Bridgeton, New Jersey.
JAN 11 1888.

Dear relatives to whom I owe letters:

There are so many of you that I mean to make use of my husband's cyclostyle to answer you. — — We had a Merry Christmas at our house this year. It commenced with our S. S. Celebration, a programme of which I'll enclose. (The scripture reading prepared by W. H. B.) Then Santa Claus brought us a tree & set it up in the children's bed-room while they were enjoying the unusual privilege of sleeping in the spare-room. There was a "putz" at the foot of the tree with hills & vales, & Noah's ark, where he conscientiously placed it for many following nights. Evelina's doll gaily dressed in blue, opened & shut her eyes, but will alas! never more, I fear, for her head is broken, & tears from her young mother & other near relatives have flowed freely. Mary's & Ellen's old lady & gentleman who nod their heads & drink tea, are as fresh as ever. There were blue crocheted slippers from Aunt Lily Stites, which they wear with great comfort night & morning, & so make more journeys than ever between their room & the bath-room. Miss Rocap, over 70 yrs. of age embroidered me a rug. There were cakes, mince pies, turkey, celery, fruit of all kinds, & other good things sent in by our people. My S. S. class gave me a beautiful white satin card. Books for all four children came from Uncle Joe & from Aunt Jennie. New outfits for Mary's & Ellen's dolls from Aunt Laurie. These dolls were just one year old on X'mas day, & their mothers celebrated their birthdays. Minnie Norcross sent lace collars to Mary & Ellen, mittens to Willie, & an embroidered napkin to Evelina. Our tree was gay with pretty tin ornaments from Mrs. Hackett. A X'mas card came to Willie from Granville Weston, a book from Miss Fithian to M. & E. The children still have Grandpa's present unused. Dr. Booth sent a volume of his sermons to my husband, I gave him Dr. Thomson's "Land & the Book". He gave

me a clock & a set of dishes (Blue Gordon) to save my best ones. But best of all we had the pleasure of making other people happy. Mary & Ellen rolled out & cut ginger snaps for nearly a whole day, till their cheeks were like roses, & a big box was filled with cakes. It was their share to the gift table at S.S. – They also had great fun selecting X'mas presents, & paying their own money for them, & their mysterious suggestions of secrets were laughable. They regularly earn 5 cts. a week going without butter for dinner, & one cent every morning they dress completely in half an hour. Mornings they fail they give me two cents. – My S.S. class were here to tea Monday (X'mas) evening, & enjoyed the lighting of the tree & their own gifts, & also after supper, a magic lantern exhibition in the parlor, by their pastor. They are all poor women who were not in the habit of going to S.S. I invited one, to start the class, a year ago, & she collected the others. A more delightful, appreciative class can't be found. – On Thursday evening after X'mas we had a reception of ministers to meet Rev. Mr. Beach, new pastor of the 1st Pres. church. Eight ministers with their wives were here. The preparations, particularly the refreshments gave me a good deal to do, but the affair was a success, & promotive of unity among denominations. We received New Year's calls, – on Monday eve. from gentlemen, & on Tuesday eve. from ladies. Three young ladies assisted in receiving. More refreshments & preparations were necessary. We had more calls than last year, & people expressed themselves as enjoying it. – We had an unusually delightful "week of prayer", the subject being as in November, "Our Risen Lord's last command." Union meetings in different churches led by different pastors. – Rev. Mr. Webb of Lincoln University spent last Sabbath with us. We always welcome his visits.

We are having our second fall of snow today, & the children are delighted. Some days ago, Willie prayed one morning "Dear Jesus, please take all the water up to Heaven, & make it into snow, & send it down to us." He seemed so happy with the expectation of snow, & sure enough about noon it began to fall. He was radiant, & immediately kneeled down to thank God. The next morning the snow was gone. So he & Evelina began to pray again for snow. Then Mary & Ellen came to me, almost crying, "Oh Mama, I do wish Willie would n't pray for snow, – you know how it hurts Kitty's sore eye." I said, fearing he might be dis-

appointed - "Perhaps some poor children are praying not to have it snow". He seemed to think a good deal about it, & several times has said - "Mama, do you believe any poor children don't want it to snow today?" & so has it prayed for snow. Today, however, it came down thick & fast, & as soon as Willie saw it, he exclaimed, "Oh! see the snow! I want to thank God". & kneeling just where he was, he said "Thank you, dear God, for the snow, Amen." -

With love & best wishes for a happy year from the "united head" of this house,

Ellen S. Belden. -