

## Correspondence.

### MR. HALL'S LETTER.

(FROM ENGLAND.)—NO 4.

DEAR EDITOR,—Almost every mail I receive from your side, I hear of some dear friend having passed away; among them Dr. Wilkes, whom we shall all miss so much; bright, cheerful and happy Mr. A. T. H. Johnson, of London, a model Sunday school superintendent—how strange will the Congregational Church there seem to me without him?—and dear Mrs. W. Currie. I was overwhelmed with grief when I heard of her death. I cannot tell you how I feel as I think of it. How strange that her noble longings to work for the Master should have been accepted instead of the work itself, and that she should be taken home to wear the crown so soon. My heart aches, not for her, but for the stricken ones in Canada, and for my lonely brother in far-off Africa. I “know the heart of a stranger,” even in England; how must he feel among the poor benighted people who can offer him little sympathy? But he, too, will have his reward. It seems to me that this great sacrifice is an earnest of a mighty harvest in that part of that Dark Continent. It is, indeed, to every one who knew and loved dear Mrs. Currie, a great sacrifice, but not too much for such a Saviour and such a cause—“*We'll meet again, 'Twill not be long.*” How many precious lives have been laid down for Christ in that distant land. When the news of the murder of the noble Bishop Hannington reached this country, twenty more consecrated Christian men were willing to go out and carry on the work which he began. These testimonies to the reality of the religion of Jesus Christ are helpful to our faith, and stimulating to our zeal.

The Christmas and New Year holidays were to me times of quiet and rest. I paid a short visit to friends in Ireland. The state of that country is far from satisfactory at present, and I am afraid that unprincipled demagogues have far more to do with this than either harsh landlords or bad land laws. I see that some well-meaning Christian men in this country propose doing mission work there, along Nationalist lines, or adopting that platform. If they attempt this, they will make a fatal mistake, for besides the impossibility of reaching the Roman Catholics by any such pandering to their unreasonable prejudices, they will alienate the only people among whom we as Congregationalists have any chance of making headway in Ireland, the Protestants of the North. In fact our ministers in that country are living in fear and trembling, in view of the threatened “Evangelization of Ireland,” as it is called.

Everything is changed in that country, and it appeared to me if the people had the land for nothing they would find it difficult to make any headway.

What with wet seasons, poor prices, internal strifes and chronic discontent, there does not seem to be much hope for Ireland with Home Rule or without Home Rule. The best thing the people can do is get out of it.

Belfast has grown wonderfully during the past ten years. I saw no signs of the late riots. It was Christmas time, and all appeared to be running over with native humour and good nature. Londonderry is very much the same; its growth has not been nearly so great. The Congregational Churches in Belfast (*three in number*) have made marked progress; but in Londonderry it has been rather the other way.

I visited Dungannon, which seemed in my boyhood days to be the very hub of creation, but now sleepy and uninteresting. Portadown is a large manufacturing place; it has grown considerably. It was one of the most memorable days of my life when, with my only brother, I wandered through the old country graveyard, read the epitaphs of many of our school fellows and playmates who have long since been gathered to their fathers, or went among the scattered families to find but remnants of large households, some in Australia, some in America, others in new homes; many gone the way of all flesh—just a few remaining. Yet I found more familiar faces, and was immediately recognized by a larger number than might be expected after the lapse of thirty years. It was particularly pleasant to meet with not a few who began the Christian life about that time, when the great religious awakening of 1859 was passing over Ireland, who are still rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. To go back to the spot where you not only “first breathed the vital air,” but where you “first saw the Lord,” is calculated to put you on a course of rigid self-examination, and to humble you very much before the Lord. It was a time of revival to my soul, and I felt sure if there had been time for special meetings we could have had times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

But to return to England, I will mention some of the places I have visited since I last wrote you.

ILKLEY,

in Yorkshire, is a charming place; a summer resort for tourists. There are three or four hydropathic establishments, where invalids go to recruit their health, and pleasure-seekers go for amusement. We have but one church in the town; but it is influential, and in the season the congregation is large. The present pastor, Rev. Mr. Hillman, has been sixteen years there, and in fact has brought the cause to its present prosperous state. A kind lady was so interested in our Canadian work that she sent me \$50 specially for that.

OTLEY

is in the same beautiful valley, and six miles distant