

From the Episcopal Recorder.

LETTERS FROM THE WEST.

Extracts from Letters addressed to the Editor of the Episcopal Recorder, by a Philadelphia Clergyman.

Letter 4.

KENTUCKY.

The following statement was handed to me in relation to the early settlement of Kentucky:—

"This was one of the most beautiful and blooming territories over which a wild luxuriant forest ever waved. And yet as it was a sort of dividing line between the northern and southern Indians, it became the battle ground upon which their nations met and waged interminable wars, so that it went among the savages by the name of the *dark and bloody land*.—Near the close of the revolutionary war several settlements were attempted in Kentucky by emigrants from Virginia. My ancestors were among the number. The Indians both from the south and north, almost immediately became jealous of these white settlers, and adopted the purpose of exterminating them. The settlers were only able to keep their position by building a fort and living in it.—While a certain portion of the men worked in attempting to clear and cultivate the land, another portion being armed, were on watch. I was born in one of these forts near Boonsborough. I wore till I was twelve years old, hose made of buffalo hair. Our chief living was upon bear and buffalo meat. We were in the midst of the wilderness of nature. Hundreds of times have I seen the Indians rushing upon our fort, or fleeing before the sharp-speaking guns of our friends. People who live in the densely settled portions of our country, know very little about the toils and dangers, the sacrifices and privations which the first settlers endure."

My Kentucky acquaintance illustrated this last remark by a vast number of thrilling incidents, one or two of which I will relate.

"When he was quite young, the people of that settlement, several of them, undertook to manufacture maple sugar. The winter had relaxed its rigors, and the warm sun began to pour down his genial rays. The snow was fast melting away, and the sap ran merrily from the perforated sugar trees.—Several negroes were engaged a short distance from the fort in collecting the sap. It was supposed that no Indians were in the neighbourhood, as none had been seen for several months. Tempted by the bright sunny day, a daughter of one of the settlers, a young, beautiful, blooming girl, rambled beyond the enclosures of the fort, where the negroes were collecting the sugar sap. While she stood there, full of buoyancy and free from every apprehension, a negro being near, busily engaged in some of the various processes of sugar-making, four or five wild Indians in a moment sprung upon them! The negroes they seized and bound, and in an instant cut down with the tomahawks this beautiful girl. Having scalped her, they fled, carrying with them the captured negro. The alarm was soon given at the fort. They were pursued—overtaken, and several of them shot. The negro was rescued. Those that had escaped went five hundred miles round the tribe, and came back again attacked the settlement. In that encounter my Kentucky friend told me that eleven of his family relatives were killed."

"Somewhere on a station near Kentucky river, in the spring, when the earth began to put on her bloom, two young ladies, the eldest of whom was the first child born in Kentucky, went out to gather flowers. As they saw some very rich blossoms on the banks of the river, they took a little skiff, and went from one side to the other collecting them. While thus engaged a number of Indians were in the canoes watching them. The young ladies having by a turn of the river passed beyond the view of their enemies, the Indians proposed to gather flowers, and place them all along the bank, where they were in ambuscade, so that when they returned, attracted by these flowers, they would come up to the bank and then the boat could be seized. The plan entirely succeeded, and while these young ladies were gaily cropping their flowers, a huge wild Indian sprang from his concealment in the boat. Their destiny then seemed sealed. They were immediately borne away

as captives. One of them, however, wore a dress handkerchief of red and brilliant colors. This she silently kept pulling to pieces, and dropping the shreds as she was hurried along through the forest. The friends of these young ladies soon became alarmed. Marks were discovered of an Indian trail. The empty boat was found. A band of armed men commenced pursuit, headed by the father of one of these young ladies. They discovered the shreds of the handkerchief, and traced them till night fall, when they suddenly came upon them where they were encamped. They perceived there was a large number of Indians, and thought secrecy in their movements important. They waited till the Indians were asleep, and then the father drew near. He saw the two young ladies sitting by themselves, guarded by an Indian. The others appeared to be asleep. His men were at some distance, and he thought it better to go up unseen, and tomahawk this sentinel, and rescue his child without alarming the other Indians. But in attempting it, his faithful dog which accompanied him, growled at the sight of these savages. In a moment they were on their feet and he their prisoner. They determined at once to put him to death. He was stripped and bound to a tree, and they were just levelling their pieces to fire at him. What a moment of awful suspense for his child who stood looking on! His men alarmed at his long absence, drew near, saw what was going forward, and instantly fired upon the Indians. A panic was immediately struck in the camp, and as the fire from the whites was kept up, and one and another Indian fell gasping on the ground, they soon fled and left their prisoners. The father and the two young ladies returned. One of them is still living, the mother of a large and respectable family, whose declining age is cheered with the comforts of a sweet hope in Christ.

Letter 7.

ILLINOIS.

At an early dawn, on Monday morning, July 17th, we crossed Fevre river, and started for Chicago in an open lumber wagon, cycled a stage. Taking our trunks for seats, we determined we would make the best of every thing, and if possible keep up good spirits, while we learned the manner in which people travelled through new countries. Our journey, though attended with no little fatigue, was like a walk over the primrose path of pleasure, compared with a jaunt of which Bishop Kemper gave me an account. He had made an appointment somewhere in the interior of Indiana, where it was necessary for him to be at a given day, and had undertaken to pass over Illinois from St. Louis to that point by land. He was overtaken by rain which continued a day or two: the streams became swollen, and the roads, often for miles, completely overflowed. All this time he was obliged to ride in an open wagon, the bottom boards of which were loose, and often slipping out, rendering it necessary for him every where now and then to get out, and stand in the mud and water, till the rickety wagon could be again brought into a state of temporary order. During the last part of his journey he rode all night, with the rain pouring down upon him, and the horses sometimes fording deep creeks—sometimes plunging into sloughs, and then wading for miles through the water which had overflowed the road. The office of a missionary Bishop at the west, if he does his duty, and throws himself with all his heart into the work, is no sinecure.

PRAIRIES.

Our course from Galena, for the first thirty miles, was through beautiful oak openings, and over a rolling prairie. After this, on nearly to Chicago, our path lay through a magnificent, level prairie country. The wide sea of grass around us was now and then broken by a grove, springing up with luxuriance and beauty amid the treeless tract of country that stretched around on every side. These groves are points of great interest, and are spoken of by the sparsely scattered inhabitants of northern Illinois, as we speak of cities and towns. The most beautiful of these which we passed were Buffalo, Inlet, and Paw Paw groves, around or near which were scenes of massacre and slaughter during the Black Hawk war.

As no one can conceive the sensation awakened by being out of sight of land at sea, till he actually stands on the deck of a vessel, that is ploughing her way

through the trackless world of waters that stretch interminably around him, and strains his eye in vain to catch a view of one single fading outline of the far off shore—so no one can conceive the emotion that rises up in the bosom of the traveller as he stands on the broad prairie, and sees the horizon settling down upon one wide sea of waving grass, and can behold around him neither stone, nor stump, nor bush, nor tree, nor hill, nor house. These vast prairies, though bearing a luxuriant growth of grass, would impress one with a sense of desolateness, were they not beautified with flowers, and animated with the song and the sight of the feathered tribes. The view of the prairie, as it stretches off before you, often appears like a perfect flower garden. Though we were too late to see the productions in their rich vernal beauty, yet often they stood strewn around us on every side as far as the eye could reach, spreading out their rich and brilliant petals of every color and hue. An intelligent lady told me that in a single walk over the corner of a prairie, she gathered for a bouquet forty different kinds of flowers; and another in Michigan informed me that she had been able to gather one hundred and twenty different kinds. Though the music wafted along over these luxuriant expanses of earth be usually not so melodious nor varied as that to which the woodlands echo, there is something very animating in the whelming of the plover, the chirping of the robin, and the fluttering of the wings of a flock of prairie hens, started up at every half mile of your journey. And than occasionally we saw noble herds of cattle feeding over these vast plains. Such large, and fat, and noble-looking oxen and cows, I never before beheld, as I saw grazing amid the luxuriant prairies of Illinois. There is no fence to stay them in their course—they range where they choose amid the ten thousands of acres that stretch unenclosed around them.

SPIRITUAL PRIVATIONS.

While on our way to Chicago, as we stopped on one occasion to change horses, I went in and sat down in the only house in the place. It was a comfortable log cabin, and all nature looked so bright and sunny without, I was hardly prepared for demure and melancholy looks within: and yet the moment I entered, I saw in the countenance of the good lady of the cabin that her heart was ill at ease. She looked so forlorn and full of gloom, I determined to enter into conversation with her, and if possible elicit the cause of her depression. After a variety of inquiries, she was drawn out to give the following sketch of herself which I will put down as nearly as possible in her own words.

"We came into this country from western New York several years since. We have never failed to be amply remunerated for our cultivation of the soil. In a temporal point of view we have increased in goods. But our children have never been to school a day since we have been here. We used to go meeting every Sabbath, but here often for months there is no such thing known as public worship. A while ago, there was a minister that used to come once in three weeks, and preach about four miles from this. But now he is dead, and we have no preaching at all. We have no ministers and no physicians. What made me more contented to reside here, was that my oldest daughter was married and lived nearest neighbor, about two miles from this. She had three lovely and promising children in whom our hearts were bound up. But the grave now covers them! They were all cut down one after another about six months ago by the scarlet fever. We could not get any physician to see them, and they died within ten days of each other. And then we had to carry them ourselves to the grave. We put them into the ground in silence. There was no one to lift up the voice of prayer."

Here the good woman seemed choked in her utterance. She wiped her eyes and ceased speaking for a moment. I remained silent, and soon she proceeded. "My daughter laid her loss very much to heart. She never after the death of her babes wore a bright countenance. About ten days ago she was confined. Herself and her infant are dead! We buried them about three days since. She had no physician to attend upon her, for there was none within thirty miles. She had no minister to speak to her words of heavenly consolation, for there are none near here. H