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Our Correspondence.

Peaceful Conquests in the Track of Sheridan
GREAT NEED OF THE MASSES OF THE SOUTH
A THOUSAND CONVICTS AT CHURCH.
From Oroomiah to East Tennessee
ANOTHER SHARP LETTER ON WOMAN'S RIGHTS
John Chinaman in California
TWO GREAT MISTAKES IN RELIGION
Large Accessions to City Churches

THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

About the Freedmen, from one of them—"Light, more light!"—Sheridan's tracks in the Valley—The want of the South's Schools for the masses—Excellent Record of the Presbyterian Church—The work demanded of her to-day.

Our work among the Freedmen of the Shenandoah Valley, and other parts of Virginia, progresses satisfactorily. During the past autumn new schools have been opened, and the Bible and spelling-book made available to hundreds more of those, who hitherto have sat in the region and shadow of darkness. As rapidly as the circumstances will warrant, new fields are entered upon, teachers sent forward, and day schools and sabbath schools established for all who may choose to attend. At all of the principal towns in this valley, and at quite a number of the minor ones, has the work been inaugurated and great things done. The avidity with which the Freedmen avail themselves of educational privileges, is not only gratifying to the supporters of the mission, but foreshadows for the former a glorious and happy future. There is, perhaps, no instance on record, where an emancipated people have made such rapid strides in education, morality, industry, and, in fact, everything that leads toward elevated life. The one long and earnest appeal of the Freedmen, all through the South, is "Light, more light." Thanks to a generous, Christian philanthropy, born amid the nation's struggle with slavery, their cry remains unanswered.

Two years ago, the path to complete reconstruction and national tranquility, so far as the Southern States were concerned, seemed plain and straight. If the most casual observer can now travel through the South, from Virginia to Louisiana, and return settled in mind as to the accomplishment of the above result, he would certainly earn the right to be classed with those who have eyes see not, and ears hear not. I will not go so far as Mr. Garrison, and say, that "reconstruction is a bad failure," but I will say that it is not a complete success. Why? If for no other reason, simply because the measures adopted by Congress are insufficient, and such as they are, have been executed in so weak a manner, as almost to preclude the possibility of success. Tennessee, the mildest case of incipient rebellion, where is she? Georgia, the first to be instructed, and the first to go back on the very spirit of reconstruction. It is not enough that a tree be planted; it must, also, be "digged about," and cared for until it takes firm root.

The political power of the South is gradually settling back into the hands of the old leaders. In some instances this is not much to be regretted, for some of the later leaders are men skilled in every art of duplicity and cunning. At most, it is only a change from bad to worse.

It was Sheridan, I believe, who said that the war left the Shenandoah Valley so desolate that a crow could not go over without carrying rations. A visit through this valley, even at this day, helps one to realize what it was in '65. Along the main routes there is some improvement, but once off the railroads (what few there are) and the mountains, one is impressed with the idea that he has come up "just after a storm." We look in vain for those evidences of thrift and prosperity which might naturally be expected among inhabitants of so rich and fertile a valley as the Shenandoah. With a soil scarcely equaled anywhere for productiveness, certainly not surpassed, and with a climate mild, salubrious, and so healthy that one doctor will answer for a whole community, it ought to be a garden spot, teeming with plenty and happiness. Emigrants from the North and elsewhere are coming in, but as a general thing they are men of small means, and of so little force of character as to be unable to maintain their own, among the more numerous natives, and antagonistic principles.

What the South needs more than anything else, is schools for the masses. As a general thing, the wealthier people sustain very fair private academies and seminaries, and their children grow up pretty well educated. But popular education, in its widest sense, is a thing yet to be introduced and to find favor in this region. I have no idea what the legislature, even if the State should be

admitted to the Union during the present session of Congress, will take immediate steps toward the inauguration of a system of common schools. Those who would support such a measure, are in the minority in that body.

If our denomination does not seize the present opportunity of putting forth a strong effort for the education and evangelization of the colored people of the South, it will commit one of the grandest of blunders. The harvest is ripe. Thousands and tens of thousands are waiting to be gathered into schools and churches, and to be elevated to the dignity of Christian life. What church is so well calculated to take this benighted people by the hand, and lead them in the walks of Christian virtue? I say it with a feeling of pride, yet not boasting, that wherever I have traveled among the Freedmen, I have found the kindest feeling toward Presbyterianism. It is not a generally known fact, that the members of our faith, even in the South, in the days of slavery, were disposed to teach their servants to read and write. In nine cases of ten of those who possess these rudimentary arts, they will be found to have been reared in Presbyterian families. Even if they failed to teach their servants to read, they atoned for it by "catechizing" them without mercy. It is the general testimony of the Freedmen, that our denomination was more friendly toward them than any other.

Our work of evangelizing the Freedmen will not be unattended by difficulties. The first will be to get the Church awakened to a full sense of its magnitude and promise. The second will be the opposition we shall meet from other denominations already in the field. The third and greatest difficulty we shall find, will be to obtain suitable missionaries. The latter cannot now be had in the North, nor can they be had in the South, in sufficient numbers. The teachers of Gospel truth whom we shall send among this people, must be produced here on the ground. How? The Committee of Home Missions should at once take steps looking to the establishment of an institution somewhere in this State, in which there shall be a classical, theological, and normal department, whose special object shall be to prepare native young colored men for the ministry. From such an institution we could send out in an incredibly short space of time many who would perform well the part of pioneer missionaries, among their brethren. I do not believe there is any other practicable mode of success. Of course we shall be able to put a number of workers in the field at once, but the main body must be drawn from some such source as I have suggested. I feel perfectly confident that we could gather to us, in a short time, the best talent among the colored people of this State. Of course, this is not the time nor place to consider the details of such a plan, and I shall not now further enlarge upon the idea.

So far, our work in this State has been confined mainly to day-schools and Sabbath-schools. These, I am pleased to say, have prospered beyond expectation. We entered this State with the determination simply to do whatever our hands found to do. We found whole communities of Freedmen without schools of any kind, and for such we provided teachers. We found gangs of youth running wild on the Sabbath day, engaged in every conceivable form of dissipation. Such we have, in a great measure, wherever we have gone, succeeded in drawing into the Sabbath-school, organized them in classes for Bible instruction, and taught them the sweet songs of Bradbury.

So much for the past. What of the future? Shall we continue to move forward, or pause here? Let the Church answer.

O. M. WARING.

REMARKABLE COMMUNION IN JONESBORO, TENN.

Reception of Mrs. Rhea and her Daughter—Fruits of Parental Faithfulness.

Your readers may be interested in a scene which transpired in our newly repaired church, in Jonesboro, on last Sabbath. It was when we were about to sit down at the table of our blessed Master. It was a touching as well as a sublime and tender scene to all who witnessed it. The house was filled to overflowing. All the Christian people of our town were present. The spirit of union seemed to come to us, in its fullness, in the person of the Rev. Samuel Sparks, who is with us from Pittsburgh, on a visit to his aged mother. The young minister, Rev. P. D. Cowan, who assisted us in the meeting, preached on personal consecration, and most ably illustrated it by that fragrant and consecrated life commemorated in "The Tennessean in Persia." How appropriate for such a time! For then how welcome to her home and her childhood's church, the widow of that holy man, who, nine years ago, in that very church, led her to the

altar a bride, then to the distant land where he nobly served his Master and won his crown, gemmed with many stars.

It was our first Communion since Mrs. Rhea's return. She brought us a letter from the Mission church at Oroomiah, Persia. How near it brought that distant land, and how much closer to our hearts it drew that great work in which Mr. Rhea died. There is a humanity in the work of Missions, which when seen, brings it near and makes it more real. That communion season was one of peculiar interest. Two others were received by letter; and four young disciples stood up and named Jesus before the world. One of them was only eight years old—Annie Dwight Rhea. I thought there was one present not seen by natural eyes. He, at least, was there in spirit, who at Oroomiah, "every evening when the supper table was cleared away, would sit in his chair, with Annie on his knee, and talk about Jesus, always about Jesus." If all parents followed that example, would they not often hear their children saying in the simplicity of childhood, "I love Jesus"? Would not their minds and hearts be so preoccupied with Jesus that the world could not find room therein? You may well suppose that the Holy Spirit was with us on that Sabbath day. We gained a new baptism. We have continued the services through the week, and some souls have, we trust, been converted unto Jesus.

SABBATH MORNING IN THE OHIO STATE PENITENTIARY.

A THOUSAND CONVICTS DECENTLY WORSHIPPING—WHAT THEY ARE TAUGHT AND HOW THEY SING—TERMS SHORTENED FOR GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

The Sabbath services in the chapel of the Ohio State Penitentiary, witnessed this morning, seemed to me worth recording for your readers. Over one thousand men, clad in the prison uniform, marching in from the cells in companies of thirty to thirty-five men, with a keeper to each company—convicts serving out their various terms of imprisonment, some for a greater and some for a less period, sixty-five of the number for their lives—all quietly and submissively seating themselves to worship God, was a strange and wonderful sight.

The chapel is a long, L-shaped room, the pulpit being at the angle of the room, and immediately opposite it. The prisoners file in and are seated upon benches running the entire length of the room, the keepers being perched upon high arm-chairs overlooking the whole assembly. Some twenty minutes were occupied to day in seating this vast throng; and from the seats set apart for visitors, the writer had the opportunity of studying the physiognomy of the men, who sat in long rows, facing him. How his heart was moved with pity, with charity, as he noted the want of education manifest in the countenances of the large majority of these convicts! Some, it is true, bore marks of intelligence, and my thoughts wandered in the contemplation of the mystery that enshrouded the history of such to be found in this company.

The services commenced by singing the hymn:

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine."

Each of the convicts drew from his side-pocket, on the announcement of the hymn, the hymn-book used in the prison, and turned to the page announced by the chaplain, Rev. A. G. Byers, who read the verses in the most touching manner. The organ was in charge of a convict, who presented the strangest anomaly of them all. For there, seated in his prison trowsers and jacket, he played with all the expression and feeling necessary to give effect to the beautiful music adapted to the hymn. After his voluntary, at a signal from the chaplain, the convicts arose en masse, and led by a very fair choir of their own number, sang as though it did them good. When they had finished, the chaplain announced the morning lesson, and read in a clear voice from the third chapter of Exodus, imparting to each sentence the pathos demanded by the sentiment, particularly in the closing of the seventh verse: "for I know their sorrow,"—pausing to show these poor men, bereft of hope and shut out from their friends and the world, forbidden even to speak to one another by the regulations of the prison, that God the Lord knew their sorrows.

Passing on to the reply that the Lord made to Moses, when asked who he should tell the children of Israel he had seen and talked with—what was his name—"Then shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you"—the most wonderful of all of God's names, "I AM," he left the sentence unfinished, said to the chaplain, that you may realize that He is whatever you pray that He may be, to you, in your dark and sorrowful position; and then he read the beautiful lines:

"When God would teach mankind His name,
He calls Himself the great 'I AM,'
And leaves a blank where Christians may
Insert those things for which they pray.

The meaning is as if he said,
'I Am' thy life, though thou be dead,
If thou art weak, thou need'st not fear,
'I Am' thy help, and 'I Am' near.

Dost thou because of sin repine?
'I Am' thy God who saves from sin,
Although thy footsteps wandering rove,
Come, taste my mercy—"I Am' love.

If thou art dark, 'I Am' thy light;
If thou art blind, 'I Am' thy sight;
And when distressed, 'I Am' indeed
A present help in time of need.

Art thou compelled to take the field
Against thy foes? 'I Am' thy shield
And thine exceeding great reward;
Depend on me—"I Am' the Lord.

'I Am' to those who on me call
Their Lord, their Saviour, and their all,
Their consolation and their peace—
'I Am' thy Lord and Righteousness."

After a devout prayer, couched in the most simple language, adapted to the understanding of the convicts, closing with the Lord's Prayer, in which many joined in an audible voice, the second hymn was announced:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

This was sung as before, excepting that the convicts remained seated.

The text was then announced:

"Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

The simplicity of the plan of salvation was brought to the minds of the most decorous, attentive audience that we have ever beheld. Mr. Byers has the most happy faculty of adapting his language to the most limited capacity, and by stories of home and of children, he caused the truth to touch the hearts of many of those hardened, benighted men, whose eyes were at times moistened with tears, which their remnants of handkerchiefs were ever and anon brought forth from their striped shirt-fronts to stifle.

Among other things, he said, the plan of salvation was so simple, that wise men could not understand it—they wanted to know the reason of it, and how it could be done. Said he: we do not read of the blind man, when Jesus took the clay and the spittle and put it upon his eyes—we do not read of his saying he would like to understand the philosophy of the remedy—how it was to cure his blindness. No; he wanted to see, and he did see, and did not stop to have explained what the effect of the clay and spittle was to be upon his eyes. So with the Saviour. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Simply come to Jesus, and be saved.

After the conclusion of the sermon, the familiar Sabbath School song and chorus, "Battling for the Lord," was sung in fine style and with much spirit by the entire audience, the whole closing with "Home, home, sweet, sweet home!"

After the benediction, the warden of the prison took the pulpit and announced to the convicts the names of those whose term of service expires during the month of December. By the laws of Ohio, a deduction of fifty days for each year of the sentence is made for good conduct, and so a ten-year's sentence would be lessened five hundred days, and so on. The joy to some of the convicts was unmistakable; for they lose their reckoning in this dark place—and some were evidently unprepared for the quick expiration of their sentences.

Those convicts who are the recipients of the full deduction for good conduct, also have 10 per cent. of their earnings while in prison paid to them in money on their discharge from the prison.

The Ohio State Penitentiary is not only self-supporting, but, as the writer learned upon inquiry, the receipts for labor exceed the expenditures \$27,000 per annum. The establishment is under the excellent supervision of Colonel Burr, assisted by the chief clerk, Mr. R. S. Duden, for whose courtesy and attention your correspondent returns his grateful acknowledgments. The sub-officers and guards number sixty three men. There are only thirty-four female convicts in this large number of more than one thousand.

The chaplain is appointed by the Board of Inspectors, who are State appointees. His arduous duties consist of the public service in the chapel, on Sabbath, and the daily visiting of the prisoners in their cells, or in the hospitals, for religious advice and information. Only four really sick men were in the hospital—some eighteen or twenty embracing the whole number of convicts under medical treatment. The teachings of this day will never be forgotten by the writer, who hopes the recital of them may cause a new interest in the prisoner in the hearts and prayers of your Christian readers.

H. D. M.

Columbus, Dec. 1869.

CITY ITEMS.

—The Dedication Week at Oxford Church has closed. It was a memorable occasion and auspicious of a glorious future to that church and neighborhood. Large audiences assembled; grand discourses were preached by Drs. Storrs and John Hall and Bishop Simpson; the social and musical services were held as announced; a couple of wedding parties, not on the programme, were generously thrown in; between four and five thousand dollars were contributed towards the payment of the debt, and a total of \$22,500 was raised from premiums on pew rents; so that there remains but little more than \$20,000 of liabilities on property, worth nearly ten times that amount. The services of last Sabbath were especially interesting. In the morning the place was filled with the Oxford congregation. At night Dr. Newton preached to children. His reception was an ovation. The place was crammed to overflowing. The family of the pastor itself was unable to get admittance, and worshipped in a neighboring church. Twelve hundred persons, it is supposed, were in the building. The union prayer meeting of Saturday was of a most encouraging character, inasmuch that it was recognized as the beginning of a more general movement for good. A Union prayer meeting for the northwest of the city was organized, which will be held every Saturday afternoon at four o'clock. The next meeting will be at the Central Congregational church, Rev. Dr. Hawes', at 15th and Mt. Vernon Sts.

It may be proper to say here, that the first step towards building the outward edifice,—the purchase of the ground—was taken by the present pastor, Mr. Robbins, as far back as 1863, and it was made from funds exclusively in his own possession, in consultation with Alexander Wildin. Afterwards, the pecuniary aid of Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Wildin was rendered in building the chapel. It seemed necessary to the truth of history to put these statements on record just at this time.

—Sixteen persons, nearly all by profession, united with the Union church, Thirteenth St. below Spruce, Mr. McCorkell pastor, last Sabbath. It was the most largely attended communion season in five years, and the usual collection for the poor was double that of former times. The pastor will preach a discourse commemorative of the conclusion of five years' of his pastorate on next Sabbath. This church, although singing Rouse's version, is among the most advanced in Reunion sentiment, as it had the editor of a late very radical New School paper to preach last Sabbath evening.

MR. HAMMOND'S LABORS IN CINCINNATI.

These have been in progress now for more than two weeks. The Spirit of God has been abundantly poured out in connection with them. The effect of his preaching and of the personal work following, upon the children, and afterwards upon older persons, has been seen in hundreds of conversions. The daily morning prayer meetings, always the most delightful of all Mr. Hammond's services, are attended by nearly a thousand people, and the Herald says of them:

"The requests for prayer, the reports of the work in the churches, the brief exhortations and the sweet singing, make the hours pass like minutes, so heavenly is the atmosphere, so delightful the spirit of Christian unity and love."

Most encouraging signs of the Divine presence appear, in connection with the labors of others, in the city and vicinity. At the exercises in the County Jail, held by members of the Y. M. C. A. on Sunday, December 12th, forty persons asked for prayers. At the new Work House Chapel, opened the same day, after Thane Miller and others spoke, fifty of the one hundred and sixty inmates asked for prayers. Twenty-one persons, mostly by profession, were admitted to the Central church. At the church in Newport, which previously numbered but sixty-five, forty-five were admitted, thirty-seven on profession. This is good news from a city, which is confessedly one of the neediest of revival influences of any in our land. The work is still going forward with power.

THE DOUAY BIBLE.

A correspondent sends us the following inquiry:

PHILADA, Dec. 20, '69.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Will you please inform your readers whether you are willing (if a majority of the School Board should so decide) that the version of the Bible known as the Douay Bible should be read in our public schools.

Yours Resp'y, D.

ANSWER.—We are more than willing that the children of Roman Catholics should read in their own version, and that our proportion of school-tax should go to furnish the books.