LETTER FROM LONDON.

"The first time since 1855," was the statement in the newspapers on New Year's morning, respecting the freezing over of the Thames. The thermometer had been down to seven degrees above zero. In addition to over 100,000 skaters in the parks, there were fully that number on the Thames, and for miles they had a clear way before them. Bonfires and barbecues on the ice were also in order. The accidents, too, were rather numerous, and several boys and girls who ventured near to dangerous places were plunged into the chilling water, never again to behold the light of day in mortality. From the suburban districts come reports of people freezing to death, and all through the city the poorer classes who ventured out, either from choice or necessity, clearly showed by their appearance that they were not entirely proof against the biting frost.

But in London the people dress better, even in the lower ranks of life, than in other parts of Great Britain. There were many thousands, clad in furs and warm clothing, who were out to greet the new year. Cheerful and happy did they appear, forming a strong contrast to the misery to be seen in the poorer quarters, as they hurried to and fro, on foot or in the thousands of vehicles that hasten in either direction. One place that seemed of special interest was St. Paul's, and shortly before midnight the space in front of the cathedral was occupied by thousands who were apparently waiting some particular event. There were all classes of society, and each member of the motley crowd seemed to vie with the other in making the air ring with sounds of every description.

Then the bells pealed forth their melody, and the noises from below arose in perfect pandemonium. The multitude had assembled to welcome the New Year, and when the bells ceased their clanging, the din became so great that the striking of the heavy gong in the old clock could scarce be heard as it tolled the hour that marked the transition from the old year to the new. This was the most notable event in the metropolis, and that because of the disagreeable disturbance, to welcome 1891—for Christmas is by far the best observed holiday.

Turning to another picture, the first of the year finds a peculiar state of things among the industrial classes in the British capital. A mania for strikes seems to have broken out among them, and while a great effort is being made to steady the movements of the laboring men, it now looks as though it would avail but little. There are strikes by railway employes, by dockers, by colliers, weavers, and in almost every branch of business, till employers know not where the next blow will be struck. Politicians are beginning to take the matter in hand, not with a view to quieting the feelings exhibited, but rather to seize the opportunity to be carried forward to fame by the tide of popular opinion, as manifested by the masses. "The rights of the workingman" is now the cry, but as yet it is spoken carefully, so that the capitalist and monopolist will not be turned into a political foe. Even Home Rule bids fair to soon take a place second to the labor question in British politics.

The scheme set out in Booth's "In Darkest England" is already having an experience with breakers, which soon place it in a sorry plight. Mr. Smith resigned his position as manager of the social reform wing of the Salvation Army. Then the public began to ask for the reason, as it was known that to Mr. Smith's ability was largely due the success which had attended the Army's place of refuge. After considerable prodding, the ex-commissioner gave as the cause of his action that "to such a pass have things come that an independent opinion cannot be allowed in the Salvation Army on any subject."

The "general" was next approached by those who were giving him support, and who wanted to know what financial system would be followed. Mr. Booth told them he was going to run it according to his own ideas, and to do it himself. He wanted no help but money, and no interference at all. He refused to accept any arrangement which would modify his power or compromise his status as the solitary and autocratic head of the movement in all its parts and all its developments. His motto was "Do as you are told, and don't argufy," and he did not propose to change by consenting to account to anybody. This was too much for the non-Salvationists and out of the scheme they went. Now, instead of warm commendations of Booth and his scheme from the pulpit, the public are told that "Booth is an irresponsible power, and his plan inferior to the combination of charitable societies that are now keeping the wolf from the door of hundreds of thousands.

Notwithstanding the fact that we are "across the big pond," there is considerable interest taken in the American Indian question. The dispatches about the fighting paint everything in glowing colors for the troops, and commend them for their promptness and bravery. But the results of the conflict at Porcupine Creek created an impression that there might be something that was not heroic in the murder of women and children. The effect of this was to cause inquiry, and three days after the first accounts of the battle came, Uncle Sam's blue coats are spoken of with tenfold more detestation than was awarded them praise at the outset. The London *Standard* makes this pointed comment on the cause of the disturbances and the spirit that animated those engaged in the awful butchery:

"The dispatches of Wednesday say that in the fighting at Porcupine Creek one hundred and ten Indian warriors and two hundred and fifty women and children were killed, and that not more than six children remained alive in the Indian camp. If this report be true, it is a disgrace to the American soldiers which no provocation can condone. Indians are execrated as monsters of cruelty when they murder the families of white settlers; but it appears that the white soldiers are not one whit less barbarous, their idea being obviously one of extermination. Americans covet the few tracts of land left to the poor Indians, and it is to this covetousness that the whole of the present disturbances are due." The boast of enlightenment and progress in American civilization is a mockery when tested by the atrocious crimes committed by the United States under the cloak of governmental authority.

There has been much discussion among ministers and promoters of charity organizations regarding the poor of London. Some cases of starving to death have occurred, and the burden of poverty bears heavy, not alone on those who are improvident, but on many who would willingly labor if they could find the opportunity to gain a livelihood. Appeals for aid are issued by various districts, of which the following, from the South-east End of the metropolis, is but a sample:

"Upon the south side of the Thames, in the districts of Dockhead, Bermondsey and down to Deptford, the privation and suffering, especially of women and children, caused by lack of work through the weather, is terrible. Strong men are, in enforced idleness, compelled to see their families absolutely without food. We do not ask help for the lazy, but for those who would much rather have work than charity."

In another district, Wandsworth, on Wednesday, a body of 100 men paraded the streets with collection boxes, asking for money, food, or anything to alleviate the poverty and distress of themselves and families. They were out of employment and funds, and could not secure either, unless it was by begging. The police warned the men that they were liable to arrest, but they continued on their way. Finally the police interfered and checked them. Mr. Denman, the magistrate, was waited upon, and said the police would have to enforce the law against begging. He said he regretted that they were so badly off but could not sanction a disregard of the statutes.

The men then went to the relieving officer of the workhouse, to see whether he could render them assistance for a brief time. He told them they could enter the workhouse, but they refused to do so as paupers, and returned to the court. The magistrate informed them he would render aid, and upon each one giving his name and address, and receiving assurance that the assistance would be prompt, they departed. These instances are indications of the deplorable condition into which both tradesmen and laborers are being crowded by force of circumstances. The seeds of discontent with the present condition of society are implanted in their breast, to grow and develop amid privations which render men desperate in their struggle for existence. Who can tell what the harvest will be? J. H. A.

LONDON, Jan. 3, 1891.

OLD FOLKS' PARTY.

The annual gathering of the Old Folks of American Fork took place on Wednesday, January 21st, 1891. They were honored with the presence of Bishop W. B. Preston, Elders C. R. Savage, George Goddard, W. C. Dunbar and N. A. Empey of Salt Lake City. The aged of American Fork, irrespective of creed or condition, were invited and carriages sent to bring them to the Opera Hall. Banners and mottoes were suspended over the auditorium such as: "Welcome," "God Bless the Old Folks," "Honor Old Age," "In God we Trust."