The Pittsburgh Gazette.

TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES P. McDEVITT.

Written on the Anniversary of his Death, October 26th, 1868.

BY M. CODY.

The October winds are wailing
A requiem soft and low.
O'er the grave where we laid him,
Just one—one year ago.

Ah! what saddening memories
Throng my brain to-day;
The past, the past, with his death scene,
Ah! it cannot fade away.

Methinks I see the sunset's glow,
The waning crimson light;
Oh yes! the silent passive hours
That ushered in that night.

With what painful gushing anguish,
Biding the dreaded time!
We knelt around his dying couch
Till rang the midnight chime.

Oh! the thrilling, sacred silence,
That reigned that lonely hour;
As Death, the impartial Angel,
Wielded his mystic power.

The calm smile split the face,
The spirit sweetly fled;
Still methought he was but sleeping—
Ah! Nay, he is not dead!

But now the bitter, bitter truth,
Comes bearing to my mind;
The vacant chair, the cheerless hearth,
His words, his deeds, so kind.

A truce to shared memories,
In silence calmly rest.
Only pray my brother's spirit
May mingle with the blest.

LETTERS FROM MRS. SWISSHELM.

NUMBER THREE.

[Correspondence of the Pittsburgh Gazette.]

The First Steps on the Road to Ruin.

In a series of "Letters to Country Girls," published in "*The Saturday Visiter*," (now, Mr. Printer, please do not make that Visitor; I called my paper "*Visiter*" on the authority of good old Dr. Johnston, and repudiate the modern orthography of the land, notwithstanding the fact that Webster, Worcester and ten thousand other wise men have given it the prestige of their sanction.) Well, in "Letters to Country Girls," published about the year '48, when I knew as much of this world, and the people who live in it, as the majority of farmers' wives, who have been brought up and always lived in the country. I told the girls it was quite ridiculous to be afraid of the seducer's arts; that no one could possibly injure them until they had first injured themselves; that, so long as they themselves did nothing wrong, they were entirely safe. In making this statement I but said what I believed, as firmly as I did, and do, the doctrines of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, for side by side with them, and running all along through them, I had, from early infancy, been taught to think that purity of heart, and its consequent propriety of speech and behaviour, were to all men what the white wand and gold ring upon it were to the sons of Erin in the days of chivalry.

To believe in the omnipotence of righteousness was a part of my religion, and, in my mind, Una could never be separated from her lion—Truth was always attended by irresistible power—but I have looked into too many faces and heard too many histories, in the past twenty years, not to know that I have lived a wild enthusiast, and that the most fearless courage stands most in need of the guardianship of caution. I have learned to believe that a larger proportion, if not a majority of the women who become terrors to themselves, and the communities in which they live, have been plunged into an abyss of shame as inadvertantly as the traveler who steps over a precipice into a chasm filled with snow. The road is all fair, and soft, and white, and no indications that, at that particular point, the foundation will oppose no obstacle between him and distruction. Just as ignorantly, just as innocently, do thousands of women step from the firm path of virtue into an abyss of despair; and fall, like Lucifer, never to rise again.

Let those who doubt this, call to mind the case of the Pittsburgh lady, second to none in point of purity, who was dragged out from behind a counter of a lighted store, from the protection she had claimed of its proprietor, through our lighted streets, kicked, pounded with a bludgeon, in presence of a crowd, by fellows in the uniform of our police. Does anybody know any good reason why any ruffian might not put on a blue surtout, cap and badge, and drag any woman off, to any den, while our order-loving citizens should each go his own way and mind his own business. If the pretended police could pursuade the victim that she was in the hands of the law, and that it was useless, and undignified to shrink or struggle, he could take her along without even the escort of boys, who would, otherwise, learn her destination. Many people thought this lady very imprudent for resisting; but, by that resistance, she secured herself against being taken to any place worse than a common prison, or receiving injuries which can result in anything more than death. I never believed it was the original intention of those men, and their employer, to take her to the lock up, or that she was the first respectable woman who had been picked up on the streets. Others have been taken, they knew not whither, until such knowledge came too late.

Scarce a week passes but we have the record of some confidence game by which men are robbed of money in open day; but the hundreds of confidence games by which women are robbed of more than life, are among the incidents which seldom get into the reporters books, for the reason that the only persons who should be interested in exposing them, are made by the face of public opinion, to feel, that they, of all others, are most interested in concealing them. That unjust and cruel law, made by women, which "devotes to the infernal gods," every woman who ceases to be a virgin, without the sanction of some statute made by some Legislative body of men and baptised "marriage" has the effect to make women conceal an outrage of which they may be the victim, as carefully as sins in which they were willful transgressors; and, consequently, the arts of the ravisher contribute more victims to the list of prostitution than those of the seducer to which most are accredited.

I know one woman, in the upper walks of life, who was once engaged to be married to a man of equal position, a *gentleman* noted for urbanity, with manners and motions, polished as a mirror and graceful as a cat. As all parties were agreed to the match, their engagement was quite public, he often saw her alone, and in her father's luxurious parlor, he thrust his kerchief into her mouth and outraged her person. Her first impulse, to rush to her mother, he restrained by forcedly detaining her, with her mouth effectually closed, pleading his love as his excuse. The short time that would elapse before this, their marriage might be made public, and the uproar she would cause, as three were strangers in the house, who must know all, unless she were reasonable. The strangers in the house, and the fear of that terrible shame secured her silence, when he released her; and that hour past it became impossible for her to tell her wrongs, without incurring suspicion. When he ceased to fear exposure he threatened her with it unless she would meet him alone; but, from the moment of feeling his ruffian power she watched him, with such a shuddering horror, that she not only risked his threats, but more carefully her secret lest her father and mother should attempt to coerce him into marriage. The dread of exposure had became greater than that of death, and had it not been counterbalanced by her dread of him, she must have gone the downward road. The courage which carried her through that ordeal was surely greater than that which enables a man to face a battery; but she was only sensible of cowardice, and personal pollution. I think I was one of the only three persons who ever knew her wrongs, and they were told to me in the hope that, at some time, I might use the story as a protection to others. When I first knew her she was prematurely old, with a crushing rush of degradation, and with the feeling that, in failing to expose him, she had possibly been accessory to the ruin of others, as he had been reported engaged to a half dozen after her marriage with him was known to have been broken off.

She had outlived the days of emotion and tears, and settled into a quiet sadness very much like despair, which was attributed to disappointed affection; but was, in reality, a consciousness of degredation—a desire to get away out of a body she felt was not a fit habitation for her soul, and to lay down the mask of deception she had worn so long. She said, with her hands lying listlessly in her lap, looking out, with an introverted gaze:

"I have looked, a thousand times, at lost women on the street proclaiming their disgrace and felt that I ought to be with them, that I had no business here. It hurts me when father or mother kisses me, and I think I ought to go and stay with people like myself."

It was a strange study to note how the tempter availed himself of her misfortune—the weakness of concealment, and the probable disbelief, doubt, scorn and ridicule which would be the result of disclosure, and framed out of them arguments in favor of self abandonment. He never succeeded in this case; but taught me to understand some of his tactics, and gave me a new insight into "the first steps" by which women go down to death. One who should fall, after being thus violently cast down, would surely be an object of compassion, and society should be as careful about closing the door against the erring, as a shepherd about locking up the fold while a portion of his flock are out in the paths of wolves. As there is danger in bringing an infected member into a fold, it is often unsafe to bring a fallen woman into a family; but there can be no good reason why there should not be a Christian Home where they could be safe until they could give evidence that they can be restored to society with safety to others. Then, let their sins be forgotten, even as we ask God to blot our transgressions out of the book of His remembrance.

JANE G. SWISSHELM.

The Alabama Claims.

A Washington dispatch gives the basis of settlement as follows: A Commission of three is to be appointed, two from Great Britain and one from the United States, which is to meet in Washington at as early a time as practicable. There are also to be two agents who will represent the interests of each Government as attorneys therefor.

The Commission is to receive all claims for damages, alleged to have been done by the Alabama, and to decide upon them, and whenever they are unable to agree on a case they are to select an umpire, or arbitrator, from among the friendly sovereigns of Europe, whose decision shall be final.

All claims are to be presented within six months after the meeting of the Commissioners. They are to adjudicate all claims within one year, and the money to be paid on each and every case shall be paid within one year from the time of decision. Both Governments pledge themselves to accept the decision of the Commissioners as a finality.

These are the main points already agreed on, but there are minor details which are yet to be settled. The question concerning the recognition of the Confederate States as a belligerant power is still pending.

Another dispatch says: It is said that the British Legation has at length produced a bill against the United States Government as an offset to the Alabama claims, amounting to $45,000,000, being for damages alleged to have been sustained by British subjects in the South during the Rebellion.

Still another states: There is quite a row in the Cabinet concerning the conduct of Reverdy Johnson in the management of the Alabama claims. President Johnson is entirely dissatisfied, while Seward insists that Reverdy is carrying out his instructions to the letter. There is a rumor to-day that the President has determined to recall Reverdy. But this probably, grows out of the difficulty known to have occurred in the Cabinet yesterday.

Spanish Politics.

At last a step is taken in Spanish politics that goes far toward supporting a republican form of government for that kingdom that was promised when Isabella was overthrown, but that has since been in hot discussion. An election for the Cortes has been ordered on the 15th of December, and the Cortes, so elected, is summoned to meet four weeks later. The Cortes has to this time held legislative power conjointly with the Crown. It is divided into a Senate and House of Deputies, both equally independent. The Senators have been appointed by the Crown for life in unlimited numbers, whereas the deputies were nominated by electoral juntas at the rate of one deputy for every 50,000 of the population, and hold office five years. The House of Deputies could be dissolved by the Crown at will. We have not seen that any change has yet been made in the style or rate of election, and as this could only be effected legally by a change in the organic law not yet attained, it is probable that the coming elections will proceed on that basis. Their importance will consist in the freer agency of the popular will, and in the work that will be transacted by a Cortes so elected, when the conditions of the country have been so radically altered. If the Liberal feeling succeeds, the Spanish executive may, after all, be a President.

Modern Warfare.

The war demonstrated the inefficiency of wooden vessels, and stone or brick forts, under the concentrated fire of heavy guns. Hence the necessity of iron-clads and monitors, and the abandonment of unprotected fortifications, except against light artillery, or for purposes of temporary defence. The recent target firing at Fortress Monroe proves further the impossibility of erecting any kind of works which shall be proof against any well-directed shot from heavy guns, as well as of building heavily plated ships so as to withstand the same kind of fire. We read that two plates of iron, each a foot in thickness, resting against solid masonery, were shivered into "smithereens" by one shot from a 500-pounder; while one on the other side totally demolished the target. What, then, must be the effect of such a shot direct upon the ten or twelve-inch iron of one of our iron-clads? It is plain that but two means of avoiding destruction are presented. The one is the presentation of such a surface as to avoid a direct shot, as in the revolving turrets, and the other in presenting no target surface at all, which is aimed at in our sunken and almost concealed iron ships of latest pattern.

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