomes nomenclature. As a figure of speech it might have been applied to Peter; but the fact is, that it never was so applied. We consequently know, without the least artifice of construction, not only what the Saviour did not mean in the case before us, but also what He did mean. So that if the rock-pretensions of "His Holiness" will not die with one quietus, here are two—*Petra* does not mean Peter, and it does mean Christ.

Nor is the word synonymous at all with "petros." It is the regular name in Greek for a fixed rocky mass; whereas "petros," a word much less in use, means rather a rock-fragment, a piece of a rock, a stone. Lexicographers do not always enlighten us much. In the New Testament "petros" is never used for rock; *petra*, never for anything but rock. (Matt. vii. 24, Mark xv. 46; Luke viii. 6, Rev. vi. 15, 16) I will not affirm as much in reference to Greek literature at large without better means than I have at hand to reassure myself on that head, although I believe the New Testament usage in the matter strictly classical. Of Homer, the very best of the Greek classics, I can speak with some confidence. *Petros* occurs often in the great poet, and always, I believe, in the sense of fixed rock. (Il. v. 273, Od. 7. 293); "*Petros* is met with occasionally, as a stone used for grinding corn; a piece of marble; a pebble grasped with the hand, at any rate, a stone." (Il. 7. 270, and 7. 734).

Accordingly our version of the Bible gives us stone as the English of *petra*. Peter's first cognominal designation at the hand of his Master, and of which the Apostle John declares "*Petros*" a mere interpretation or equivalent in proper Greek; whereas "*Cephas*," was a word essentially foreign and barbarous, needing to be thus explained in order to being understood. "Am I asked," why Peter, with his unsteady character, should have been called a stone even? Because his confession indicated: (and as Jesus was well aware, indicated truly) that he had in him the elements of a new nature, corresponding measurably with that of his Divine Friend, and that he thus stood related to the great Author of spiritual life, as a rock-fragment is related to the mass it came from—a relation of once of origin and of quality, not discernible to common eyes, perhaps, but real, nevertheless, and rendering every way just, and meet: the glorious eulogy which his new name expressed.

As everybody knows, Christ Himself is sometimes spoken of in Scripture, under the metaphor of a stone. Generally as a building-stone; a corner or a foundation-stone; occasionally as a "stone of stumbling"; never, I believe, without some qualifying context or addition. And even then the word used is not "petros," but *lithos*. So that he is nowhere mixed up in ambiguity with the name given to the Apostle.

The case stands simply thus:

1. Christ does not say that He will build upon Peter.

2. He does assert the great evangelical fact that He will build upon Himself, "The Rock of Ages"; as just indicated by the Apostle's confession of His Messianic character.

3. He recognizes in Peter a relation to himself, as of "*petros*," to "*petra*," the secondary to the principal; the servant to the master; with the assurance added (needful to Peter's vacillating mind) that when the great edifice is up, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," an assurance which had the Apostle mistaken his own person for the intended basis of the Church, must either have passed his comprehension, or turned his head.

The wonder is, that an ecclesiastical society pretending to be Christian should persistently falsify that pretension by claiming to be founded, not upon the Author of Christianity, but upon a poor frail human being, full of infirmities. Peter and "his successors!" What a foundation for a Church! Happily Christ's people are His Church. And they are such for the precise reason that they are built upon Him alone. Can a Church be His that has a man for its foundation?—in other words, for its trust, its main reliance, its "centre of unity," so-called? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The "succession," too! another fond conceit. There are two difficulties about it. In the first place it is destitute of historical evidence; indeed, the evidence is all against it. Peter was never in Rome. Even Milan is obliged to concede the point. Much less did the apostle die there. And, in the second place, there is no agreement among historical antiquaries as to who was the first, second, third, or fourth bishop of Rome. It is a theme of utter confusion among them. And finally, if every other difficulty were got over, how could a Romish priesthood succeed as such to the office of a man who was not a priest?

I believe some of the Romish fathers gave countenance to what is now the Popish view of the subject; and that a story of Peter's having gone to Rome, and suffered martyrdom there, was manufactured by somebody in the way of "pious fraud," to give the thing a chance of being possible, or at least of being made "tradition" of, for after generations. But other fathers, such as Origen, Epiphanius, Hilary, Augustine, scouted the notion of the Church's being founded on the inconstant Apostle; regarding him as simply named after the Rock, whose presence in the person of the Redeemer, he confessed. "*Non enim a Petra petra*," said Augustine, "*sed a petra Petros; sicut nos Christus a Christiano, sed Christianus a Christo, vocatur.*"

H. W. W.

The moment a man gives way to inordinate desire, disquietude and torment take possession of his heart. The proud and the covetous are never at rest; but the humble and poor in spirit possess their souls in the plenitude of peace.—Kempis.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS, NO. XLIV. TREASURY CITY, NEV., Aug. 1869.

IS THIS A BARREN LAND?

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and the Lord has given it to the sons of men. His command to Adam, after creation, still binds his descendants: "Replenish the earth and subdue it." No portion of our globe but has some peculiar adaptation for supplying man's increasing numbers and wants. Twenty times the present number of inhabitants can be luxuriously supported upon our planet if rightly subdued. This "Great American Desert," as tourists and geographers are pleased to call it, will yet maintain, from its own productiveness, as many people as are now in the United States.

STOCK RAISING.

An item of sacred history in reference to this subject was to me a long and serious puzzlement. The impressions received from teachers, Bible commentators, lying tourists and stupid geographers, concerning the great Arabian Peninsula being that it was not merely a wilderness, but a desert, wholly devoid of vegetation and covered with rocks and scoria, and with burning, drifting sand.

With these impressions I read in Moses' history, that when Israel came out of Egypt, they brought with them into this same desert, "Flocks and herds, even much cattle." And after forty years sojourn therein, when ready to cross over Jordan, instead of all their cattle having perished, the same historian again records: "The children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle."

Now the puzzle was to understand how those immense herds of cattle not only lived but so greatly multiplied in such a region. Did they, with their owners, live upon manna, and take a occasional feast upon quails? Better information instructs us, that large portions of the territory over which the Israelites journeyed and encamped, consist of the same kinds of soil, and are covered with the same species of vegetation, as most of the Great American Basin, the Artemisia—Sage Bush—being the predominant shrub in both.

Experience is fast demonstrating that Utah and Nevada—vast territories, larger than New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania—are among the finest stock-growing countries on the globe. Here, horses, cattle and sheep not only live, but thrive and grow fat all the year round, without a handful of grain or barn feeding. Flocks and herds can be here multiplied to an almost unlimited extent. Shepherd days are returning.

A grass called Bunch grass, from the production of each root growing in a separate clump, is a favorite pasture, not only in its early summer greenness, but after drying on the stock in July; the rainless, dewless atmosphere preserves it like newly mown hay until winter.

White Sage is an abundant perennial shrub about two feet high; oily and pungent in its summer greenness; in which condition it is never tasted by cattle; but when the frosts of winter have unfitted nearly all other vegetation for grazing purposes, this plant is rendered soft and palatable by the freezing. In this condition horses, cattle and sheep become very fond of it, and as an article of food, it is healthful and nutritious. The snow in the great valleys never altogether covers this really pretty shrub, which is likely to prove of as much money-value to the immense State of Nevada, as all her rich silver mines. There is a sufficiency of it growing on millions of acres, as yet unreached by graziers, to winter all the cattle in the United States. Such are God's wise provisions and wonderful adaptations.

No marvel that but small developments have as yet been made in stock raising and farming in this boundless region of mineral wealth. A floating population has hurried here, with the hope of becoming suddenly rich, and never dreams of attempting the slow process of stock-raising and farming as a road to wealth, though both were never so inviting. A different population must come for these slower, surer, yet more profitable purposes.

One result from such a condition of things is that every thing eaten, worn or used is at a price as exorbitant as would make the ears of every Eastern housekeeper tingle. All payments are in coin. Potatoes fourteen cents per pound, all such things are sold by the pound—green fruits fifty cents per pound; eggs a dollar a dozen, and so on. The Overland route being such a government-propped monopoly, but little benefit in cheapening the necessities of life has as yet been derived from its completion. A. M. STEWART.

An English journal, commenting on an extract from *Blackwood*, says:—"It is open to a man to profess his faith now in society as unblushingly as his want of it, a change of even greater importance. Time was when to argue in favor, say of the possibility of revelation in a drawing room, would have been considered monstrous. Now men and women will listen and discuss with all the eagerness of tone and quick incisiveness of speech with which they of old would have discussed the prospects of a ministry or the march of a foreign army, with an evident thirst to hear, and to speak, and to know, which proves at least this,—that religion has become a subject of human interest. Formerly society treated it as something it was quite right to approve, but indecorous in the extreme either to attack or maintain. We are out of the cycle of indifference to religion."