

of fire." Probably the Dean of Westminster has over-strained his ingenuity, in his endeavour to show how much the visions of John took their shape and colouring from the natural scenery and the physical phenomena of this island-prison. But much may be said in support of the general principle on which his speculation proceeds. If we find the descriptions which other inspired men give of the worship of heaven idealised from that of Solomon's temple, why may we not believe that John's visions were influenced in some degree by the scenes of this natural temple of the Ægean? It has been noticed that there was little in the sunrises and sunsets of Ephesus corresponding with the grand pictures of the Apocalypse, but it was otherwise with what John beheld in and around Patmos. As he looked down from one of its summits on the everchanging sea he must often have seen it calm as a mirror at his feet, "as a sea of glass like unto crystal;" or when the neighbouring volcanic mountain of Thera sent up its lurid flames, how often must the deep have seemed "like unto a lake of fire!" And again, when its dense smoke darkened the heavens, the sun must have appeared "like sackcloth of hair," and the "moon as blood." Thus far, perhaps we may safely go with the accomplished traveller in supposing the natural phenomena in and around this rugged isle to have been reproduced and enlarged in John's symbolic pictures of the spiritual world; and indeed the very circumstance connects the Apostle all the more, in common with the narrative part of his Apocalypse, with Patmos:

It is a fact not without its interest, that this island continues to be, to the present day, the Iona of the East. Its monastery, seen from a great distance on one of its loftiest ridges, is a miniature university, to which youths come for the higher forms of instruction, from the Morea, from the shores of Asia Minor,

and many of the neighbouring islands. The sacredness with which the name of the beloved Apostle still surrounds it, protects it alike from the exactions of the Turk, and from the robberies of the pirate, just as, in the middle ages, the convents were safe when the baron's castle was given up to the flame or the sword. Perhaps its smallness may have something also to do with its independence, and there does seem a mixture of poetry in the description of one traveller which represents liberty as "springing up here, like the flower upon its native mountain."

LETTER FROM REV. J. FRASER CAMPBELL.

*On board S. S. "Duke of Lancaster," }
near Port Said, Nov. 14th, 1876. }*

To the Christian readers of the Presbyterian Witness.

DEAR FRIENDS,—Thank God with me. I am cheered by the belief that many of you continue in prayer for me, and surely your prayers are answered. I thought of this when on the passage from Newfoundland the weather was so favourable, though we left St. John's in the very season of the equinoctial gales. And I cannot but think of it now when He whose bidding clouds and winter winds obey, sends us, day after day, so extraordinarily beautiful weather. It has been the subject of wonder and remark to everyone, and of much thanksgiving. At first it was continually in our mouths, but now we have got so used to it that the subject seems stale, and except in our thanksgiving to God we only occasionally talk of it. Coming down the English Channel the frequent exclamation was: Oh, if it will only continue till we get across the Bay! And so it did. The dreaded Bay of Biscay, where even in a calm the swell is sometimes so tremendous, the Captain says he does not remember ever to have