

# THE CHURCH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

MARCH, 1894.

## INDIANA.

DOUGLAS P. PUTNAM, D. D.

The topography of the State of Indiana differs greatly from that of the regions from which most of its early settlers came. There is not a mountain and scarcely a good sized hill in the State. Probably the highest elevations are not more than six hundred feet above the general level. For the most part the face of the country is a succession of exceedingly fertile valleys, flat plains, swamp lands and earth undulations, with something that might be called hills along our southern and portions of our western borders. The swamp lands are confined to the north-western portion of the State, reaching back from the shores of Lake Michigan where the earth had to be spread out to make room for Chicago, some of whose suburbs have already spilled over into our State. Much of these swamp lands has been reclaimed by drainage and forms the finest of pasture and meadow lands. The rest of the State for the most part was originally heavily wooded with the finest of timber, walnut, oak, sugar-maple, beech, sycamore and hickory abounding everywhere.

The mineral resources of the State consist largely of coal, building stone and natural gas. The famous "block coal" (so named because of the form in which it comes from the mines) to be found in such great abundance in the westerly middle portions of the State, is said to be superior even to charcoal for smelting purposes. A very fine quality of lime and brown sand stone for building purposes is to be found in quarries of almost limitless capacity.

The development of the natural gas during the past ten years has worked wonders in our

manufacturing interests and in numerous instances has changed the centres of population and the channels of trade. Millions of dollars have been invested in gas enterprises, and notwithstanding numerous legal battles to prevent it, pipe lines have been laid to Chicago to supply the people of that great city with the finest fuel on earth. The gas field of this State includes the whole of ten counties and portions of ten other counties, all lying in an irregular crescent shape, some distance in an easterly and north-easterly direction from Indianapolis, and is possibly equal in extent to a fifth of the whole area of the State. While the gas supply in some portions of this field seems to be temporarily exhausted, yet in other portions wells are being constantly opened. This gas is usually found at a depth of about four to nine hundred feet and shows a pressure of from three to six hundred pounds to the square inch. A gas well on fire, under full pressure, forms one of the greatest shows on earth. The roar, the smell, and the heat are fearful.

The population centre of the United States has been within our borders for some years and is now not far from Columbus. Our more than two million people are like the rest of the nation—reasonably homogeneous. We are from everywhere, though we have no especially large foreign population. The first settlement was made by the French traders at Vincennes and Corydon as early as 1702. These points, however, were not continuously occupied. The first permanent settlements came at the points named and at other places along the Ohio River, as

are only four persons in the district who have not given their hearts to Christ.

“Still another field comes to my mind. The Sabbath we met to organize was so stormy that only eight boys and one lady were present. The lady consented to superintend the school. It was a log school house and all the seats were made

of slabs. I have tried to keep track of those eight boys. Three are ministers of the Gospel, one a doctor, and, like St. Luke, “a beloved physician.” Two of the others are Sabbath-school superintendents. Dear teachers and superintendents, be not disheartened nor discouraged. Let no obstacle turn you from your work.”

---

## FREEDMEN.

---

### SAMPLES FROM OUR LETTER FILE.

There is no doubt but that the general interest in the work of any of our Boards would be greatly increased if in some way the many letters that are received from the workers in the field could be brought distinctly before the minds of the many earnest friends who have a general knowledge of what is being done, but fail to be touched by that peculiar influence that arises from definite knowledge connected with specific cases. One of the hard duties of those who read these letters is that of being compelled often to say *no* under the conviction that there is certainly some one in the great Church at large who would supply the needed aid were the facts only clearly known, and the pressing wants of this or that case distinctly apprehended. Perhaps it might serve to awaken and increase a general interest in our work, to give short extracts from various sources—not so much for the purpose of making special appeals, for special cases, as to present, here and there, such side-lights as will enable all who read these extracts to form a more intelligent and comprehensive conception of the great and growing need of more money, for the general fund, out of which the Board, in its wisdom, may distribute on the line of proportion and relative importance.

1. “I am truly glad to say my church building is finished, and I do humbly accept the congratulations of the Board, and am glad of the pleasant letters you wrote to — and —. They have been my friends from the first day I landed here, and have helped me faithfully in my church building. My work is winning now. We have, it is said, the prettiest church in the

city, and I have good congregations to hear me preach. I have worked hard and think I have made good friends for myself and my work since I have been here. I have yet much to do before my church is finished. My seats have to be paid for, and the reflectors, and we are absolutely compelled to have a bell. The Sabbath-school is splendid, and the day school the same. I am almost, it seems, broken down. Please call on us this winter if you can.”

2. “Your more than welcome letter was received this morning. I am so thankful for the good news that my heart is overflowing with joy and gratitude to you and the donors of the garden seed. My prayer goes up to the Triune God that he will bless, sustain and encourage you by directing and commanding those who know Him, as well as those who do not regard Him, to give of their substance that you may be able to meet the increased claims, obligations, demands and duties in this great aid service to those whom He hath chastened, smitten and humbled. I shall carry out your instructions and suggestions to the best of my ability, and in the fear of God to whom we must give an account.”

[The seed referred to was sent by Messrs. Landreth & Sons, Philadelphia, Pa., and Messrs. D. M. Ferry & Co., Detroit, Mich., in generous response to letters written from our office.]

3. “Our school is in excellent condition and doing a good work. The teachers are all at their posts. Our church work has been greatly injured by the cyclone. The vegetables under the ground were destroyed by the salt water. Our people feel this loss much, as these are their main support, especially at this season of the year, but are not wholly discouraged. They claim better times are coming. The Lord will provide.”

4. “Our report does not report so well, this month, as the grip required part of the time of

one of the teachers which necessitated closing the school sooner than we meant—also, very inclement weather helped matters along. We are sorry it is so—since our term is short without the loss of a day. Our little orphanage has been much afflicted within the last two weeks; but, we hope for better days and a Happy New Year."

5. "Our building is not finished inside, but we hope by another winter to have it done. Many thanks to the Board. Do pray for us that God may bless us in our work. This is a hard year with us and the people to whom we are preaching. The people have not the money to pay. I have been receiving from them for pay on salary anything they could let me have, that I could use, in order to teach them how to give. You know I told you that if they paid \$100 they would do well. They have paid more on building than on salary. My other church has it on their heart to build. We started to raise the money on Thanksgiving day and raised \$14. Since then we have raised \$50. When we get better buildings people will attend church more in the Winter."

6. "This is a very promising point; and, if rightly managed a grand work will grow up here. We are gaining ground. Several, during the last quarter, have united with our church. As soon as we can get a house to worship in, and teach the people what the Presbyterian Church really is, we will have but little trouble. Some look upon the Presbyterian Church as a great curiosity. They come to our Sunday-school to see how we teach the Bible. We pack the shorter Catechism into them every time they come. In order that the work may grow, and the people be kept together, we give most of our time here. The school which was organized the 1st of the month keeps us here. We have too many points to do well at all of them and work up the school at the same time. I hope God will bless the Board and that the officers of the Board will be able to do all that is in their mind and heart to do."

7. "The sad news of the loss of our church and school building has, no doubt, reached you. Only a few desks were saved. The week of prayer had been observed by the students and was continued this week. There were three conversions. Some eight persons expressed a desire to unite with the church. Some interest was taken in the meeting and it was prolonged until 9.30 p. m. About midnight the fire broke out. Miss — was just going to bed and gave the alarm. The flames were in the belfry. Soon

the whole town was awakened and black and white worked with a will to stay the fire and save the dormitory. The women prayed for its safety, and one little girl fell on her knees and prayed "Lord have mercy and save the dormitory. Save it, Lord, save it for Christ's sake." She declares, now, that the Lord saved it because she prayed. Only hard work, with prayer, saved it; but a number of the windows were broken, the spouting injured, furniture and some dishes broken. One girl was hurt. A trunk fell on her."

8. Another fire. "You have received ere this my telegram announcing the total destruction of the Boys' Dormitory. It caught from a defective flue while we were at Sunday-school. The wind was very high—blowing almost a blizzard. In twenty minutes after the discovery it was in a sheet of flames. The young men had labored very hard to make their rooms comfortable and had just finished, Saturday night, putting on paper upstairs. Three slept up stairs and six down stairs. The ones that slept up stairs lost everything except what was on their backs, and their Bibles and catechisms. The others lost part of their things. Only a few pieces of furniture were saved. In the moment we knew not what to do—whether to send them home or try to keep them; but, after seeking guidance from the Lord, decided to keep them, believing that "He will provide." Of the nine boys eight of them are self-supporting and are among our best students. I have succeeded in renting a small house, just below the church, waiting to hear from you."

9. "Neither one of these churches have a suitable place of worship. At — there is an old, open, rotten log house into which the rain and wind pours. At — there is a new open log house through which the wind whistles. We have no stove. They have to make a fire outside and warm well before they go in, and the congregation has to run out at the time of service to get warm."

10. "It is with pleasure that I write you We have just closed a series of meetings. The work has been wonderfully blessed. The church has been greatly revived and many new ones have been added to the church. We had 29 professions. Our work this year is very hopeful and encouraging. We have a school work connected with this church which begins every year after Christmas. It is very important and beneficial. We have started a work in —. The work there has a bright future and is filled with grand possibilities. I have been preaching there ever

since September. The work is being built up. The young people are anxious to have Presbyterian work there. The people do not have any preaching of any note; therefore, there is the greatest need of the plain, simple truth. We are unable to teach all the week and keep up both these fields—in fact will have to give up the work at ——, or my school. I know the Board is pushed to the utmost. I appreciate the urgent demands continually coming to you for help, and the limited amount you have; but, is it possible for you to give us something in the way of supporting a teacher so that I can continue to preach to these people who are suffering for want of the simple, plain Gospel of Jesus Christ? Can you help us? If you can do anything, please do it."

11. A letter from an Elder in the white church at Columbus, Ga. (Southern), concerning the

death of one of our faithful colored ministers—Rev. J. H. Bergen:

"I received your favor in reply to my telegram announcing Mr. Bergen's death. I came out of a sick room to attend the funeral. Took our pastor, Rev. Dr. Carter of the First Presbyterian Church, and had services at Bergen's church. I was obliged to go back to my room where I have since been engaged in fighting the grippe; and am but just out, hence the delay in writing to you. Bergen was one of the best men I ever knew; simple, single-hearted and sincere. His sole aim was to serve his Master, and I doubt not he has entered into rest. I buried him properly, and the total expense does not much exceed \$35. I think he owes only small amounts, and if you see fit to send me a check for what is due him, I will disburse it and make due report to you "

E. P. C.

Rev. J. R. Ramsey writes to us of Robert Johnson, lately deceased:

His life was intimately connected with the missionary work among the Creek and Seminole Indians. At first a slave, his time was hired by the missionaries to aid them as interpreter. His knowledge of the language and manners of the Indians qualified him in a remarkable degree for that important work. He was a zealous Christian, and was willing to do anything, even to risking his own life, in helping to preach the Gospel and in conducting the Indian schools. He once put himself between me and a drunken Indian who was threatening my life, as we were returning from a preaching appointment. The Civil War, in which he served as a useful Union soldier, made him a freedman, and by improving his consequent advantages he afterwards became well-conditioned in life. After that strife was ended and the Indians settled in peace in their homes, he stood beside me amid the falling snow one February Sabbath, to interpret for me while preaching to the Seminole congregation that was too large to be contained in any house in their country at that time, and to assist in organizing the Seminole Presbyterian Church and in administering the ordinances, when twenty-five new members were baptized. His skin was very black, but there was no man more respected and loved by the good of all colors than he.

What has the color of a man's skin to do with his respectability, anyway, unless it is colored by rum?

#### AFRICA IN CURRENT HISTORY.

For several years past and probably for several years to come the news which will tell most in the world's future history is that which comes from Africa.

A French military force has lately entered Timbuctoo in the very interior and most inaccessible part of the South Sahara neighborhood. France proposes to control the whole of this territory, and she reaches Timbuctoo from the north by way of Algeria and from the west by way of Senegal.

Timbuctoo has been an almost unknown city, visited very rarely, and generally by Europeans only in disguise. The information is too meager as yet for us to understand the full meaning of this occupation. So far as we know the force is a small one, and a small force could have no chance in case of opposition.

We have no question that France intends to make Timbuctoo a great centre for its influence and power, nor that Northwest Africa will be finally under French control. It is often said, and truly said, that France has shown no great aptitude for colonial enterprises owing to a lack of surplus population. But she has put Algeria under civilized conditions, and Frenchmen may multiply more rapidly in the colonies than they do in their own country. The partition of Africa will afford a great outlet for European population and enterprise and will have a great influence on the world.—*The Independent*.