

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

Although most of your readers are probably more interested in matters of the mother country than in the transactions of this metropolis of the new world, yet the frequency and speed of communication, the considerable commerce, and the identity of language and ancestry must mutually incline us to each other. In the hope that a more intimate acquaintance will increase our friendship, and that an occasional letter from this city concerning matters secular and religious, especially the state and movements of our own churches will be of some service to our readers this correspondence is undertaken.

Ever since the downfall of the rebellion the tide of fashion, and the flood of extravagance seemed to be sweeping us down at a fearful rate, so that some among us began to tremble for the ark. It seemed as though the city were given to carnality. Crowded theatres, extravagant balls, saloons filled with the dissipated, and other haunts of satan involved in their coils numbers from every class of society of both sexes. "Never" says one of the worldly newspapers "was there a more brilliant winter in New York."

Alas! not the brilliancy of the light from the Sun of righteousness, but the glare and splendor of the world's passing pageant has absorbed the attention of the giddy crowd. Even professors of religion to some extent felt the influence; many however not drawn away to the practice of worldliness found themselves spiritually benumbed. Few came out on the Lord's side, prayer meetings languished, congregations on the Lord's day were thin. The Pastors were exercised at the subject and for two monthly meetings the Pastors' Conference the subject for discussion was the duty of Pastors in time of religious declension. Some began to weep between the porch and the altar; with the new year some extra meetings were held in several of the churches. Meanwhile we began to hear of revivals in different parts of the country, and with the last two months we have been experiencing a great blessing. In Brooklyn, Newark, and several of the suburban towns hundreds have professed to pass from death to life, and New York the work seems to be spreading and deepening. There is not that excitement which in 1857 drew together crowds in great open meetings, but there seems to be a solemnness of the spirit's presence in the community and a general impressibility on the subject of personal salvation. It is easy to approach pens, and as one remarked to me the other day appears as though a single sentence in the ear of an unconverted man finds its way to the heart. All the evangelical denominations are sharing the fruits of the work, but our own churches are reaping special blessings. Some churches that had been weakened by deaths and removals already feeling the good effects of the ingering. So many of our most wealthy brethren have removed to country residences within a few years past that it began to be a problem some of the oldest places of worship were sustained; but God in his mercy is solving the question by drawing to himself multitudes whose lives and means will now be thrown into the scale against the gigantic evils which themselves unflinchingly on almost every corner.

The denotational sermons which have been preached by of ability in the Fifth Avenue church indicate an awakening to the necessity of identifying clearly describing the "old land marks." We published the volume containing these discourses will be a valuable addition to every Bap household library.

Our benevolent societies are closing the financial year prosperously. The effort to unite the American and Foreign Bible Society with the Publication Society having failed, negotiations are now in progress between the Bible Union and the American and Foreign Bible Society for a connection which will go far to unite our denotation in Bible work. A joint committee of members from each board have the matter in hand their action thus far encourages the hope that an agreement will be reached which will contribute to the cause of pure versions throughout the world. It is certainly desirable all who advocate a pure unrestricted Bible endeavor to conform exactly to its teaching and present an unbroken front in the working of the word to the nations. As our Anniversaries are held this spring in Boston, shall not see a number of our brethren from your vicinity at our tribal gathering? Come up if least, brethren, and may you come with rings of golden sheaves gathered for Jesus.

New York, March, 1866.

AMICUS.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM VIRGINIA.

Brother Selden,—

Having been engaged the last four weeks in visiting various parts of Virginia, with a view of ascertaining the condition of white and black citizens; in regard to their physical, intellectual and religious wants; it has occurred to me that some facts—and results of labors which have been already put forth—might interest the readers of the Messenger.

There are some points I can best illustrate by giving you the facts in regard to the School for Freedmen at this place. In October, 1863, at the desire of the Government, I raised the funds and erected a Chapel and School House capable of accommodating five hundred persons; on one of the Heights of Arlington. The Arlington estate comprises eleven hundred acres—extending back from the Potomac River in a very nearly level plain—for about one mile, and then rising abruptly and terminating in a series of hills called—"Arlington Heights." This estate was inherited by Mrs. Robert E. Lee, but she having abandoned it, and the taxes not being paid for three years, it was sold under the usual laws of the State, and purchased by Government. Two Hundred Acres have been fenced in and laid out as a National Cemetery, where soldiers, who fought for and against, our government are buried with equal care and consideration. Already thirteen thousand have here found their last earthly resting place to remain undisturbed until "the last trump shall sound," and others shall be called with that mighty host which "no man can number," to appear before HIM who is to "judge the world in righteousness." The rest of the estate has been "divided into five acre lots," and rented to the freedmen. A village has been erected called "Freedmen's Village," with about 1500 or 2000 inhabitants; and in the center of this Village is our School House and Chapel. The building was dedicated on the 3rd of December, 1863. I organized, in connection with Mr. H. E. Simmons—a Sabbath School, Dec. 6th, and the week day School was opened the next day, Dec. 7th, 1863.

These have continued, with Mr. Simmons as principal, assisted by five lady teachers, until this time. The results show, FIRST—that colored children are as studious, as capable of improvement, with a memory as retentive, and an understanding as clear, as the best white children of our land. In order, neatness, respect for their teachers and thirst for knowledge, they are not excelled by the best white schools in the city of Boston. About three thousand have been instructed in the day and evening schools, in the two years and four months since they were organized. Those who have been regular attendants, and who could not read a word when entering the School, can now read the Bible fluently, spell any ordinary word of four syllables, write intelligibly, and recite fairly in geography and arithmetic. About the same number have attended the Sabbath School, that have been in the other Schools—the largest attendance on any one Sabbath being 515—the average being nearly four hundred. Last Tuesday afternoon we had a special meeting, in order to present all Scholars, not already having either, and who could easily read them—with a Bibles or Testament. After distributing over two hundred our supply became exhausted; but the demand continued and will be met as soon as the Bible and Testaments can be obtained. A Baptist Church has been formed, and with a good, intelligent preacher and pastor, this village, for intelligence, moral worth, and religious knowledge would exceed any other community of the same number of people in Virginia. Last Sabbath the Scholars were reviewed on the Book of Genesis, and for quick and correct answers, my Sabbath School cannot compare with with them, and I fear it would be necessary to push down into the Provinces to find their peers in this respect. What is true if these Schools will in general apply to those of Richmond, Petersburg, and other places in this State.

SECOND. Colored children want to be treated precisely the same as other children, have the same books, papers, kind of instruction, discipline, &c., that are seen in our best Common and Sabbath Schools in New England. They know and appreciate their friends, and form towards them—the strongest attachment. In the Sabbath Schools they are reverent, attentive, eager to learn and grateful for all kindness shown them. I have a letter before me from a Southern gentleman—a Bank Officer and Superintendent of a colored Sabbath School—in which he says, "Now that we enjoy this privilege (teaching colored children) none daring to molest—and none desiring to do so—we find an enthusiasm

and universal desire for instruction that is perfectly wonderful. Nor do we find anything of the incapacity of which we have heard so much. We have had as many as five hundred and twenty in attendance on some Sabbaths but our usual number is a little above three hundred came as yet we have not been able to secure regular and efficient teachers. Already a large portion of the School have learned to read, and we have formed five Bible Classes. It is sometimes almost impossible to keep the classes seated, as the children become so much interested that they cannot sit, and the teachers are gradually and entirely surrounded by their excited charge." My own experience confirms this and so does that of every teacher with whom I have conversed. But this letter is already much too long; I must leave some thoughts about the poor white population and the physical condition and industry of the colored people to another letter, if such information shall be desired—yet will ask permission in closing to express my sincere thanks to many of the readers of the Messenger for the kindness they have shown me, in my repeated visits to the Provinces, and to express the hope that a good delegation of them will be present at our Boston Anniversaries in May, and thus afford me an opportunity to reciprocate some of their favors.

Fraternally Yours,

N. P. KEMP.

Arlington Heights, Va, March 29th, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

Canadian Correspondence.

Mr. Editor,—

I regret that the pressure of every day duties has hitherto prevented me from complying with your invitation to send a few lines occasionally for your columns. The task would certainly be to me a very agreeable one, carrying me back in memory, as it would, to the cherished friends and associations of other days. No need one be at a loss for topics of either a secular or religious character. We have fallen upon days in which great events crowd upon one another, and just at present the excitement both of our own provinces, and of the neighbouring Republic cannot fail to afford abundant food for reflection. How happy they who in the midst of anxieties and threatening dangers can calmly trust in the wise and loving purposes of an Almighty OVER-RULER.

I suppose you in Nova Scotia scarcely feel, to a very large extent, the Fenian excitement inasmuch as you have no long or short border to defend against hostile incursions. A considerable, and under the circumstances, a very natural, degree of anxiety has been, and is felt in Canada in view of the recent remarkable demonstrations over the border. As you are no doubt aware volunteers are every where springing to arms at the call of the Government. Some twelve or fifteen thousand of these are already either at the frontier, or in readiness to go thither as fast as steam can carry them, at a moment's warning. Home Guards have been organized in most or all the cities and towns, as a precaution not so much against Fenians, as against burglars and other ruffians, who are but too ready to take advantage of the disturbed state of public feeling to perpetrate their deeds of darkness. On every hand the utmost activity prevails, though thus far I have seen none of the panic, or of anything like panic, of which the veracious telegrams say so much to those at a distance. I write on the evening of St. Patrick's day, the day upon which, according to information received at head quarters, the raid or invasion was to be made. I need not say we have no fears of invasion or anything like it, at present. Leaving all questions of American neutrality aside—and we certainly have neither disposition nor cause as yet to doubt that the American Government will do its duty promptly when overt action begins—we do not believe the Fenians, with all their native wildness and impracticability, are such fools as to land an army upon our shore in the month of March, to manoeuvre in, and march over a continent of mud. Nevertheless it seems not at all improbable that raids and petty plundering incursions may be attempted, and the Government and people are fully on the alert to meet them. The volunteers are just now kept under arms at night, the railway engines under steam and the telegraph operators at their posts, and everybody seems to have full confidence in the ability of the volunteers to take care of any hostile bands which may venture across.

But I did not intend to take up so much space with particulars which are, I presume, nearly as familiar to your readers as to us. You will, I dare say, be more particularly interested in matters pertaining to our own branch of the

christian church. The Baptists in Canada are, comparatively, a feeble folk. Baptist principles, if not progressing so rapidly as those who firmly believe them to be New Testament principles, could wish, are yet gaining ground. Many earnest and devoted men are in the field. The ground already occupied is in most places being cultivated, and new aggressions are from time to time being made. Yet devout Baptists, as well as christians of other names, cannot but feel and deplore the want of a more earnest and aggressive piety, a deeper and more fruitful spirituality. Many are we believe praying and hoping for mightier manifestations of the Spirit of truth.

The chief new enterprise of a public character just now before the Baptist denomination is the Ministerial Aid Society. Its chief object, as implied in the name, is to secure a permanent fund from which the wants of aged and infirm ministers and their families may be supplied, or at least lessened. The aim is to raise ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for permanent investment for this object. L. J. Claxton, Esq., of Montreal, with his accustomed liberality has given one thousand unconditionally, and has pledged another thousand, on condition that the full amount named be raised by the 1st of July next. W. McMaster, Esq., of Toronto, has also contributed one thousand. About two thousand yet remains to be raised. The object is a worthy one and we believe will not be suffered to fail.

Steps are also being just now taken in Canada West, to organize a Ministerial Institute for the mutual benefit of Baptist Ministers. The scheme bids fair to succeed and promises to be of much utility, especially to many whose educational opportunities have been limited and who yet are anxious to become workmen needing not to be ashamed.

The "Canadian Literary Institute," the young Acadia College of Canada, is well attended this winter. There are at present upwards of twenty students in attendance who have the ministry in view. Under the present arrangement by which the Theological department is in session but two terms (twenty-seven weeks) in the year, the greater number of these will shortly be labouring in various parts of this great field in the Master's service. It speaks well for the estimation in which the Institute and its students are held, that there are more demands for the services of students during the summer than can be supplied. The Literary department of the Institute embraces at present, apart from theological students, seventy or eighty of both sexes. E.

Canada West, 17th March, 1866.

For the Christian Messenger.

Berwick.

Dear Brother,—

The intelligence of revivals contained in the Messenger of late, has been very interesting. The moral and religious movements in this county are very encouraging. The evil of intemperance has been advancing steadily for some years past; and very little vigorous resistance has been offered by the Temperance organizations. The introduction of the Order of Good Templars has seemed to call to arms all the disbanded forces, and a large number of new recruits. I met with a Division of the Sons of Temperance a few evenings since, where I met three persons who had abandoned the selling of strong drinks, and had united themselves with the advocates of the Temperance reform. Templars and Sons are multiplying throughout the County, and a religious awakening seems to be spreading in several localities. The temperance movement, I regard as the harbinger of better days for the churches. A general alarm has been felt, that the liquor traffic would increase with its attendant vices, till it would corrupt the morals and destroy the happiness of the community; but God has disappointed our fears by giving us some success in arresting the evil and in filling us with hopes of greater victory. When we are exerting ourselves to prevent the sale and use of alcoholic liquors in our little villages and country places, we sometimes think and speak of the general source. We dare not talk about those fine looking gentlemen whom we sometimes see on the streets and in the congregations of devout worshippers, when we visit the metropolis who are known as wholesale liquor dealers. We have an idea that they are not beyond the pale of moral responsibility. And it seems to us that as God has committed to them—our merchant princes—the means of coming into possession of the fruits of the deep which have cost one class of our laborers—the fishermen—a great deal of labor and toil, they are under some obligation to God and their