

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

FROM LOWER CALIFORNIA.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, Sept. 18th, 1873.

Dear Bro. Selden,

From the above address you will doubtless ask a few questions—such as the meaning of Los Angeles, and where located—productions and climate, &c., &c. First, Los Angeles in Spanish means "The Angels' city." Located 500 miles south of San Francisco, on the Pacific slope. The climate being second to none, New South Wales not excepted, or any other portion of the globe with which we are all acquainted, the skies of Italy being no exception. It has a uniform semitropical climate all the year round, not having the humidity nor changes of the other mentioned places, but in contradistinction the atmosphere being dry but not weakening, the weather being remarkably uniform, with continual sunshine, there being no rain or other storms for nine months in the year. Indeed a rain storm would be a sad calamity from the fact that the immense amount of grain raised and allowed to remain in the fields from harvest time until exported would be sadly injured; as well as the dry grass called filleree, which has been cured by the sun, and is well fitted to keep the stock in good condition throughout the nine months of the season; this remains uncut upon the land, pastures, &c., a wonderful provision of nature, unknown to many parts of the world.

The agricultural productions are almost beyond credence. Corn of the finest quality from 16 to 22 feet in height, everything else in the same proportion.

The fruits are abundant, including not only all the English productions, but a vast variety peculiar to semi-tropical climates amongst the many may be named the orange, lemon, pomogranate, nectarine, apricot peach, &c., &c., with grapes and strawberries by the ton. The grapes which heretofore had been converted into wine and the refuse into gas to light the city, are now, by the "Alden" process, utilized and made into excellent muscatel raisins. The same is applied to other fruits and even vegetables, which is a new and good thing under the sun. Much of this is to be attributed to the progress of temperance principles and hygienic principles in general, which we are happy to say are beginning to prevail. This wealth of production is the result of a good system of irrigation. All the rivers being converted into innumerable rivulets for hundreds of miles throughout these beautiful valleys.

We have steamship communication daily with San Francisco, and all other parts on the Pacific coast, from Oregon to Panama and through the latter to New York, and all Atlantic cities. There are four first class railroads, and rolling stock radiating from this city, all of which will soon connect with the great southern Pacific, below the snow line, thus avoiding the snow-blockade of the Central Pacific Railroad—which is likely to recure for this city the immense Oriental trade and commerce. All this wealth of production is the result of only 25 years of American enterprise, as previous to 1849 the whole Pacific coast lay dormant and unproductive in the hands of Spain and Mexico. This city (Los Angeles) is not 10 years old, yet it manifests all the elements of modern progress, we have 8 newspapers, 3 of which are daily, viz.: the Herald, Express and Star. The buildings and system of Public School instruction being unsurpassed. The religious element consists of the usual evangelical denominations, and the Roman Catholic, which is chiefly Spanish and Mexican with some Indians, all of which have their old dobie or mud buildings, fast disappearing, succeeded by splendid American and British edifices, for the accommodation of banks, &c. The prospects of the Baptists are brightening as you perceive by the following notice of the Los Angeles Association, recently held at Santa Ana, and the organization of the Los Angeles Baptist Church in this city.

MEETING OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

The Baptist Association of this county commenced its sittings on Friday the 11th instant at Santa Ana under the presidency of Elder J. C. Curtis of Los Nietos. The place of meeting selected was a beautiful grove of sycamore trees in which was erected a booth of willows capable of seating a thousand persons or more, ample provisions were made and invitations extended to all visitors as well as to the delegate messengers. Six new churches were received into fellowship making a total of fourteen including the Los Angeles Baptist Church recently organized in this city.

The meetings were characterized by the

greatest harmony. The introductory sermon by Elder C. O. Riley, was earnest, faithful and appropriate, as also those that followed by Elders Thomas, Davenport, McLean of Brooklyn, Lovell and others on Friday and Saturday. On Sunday a Missionary Sermon was preached by Elder John Francis of the American Baptist Home Mission Society at the close of which a collection was taken up amounting to about sixty dollars for Home Mission purposes. At 3 p. m. Dr. Hobbs of Los Angeles, delivered an excellent discourse on the Immortality of the Soul, and at 7 p. m., Elder Wright of Riverside, gave a practical sermon on Religious duty. The Association continued in session until Monday when the appointment of two missionaries was consummated. Great praise is due to the families of Santa Ana embracing various denominations, for their noble hospitality.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

An Ecclesiastical Council met at the new German Church, on Spring street, between Fourth and Fifth, in this city, on Sunday, the 10th instant, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Church. The delegates present were Revs. John Francis of San Francisco, J. C. Curtis of Los Nietos, Deacon I. Lankershim of San Francisco, Rev. Mr. Cooper and Dr. Hobbs, with a number of lay brethren.

The meeting was called to order by the appointment of Rev. J. C. Curtis as President and Mr. Hancock as Secretary. After the reading of the Declaration of Faith and Covenant and other preliminary exercises, reading letters from the churches, etc., the Rev. John Francis delivered the recognition sermon and the Rev. Mr. Curtis the charge to the newly organized church officers, pastor, etc.

During the day two, Chinese and English, services were held and largely attended—the first being on the public square near Temple Block, where the best of order was maintained, and the second in the church on Spring street.

Commencing at the close of the organization services, and notwithstanding the meeting was protracted for four hours without intermission the interest was continued to the close.

The newly organized church will meet every Sabbath at the above-named church edifice at 3 o'clock p. m.

On my arrival in this city there being no Baptist preaching or interest we commenced labors in the Court House, and continued for three months which resulted in the above organization with a fair prospect of further increase. The above Association was characterized with more than ordinary zeal, and great missionary spirit was developed as will be seen by the appointment of two missionaries and we are happy to say that with one of whom many of the readers of the Messenger have had a long acquaintance, viz., Rev. John Francis, whose assiduous labors in the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island nearly thirty years ago, are held in vivid recollection by many who have not yet reached the heavenly Canaan. I esteem it a remarkable Providence and singular coincidence that my brother and myself who labored together a generation past on the Atlantic coast should again be so happily united as co-laborers on this great Pacific slope for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Master, and Saviour Jesus Christ, to those kind providence and guidance we are indebted for the preservation of myself and family by sea and land, and notwithstanding our intention when leaving Australia to reach Nova Scotia—directed us to a field of great spiritual destitution and of great importance. The influx from various parts of the world, not only from Australia, but also from Canada and the Lower Provinces, not a few of the number being Baptists, which impresses us with the fact of a future for the denomination in this city.

Bro. Francis, who has charge of the Chinese mission work on the Pacific coast, accompanied by one of his Chinese assistants who preaches in his own language to his countrymen, numbering not less than 100,000 distributed throughout the land, including about 2,000 in this city and suburbs. Here it is intended to establish a mission similar to the one established and conducted by Bro. F. in San Francisco, which numbers 100 pupils, including 13 baptized communicants. Five of these preach the gospel to thousands of their countrymen in the Mission house on week evenings, and in the open air on Sundays.

"OPEN-AIR SERVICES AT LOS ANGELES.

The open-air services in English and Chinese attracted quite a crowd in front of Temple Block last Sunday. Although the services were designed principally for the edification of the Celestials, they were very much in the minority, not more than twenty being present altogether. After a short address, delivered by the Rev. Dr. Francis, the Chinese missionary spoke to his countrymen for about fifteen minutes. He seemed to be earnest and impressive in his words, however odd they sounded to the majority of his listeners, and those who could understand his import gave him the most marked attention. To the credit of our city, we are proud to say that in

that promiscuous gathering, with its somewhat peculiar, and to some, ludicrous circumstances, not the least disrespect was shown by word or action to either the speaker or any of the Chinese auditors.—After the conclusion of his remarks, a chart bearing a translation of the little song, "There is a Happy Land," in Chinese characters, was hung up in sight of the assemblage, and the missionary attempted to lead his Chinese brothers in rendering it into song. To our notion, it was a sorry attempt at music, but we suppose it was melody to the drum of John's ear. Afterwards it was sung with the English words and tune, sounding much more Christian-like. The assembly was finally dismissed by a benediction pronounced in passable English by the missionary.

Truly yours &c., Wm. Hobbs.

P.S.—I forgot to say we have enquirers in this wicked city, and others converted. To God be all the praise. W. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE PULPIT.

NO. 11.

When the Rev. D. A. Steele in his lecture recently published, remarked that it may be well to spend a little time in contemplating what may be termed its finish, to behold the adornments of christianity, &c., that idea is one near akin to that I have in view in this essay. Folly needs "shooting as it flies," no matter whether its perch be a pulpit or a platform. I need not I presume, guard the reader, lest he fall into the mistake of supposing that my object is, in any way to underrate or lessen the influence of the pulpit. On the contrary, I am anxious and my object is to elevate the standard of pulpit oratory. I have made no reference to the piety, to the spirituality, or the orthodoxy of the man who has selected the pulpit as the sphere of life's labour. Neither is that my purpose. Finding such a one there, my aim is to assist in perfecting him, as far as I can, and making him more efficient than he otherwise probably would be, even though I lessen his self-sufficiency or wound his sensibility somewhat.

The cricketer, the athlete, every one of us, in his sphere must expect the rough with the smooth, and take it as he finds it. I have often thought that the pulpit orator, while he enjoys privileges, and is exempt from the ruder contests, and fiercer encounters, to which most other public speakers are subjected one time or another, is a loser withal. Many such are valiant for the truth, they conjure up arguments which they suppose an antagonist might use, and then they call the audience to bear witness, how easily such may be refuted. But these easy victories give little muscle to a combatant, little skill, and in the absence of a rival opponent to attack, or defend against, the orator retires self-satisfied that he has achieved important results.

The sailors' dialogue, after a long voyage and returning from a Sunday morning service, has point and will illustrate what I mean.

"Well Jack, said his comrade, referring to a more than usually interesting discourse. What do you think of that yarn?"

"The yarn was well enough" said Jack, "but it is easy to spin a good yarn when there is nobody there to contradict you."

That is it. The pulpit speaker, has not the correction in reference to matter or manner, which the reply, the satire, the ridicule, the vigorous onslaught of an opponent of different sentiments in any other sphere, insure. His weak positions, weakly made, his ungraceful action, his ungrammatical sentences, his ridiculous pronunciation of foreign, or difficult and sometimes of common words, his colloquialisms, his frequent and tiresome repetitions, are all supposed to be so identified with the sacred subject discussed and the calling of the speaker, that he escapes criticism but to repeat himself, it may be, as often as he appears in character. I maintain that this is unfortunate for him. For there is no better school, no higher finish to be obtained, than that, where our faults and follies are mercifully exposed, where the lash falls freely and the trenchant blade of criticism, lays bare to the bone all pretentiousness, not founded on solid acquisition.

I may not perhaps go quite so far as the Ministerial Institute Lecturer does, under the heading "Liability to misstatements and overstatements," recently published in your columns. I admire his candour, however, and find no fault with the sincerity with which he lets fly at the errors of the day. But I am sailing, as the mariners say, on another parallel as will be perceived. I am anxious that those gentlemen who occupy pulpits, should be fully equal to their compeers in other places, as well as to the self imposed duty.

In a former number, I instanced the abuse of the interjection O! when repeated in almost every successive sentence, and not unfrequently twice or thrice in one, during some unconsciously long exercise. But there is an expression I find becoming so general and so common, among preachers whose services I am permitted to attend, that I am sure if they knew how often they repeat it, would not be so continuously dinned into one's ears. Our language is neither so poor, nor so barren, that any one word, should be found in the beginning, middle and end of a series of sentences. Not even among pulpit orators. The word I refer to is "Realize." It is a very good word, but it is run to earth in these days.

It is supposed that we obtained it from the Spanish, or French, and they in turn from the Latin. Its root being Res, a thing. But no matter whence its origin, I am weary of hearing it. Perhaps some sensible reader will take a note of these remarks, and introduce a substitute occasionally such a synonym as will relieve the sensitive organs of critical hearers.

Then there is the word "feel" and a fine old Saxon monosyllable it is. But poor thing, the amount of duty it has to do on every platform, is something wonderful. If the speaker is certain of anything—he feels certain. It he doubts—he feels doubtful. If he is glad—he feels glad. All the emotions of the mind, with such, are feelings.

I might add a long list of just such hackneyed words,—and sometimes whole phrases do like duty, and probably nine out of every ten who transgress and lay themselves open to remark, are quite unconscious of it.

How must our teachers, and Professors, and Educationists wince, occasionally occupying the positions of listeners, when they have to witness the failures, and shortcomings and blunderings of some who but lately emerged from their tuition.

Then there are those un scholarly pronunciations of words, which are almost sure detectives of the absence of a thorough and classical education. The word phillistine with the accent on the last syllable, instead of on the second. The accent on the second syllable instead of on the first, in the word interested. Philipians pronounced with an accent on the last, instead of the second syllable, or as if it were spelled Phillipians.

Acceptable, pronounced with an accent on the second syllable, instead of the first.

There is a class of words such as "contemplate, compensate, confiscate, consummate, demonstrate, expurgate, extirpate," the proper syllable for accentuation of which is on the second not the first,—and so the English orthoepists have long since by common consent ruled with little variation. But some objector may possibly say, "Are none but those who are acquainted with the varieties and refinements of the English language to occupy our pulpits? I have not said that. Occasionally persons of great natural aptitude for religious teaching, deeply read in English scriptures, possessing even a very limited education, yet giving evidence of careful mental training, and severe thought, may be heard with both pleasure and profit. But if such had been favoured with the aids that books, and teachers and professors are adapted to confer the satisfaction and gratification of listening to their efforts would be much greater. A few original ideas, briefly and modestly put, even in a homely garb, in the estimation of competent judges, are worth much more than a plethora of words and repetitions where the proposition of grain to the chaff is almost infinitesimal.

It seems to me, that while I am in the mood, it would be just as well to remind some of our more prominent and pretentious speakers that it is a mistake, to pronounce the word "duty," as if it were dooty—that the word "news," should be carefully distinguished by every public speaker from noose. And so, if the word "dew" to hear it pronounced as it spelled do, betokens an absence on the part of any public speaker of the finishings of scholarship. The compounds of these simples, are many and all in the same category.

Few men have obtained the celebrity in the pulpit which by common consent, has been accorded to Robert Hall. Few can reasonably hope to attain it. But it is not less the duty of all who aspire to the office of preaching, to train as he did. Rigorously to discipline the mind, and never if it can be reasonably avoided, without thought and proper preparations, mount a public stage or platform to address an audience.

But I have written enough possibly to prompt some of those who occupy our

pulpits, to respect the weaknesses of such as are doomed to listen to discourses upon which there is little evidence of preparation—having been bestowed, and delivered in a manner, that would not be tolerated elsewhere, that in what some people call the Sacred Desk.

MASSILLON.

For the Christian Messenger.

RELIGION IN SIAM.

No. v.

"It would have been no child's play under any circumstances, to meet intellects like those of Moung Shwagong, and Moung Long, naturally keen and powerful, and trained by long practice to the adroit use of dialectics. But for a foreigner to meet them in their mother tongue, on questions so difficult and elusive in their nature in such a manner as to silence and convince them, argues a combination of talents and acquisitions, of which the world has furnished few examples"—Mrs. Conant's life of Judson.

She had, in a previous portion of the work, given a brief and succinct description of the leading ideas of Buddhism. 1st. The eternal existence of matter and of finite spirit. 2nd. Fate, the supreme ruler of the universe. 3. The eternal transmigration of souls. 4th. The development of Buddha. 5th. Annihilation, the supreme good. Buddhism in Burmah, and Buddhism in Siam is the same thing. And it is only those who have perhaps mastered a few of the more commonplace difficulties that present themselves in acquiring the use of a foreign language, that can appreciate the truth and force of that portion of the extract above, which I have caused to be printed in italics. Before any success can be well hoped for, by the Missionary who would convert a Siamese Buddhist to Christianity, there must be not only a thorough and perfect mastery of the language of the country in all its inflections and idioms, its forms of speech, and their modifications—but the system of Buddhism itself, the sacred literature, as well as the language of the country must be thoroughly understood.

Otherwise how can it be expected that a Missionary can cope with priests, and learned men, whose lives have been devoted to the acquisition of the abstractions with which the system abounds?

It was this that cost Judson such long years of toil and devotion in order to pioneer Christianity into Burmah and by the light of his experience, it may be pretty clearly foreshadowed, what awaits the missionary to the Siamese. True there are advantages in reference to translations and the acquisition of languages, as well as in the civil polity which prevails, existing in Siam, that were absent in Burmah, but Buddhism and idolatry are the same in one country as in the other, and now, as ever.

My labrations in connection with Siam, its religion, and its suitability as a foreign field, upon which the efforts of our denomination may be wisely expended, are about to draw to a close for the present. It is due to the Rev. Mr. McKenzie, and the rather in view of the authority he has vouched for his announcement at the Academy of Music. I say it is due to him, to observe that nothing that he said, could by any possibility have decided the Board in their previously arranged plans and policy. It is largely to the representations of the Rev. Mr. Carpenter made at Windsor in 1873, and previously in all probability, that so favorable a view of Siam as a Mission location, was ever entertained.

The Board so far as in their power, as I for one understood previous to the Convention of 1873, had determined upon Siam and the Siamese, or the Karens and Karenees, in Siam as the country, and people where, and among whom, they proposed to send their Missionaries. They required the sanction of the Convention of course, and after Mr. Carpenter had addressed the body, it was perhaps no great wonder that such sanction should have been given by acclamation.

But the Board was not then aware, as already remarked, that the Karenees and the Laos and other tribes were under other tutelage and superintendance at the very time when Mr. Carpenter, unaware of it, we presume also, but who should have been aware of it was urging us to send our Missionaries to them. Had these facts been known then, as now, our Mission might possibly have taken a different phase, to that which it has assumed.

As remarked in one of the official documents before the public, Miss Norris, now Mrs. Armstrong, labours, up to latest accounts, have been, as I gather, given gratuitously, to the American B. M. Union—