

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

California Correspondence.

Petaluma, Cal., Dec. 14, 1864.

DEAR BROTHER,

Through the kindness of Brother L. R. Shaw, of Windsor, N. S., who is a very worthy and devoted member of the First Baptist Church here, of which I am pastor, I am favored occasionally with copies of the Messenger, and it gives me much pleasure to see it and welcome it as an old friend, and many a time its pages contain letters from parties with whom I am acquainted, and from localities that I visited when traversing your Province as a Temperance lecturer several years ago. Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians will ever be remembered by me with pleasure and gratitude, and many a time I refer to the zeal of your people in sustaining good works, when anxious to stir up those who are negligent and indifferent in moral and religious duties. That your zeal for the cause of the Redeemer and everything of good report may increase more and more is my prayer.

As I was more particularly identified with the Temperance cause when in Nova Scotia, my Temperance friends will feel anxious to know what I have to report of that Great Reform. The Temperance men of Pictou County, Cumberland, Colchester, and some seven or eight additional counties of your Province, will bear witness that I endeavored to advance that cause when in your country, and that I loved to talk, and write and work for Temperance, and I believe my labors were blessed of God to many families, and the public at large.

I have been in California four years, and have had a full experience of California life. Few men in the State have seen as much of the State as I have. For three years I travelled as Grand Lecturer of the Sons of Temperance, and lectured in thirty-four counties of the State. Experiencing all the changes of climate peculiar to the country, sometimes in the sandy valleys, sometimes in the snowy mountains, at times on the sea coast, again far in the interior. The cause of Temperance has many warm faithful friends here, but the peculiarities of the country, the restlessness and changeable disposition of the people, who are continually on the move from place to place, and the mixed morality of many is much against the success of societies. The cause is represented here by the Sons of T., the Dashaways, and the Good Templars, and they are all doing well, and have all accomplished much good. Yet, after all, there is a vast amount of dissipation, especially in the towns and cities, where drinking saloons and gambling halls are in full blast all the time, day and night, Sunday and weekday all the same. Their light is ever burning to lure to death the foolish and the desperate. As a general thing the slaves of sin and hell commence by foolishly going in the ways of evil, but soon vice fastens on them, and they become desperate in following their destroyer. They rush to damnation with a wildness and recklessness that is appalling. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death." Many a noble young man has, in this State, had reason to thank God that he, in your Province, or elsewhere, became a Temperance man before leaving home. Temperance principles have been blessed of God to the preservation of thousands who otherwise would have ignobly perished here. Thousands and tens of thousands of those strong-minded young men who used to tell their friends that "there was no fear of them, that a moderate indulgence in strong drink was good and safe," have died in the ditches, dens, and hovels of California, wrecked in body, wrecked in mind, wrecked in soul! Blasted, withered and doomed they were, because they imagined themselves strong enough to tamper with the monster that has slain the mighty of men by millions. Let the young men of Nova Scotia beware how they play with the poison drinks.

California is an excellent field to test a man. All that a man has of physical, mental, moral and religious strength, will be put to the full test ere he is long in this State. Those who come here with a mere profession and form of religion, and have never had the great work of regeneration performed in them, stand about as long as chaff before the wild tempest. They are soon swept away and we hear no more of their professions. The tide is too much for unaided human nature, anywhere, and particularly so in California. If a man leaves Halifax with a genuine piece of gold in his pocket, that gold will not become dross in California, nor even in fire. And so with regard to religion,—true religion is the same everywhere, but it is not so readily tested in localities where formality and custom often cloaks over a cheat and a deception.

The cause of Jesus Christ has been making slow yet sure progress in this State. The people are gradually becoming more favorable to Sabbath observance and the support of churches, and in time there will be a people here who will give glory to the Lord. The Baptist cause is steadily growing, and during the last season we have received additional help from abroad, and the work goes on.

The Evangel of San Francisco, the organ of the Baptists, will inform you from time to time how the work is advancing. Several ordinations recently took place, and new churches are being established here and there. In this town—a place of about the size of Pictou—we have six churches. The Baptists have one of them, and have the best place of worship, with a membership of about 40. The war affects the public mind here, and has troubled some of the churches. Those strange creatures, the Copperheads, are here too, and they abhor loyal men. We had to expel a dozen of them here last Spring, because of rebellious, disorderly conduct, and the Copperhead rabble threatened to burn our church, and kill the pastor, and raise trouble generally; they went so far as to mob our church and take away our Bell. But the Union people put the Bell back again, and since then the church building has not been molested. On the night of Sabbath, 17th July last, at midnight, my cottage windows were smashed in with great stones, and my wife and myself came very near being struck on the head. This was the work of Copperheads and Secesshers. This is the way Jeff. Davis & Co. treat British subjects in Cal., who seek to obey God, and pray for the Government under which they live and are protected. You had better believe it, Brother, none of the Nova Scotians or Canadians in California are in favor of Jeff. Davis & Co. We here see the rascality of the fellows fully. The Copperheads and rebels of California are composed of the scum and scoundrelism of earth, and they have murdered several men in cold blood since the election, merely because they voted for Abraham Lincoln. I honestly say that I do not know a Christian in California who is not loyal to the U. S. Government. The very worst men here are Copperheads and sympathisers with Rebellion, and with "the sum of all villainies"—SLAVERY.

Sonoma County, of which Petaluma is the chief town, is called the South Carolina of California. This State in general is loyal, and gave a majority of more than eighteen thousand for Lincoln and Johnson.

Nova Scotians can never be thankful enough for the blessings of peace, and for freedom from the disturbances that here distract the public mind very much. But if the people of the Provinces are not careful, the agents of Jeff. Davis & Co., who have fled to the Provinces to foment mischief, will involve you in a war with the United States. If refugees from the States do not behave themselves as they should, the Government should send them back whence they came. The agents of slavery should ever meet close watching under the British flag.

With love to all old friends,
I remain, yours in Christ,
JAMES A. DAVIDSON.

For the Christian Messenger

The New School Law in Hants Co.

MR. EDITOR,

For the information of those of your readers who are interested in our Educational affairs, I beg through your columns, to say a few words concerning the operation of the New Act in Hants Co.

Of the 81 sections in this County, about 60 have appointed Trustees and adopted Assessment. Assessment has been carried in Hantsport, Windsor, Brooklyn, Scotch Village, Kempt, Cheverie, Walton, Noel, Mainland, Welsford, Emsdale, Esfield, Nine-mile River, The Gore, Middle and South Rawdon, St. Croix, Ardoise, and in fact, in every town and village of any size and pretension in the County. Only 6 sections have rejected the Act. Four of these are in the Township of Falmouth and vicinity, and lie contiguous to each other, showing that their opposition to the law has resulted as much from contagion as reason. Indeed it was to be expected that Falmouth would oppose the law, and the fact can excite no surprise in the minds of those acquainted with all the circumstances of the case.

33 teachers were examined and received Diplomas last October, 16 in East Hants, and 17 in West Hants. This number will be considerably augmented at the approaching examinations in April. About 24 schools are in operation in the County at the present time, employing 80 teachers. The small number of schools, comparatively speaking, now in operation, may be accounted for in two ways. First, some sections have not been

able to procure male teachers, they being chiefly in demand during the winter months. There is a prospect, however, of this want being soon supplied. Secondly, several sections have preferred to do without a school for the present term, in order that they might turn their undivided attention to the erection of a new school-house, not feeling able to build a school-house, and support a teacher at the same time. Indeed many sections now without a school feel that they can well afford to wait a little, seeing that by the new school Act a priceless boon has been placed within their reach, which they may accept at their convenience. I would observe, however, that there is a prospect of other schools being opened soon.

Two schools in the County now employ 3 teachers each, and two others employ 2 teachers each.

From almost all the schools in operation, the report has come of want of room. The system of free schools is leading many to seek the school-house, that would never have entered it under the old regime! In some schools the attendance is over 300 per cent above what it was under the old Act, and the order and efficiency of many of these schools, the interest taken in them by parents who were formerly indifferent, and the expense which is cheerfully borne in order to provide a first class teacher, and furnish the school with suitable furniture and apparatus, exceed, I declare, any thing that I had allowed myself, in my most sanguine moments, to expect.

The new Act has been in operation too short a time to disclose all its merits, still enough of its working has already been seen to demonstrate the superiority of free schools over every other system that has yet been tried.

It will not be denied that the new Act might be improved. It would be strange, indeed, if in the transitional state of our Educational affairs, a law could be framed that would anticipate every exigency, and be pronounced by the universal public as perfect. All great Reforms have been marked by certain apparently backward movements in their earliest working. Counter currents may be seen along the edge of great rivers, but the rivers nevertheless move on. The opposition offered in some sections and Counties to the new school law, when contemplated from one point of view, might be taken for a retrograde movement, but it has been, in fact, only the angry whirling of the eddies along the bank of the great educational stream, whose widening and deepening volume has all the while been rolling onward. The inquiry and discussion which the new Act has occasioned, has had the effect of wonderfully quickening the educational life of the Province, and has prepared the people to desire and reach a still more advanced educational position.

I am not aware that the advantages to the Province of Confederation, so warmly discussed at the present time, have been exaggerated, but I am quite sure that they would be equalled if not exceeded by free schools and compulsory assessment. Nothing would more stimulate the industry and enterprise of the people, and give them a greater impetus in the race of material progress than a sound system of popular education.

It is to be hoped that the Legislature at its coming session, will make the school Act in every respect what it should be. As individuals who first opposed assessment in their own section, now see and admit from its beneficial working that they were wrong, so will it be in the Province as a whole.

I am sorry that some of the public journals have done little more than throw suspicion in the new Act, and have thus created in some sections, an opposition which otherwise would never have existed. The misrepresentation and falsehood touching its operation, which have appeared from time to time in the pages of the Chronicle exhibit a style of depravity as despicable as it is pitiable.

In conclusion, I would express the hope that the day is not far distant when the whole Province will enjoy the benefits of that system of Common Schools, for which several of the Counties have already shown themselves so ripe, and Hants among the number.

D. M. WILSON,
Inspector for Hants Co.
Windsor, Jan. 21, 1864.

Confederation.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger
DEAR SIR,
The wise king said, "Give instruction to a wise man and he will be yet wiser."
Allow a very old subscriber for the Christian Messenger thus to deal with the Editor. Your criticisms on the Archbishop's late letter I take to be unsound. You say "This

appeal to fear as a motive for Confederation we think hardly creditable to that gentleman, to us, or to the times in which we live. We have no taste for raising an alarm. If prudential &c., &c.

Why not creditable? Has the Millennium commenced, that the weak need no longer dread the strong? or is there something in the temper and in the present circumstances of the U. S., so peculiarly calculated to dispel uneasiness, that prudent forecast—as regards her armed myrmidons—ceases to be a virtue? Let the Editor of the Christian Messenger answer this question.

In the same number—on the very page—and in the identical column in which the censure of the Archbishop's remarks is contained, you yourself have thus written:

"The Society, composed of numerous Irish emigrants to the United States, called the Fenian Brotherhood, have of late created a good deal of alarm in Upper Canada. Their object appears to be to form secret societies in Canada, and if possible, cause mutual aggressions between the two countries, in hopes that hostilities may finally be the result. Of this, without doubt, under existing circumstances, there is much danger. A most causeless and unjustifiable bitterness appears to exist against England throughout the Northern States, which, without great prudence and forbearance in both Governments, may lead to a serious collision, as soon as the present civil contest is ended. We doubt not the Executive Powers of both England and the United States would be strongly averse to so vicious a measure; but unhappily the latter power is so greatly under the influence of mere popular feeling that it can scarcely be viewed in the light of a free agent."

Here, then, is a band of recreant ruffians seeking to embroil these colonies—the people of the Northern States filled with causeless bitterness to England—their Executive so controlled by popular feeling as scarcely entitled to the character of a free Agent,—and when the civil contest is ended, there will be legions of soldiers to be disposed of.

This is your own shewing,—and yet it is not creditable to look the danger in the face and make such provision as we may to guard against it, although the stake be nothing less than our country and our homes!

Surely there is some mistake. You cannot have meant what your types indicate. As your readers have not the advantage of forming their own judgment of the Archbishop's letter,—a production, in my judgment, full of patriotism and good practical sense,—I think it but just that the cause of Confederation should not be allowed, without remonstrance, to suffer by what I deem your mistaken sentiment respecting one of the many mighty arguments in its favor.

Yours ever,
AN OLD FRIEND.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 25, 1865.

Notwithstanding the twaddle of some of the detractors of Mr. Spurgeon, and the efforts to make capital by republishing paragraphs intended to bring his name into contempt, the object sought by them is far from being accomplished. The Metropolitan Tabernacle is still a centre from which the gospel is sent forth to tens of thousands. The following letter to the London Freeman reached us by the last mail, and will be perused with interest by many of our readers. We put aside other matter for the purpose of giving it insertion:

REVIVAL PRAYER-MEETINGS AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.—Sirs.—We live in preaching days. God has blessed this nation most abundantly with earnest, zealous, affectionate, and faithful dispensers of His Word. The hands of these God-sent men require to be lifted up in holy prayer more frequently. A spirit of wrestling supplication among the churches will help towards this object. Ministers require this as a stimulus in their responsible labours; and conversions will be frequent in proportion to the prayerfulness of the churches. Unity of action is also necessary to promote numerous conversions; and this unity cannot so well be obtained as by a spirit of vitality being infused into the prayers of the faithful. Some of our churches begin to feel a want of a real revival. One step towards obtaining God's blessing is to feel a need of it.

It will please the readers of your journal to hear that a monster prayer-meeting was held on Monday night at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, at which a great number of Baptist ministers of the metropolis and suburbs were present. The object of this—shall I call it a "revival meeting"—was to petition God for an outpouring of His Spirit upon the various churches of this metropolis, connected, not only with the Baptist, but indeed, every denomination. The Tabernacle was crowded from top to bottom, and it may faithfully be said that never was there such a monster gathering for prayer to God, at least in this country. Many ministers engaged in earnest prayer, and a spirit of holy enthusiasm was felt throughout the whole audience. The ministers present expressed their humiliation be-