

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Autobiographical Sketch.

By REV. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

EVENTS OF YOUTH.

(No. 8.)

Toward the close of the year 1813, when I was nineteen years old, an invitation was given me to teach a school in the western part of Cornwallis, at the foot of the North Mountain, on what was called "The Back Road." To this request I acceded.

This place, which is now thickly settled, and where there are five cultivated farms, with good houses, and general accommodations, was then in comparatively a wilderness state, with very few inhabitants, who were just commencing the clearing of farms, and principally living in rude log houses. No school had ever been taught in the neighbourhood. A house was built of rough logs, and I was employed to teach the children in it.

At this period I entered on a new sphere of life. Several events and circumstances connected with it may be worthy of record.

At a school meeting held preparatory to the commencement of my labors, one of the proprietors remarked to me, "I will know whether you govern the children or not." I made no reply; but thought, "I shall know whether they are governed at home or not." When I began to teach I kept this in view, and soon made up my mind on this point. "Here," said I, "is a family that his governed, there is one that is not. The difference was easily ascertained. Such children as were taught and habituated to obey their parents, yielded ready and cheerful obedience to their teacher. They needed no second bidding. But such as were allowed to take their own way at home, or to wait for a second or third command, when that which was enjoined did not accord with their inclinations, were naturally disposed to adopt the same course at school. As I boarded around at the houses of my employers, I had subsequently an opportunity of verifying in every case the correctness of my judgment formed at the first. It invariably proved to have been perfectly correct. How highly important, how exceedingly desirable on many accounts, that children should be inured to the rendering of strict and prompt obedience from the first dawning of reason. This is adapted to render them happy, respectable, and useful, and to prevent innumerable ills.

One of the first rules established by me—always retained and enforced as far as possible—was the entire prohibition of all profane and indecent words. Every teacher, as well as every parent, ought to be particular on these points. When children and youths are associated together, great care is requisite to prevent the imparting and receiving of corrupting influences. It may be added, that no person should ever be employed as a teacher who will, under any circumstances, utter a word verging either toward profanity or indelicacy; nor, indeed, whose general example may not be safely followed by the young.

It had been remarked to me by a friend, that teachers ought to study the dispositions of their pupils. A case presently occurred which brought this just remark forcibly to my mind. A prudent man stated to me privately, that he feared there was one of his sons whom I could not succeed in teaching. He said that if I did not, he would not blame me. The parents had made considerable proficiency in teaching an older son at home; but in the case of this one they had failed. He added, that if I could instruct him, they would be extremely glad. I determined to do my best.

When the lad came to school, I soon perceived that he had lost all confidence in himself. He had in some measure learned the letters, and been taught in Dilworth's Spelling Book—then in common use—as far as to "Dah, nab," &c. There he was set. He was aware that his relatives had given him up for a dunce; and he concluded that it was useless for him to attempt to learn. Of course he was averse to attending school, and when there was reluctant to say his lesson, I resolved not to find any fault with him for erring, and never to speak sharply or discouragingly to him. When he erred, I put him right in the gentlest and kindest manner. Whenever he did well, I commended him. I did not keep him long at one lesson, lest he should be disheartened. It soon became apparent that he attended the school with cheerfulness, and came up to me to receive instruction with pleasure. Though he did not possess a natural aptitude to

learn, yet by kind treatment, commendation, and attention, he was happily raised from a state of discouragement, became conscious that he could acquire learning, and was induced to plod on with a good measure of success. It was remarkable that he was never absent a day during the time that I taught there, namely, four months and a half; and that there was no occasion to rebuke him, or to speak to him otherwise than kindly. An opposite course of treatment would undoubtedly have bound him in ignorance; but under this he made respectable proficiency in learning. The experience acquired in this case, was adapted to aid me in my subsequent labors as a teacher.

When I came to be boarding with different families. I perceived how needful it is to regard the admonitions of Solomon with reference to tale-bearing. The people were living in general harmony. In different instances, however, I was persuaded that if I had simply stated, in strict accordance with truth—different from the usual practice—in one house what I had heard said in another, and then carried back the remarks that would have been naturally drawn forth in reply, a fire would have been kindled that would have set the neighbourhood in a flame. (James iii. 5, 6.) I therefore adopted a fixed resolution, never to mention anything which I might hear in a way calculated to excite resentment and strife. The observance of this resolution, formed in early life, has unquestionably prevented much harm, and preserved me from a great amount of vexation and trouble.

Every person ought to be cautious never to utter a word that is liable, if reported, to excite animosity or displeasure. The individual, however, who hears an unguarded or imprudent expression, should by no means repeat it. If any person's character be seriously assailed, it may be the part of duty to give the accused an opportunity to refute the slander. But in all ordinary cases the utmost care should be exercised to avoid every thing of the nature of tale-bearing. This pernicious practice, which is strongly condemned by the inspired writers (Lev. xix. 16. Prov. xviii. 8. xx. 19. xxvi. 20.) is derogatory to the reputation of those who indulge in it, and does an incalculable amount of mischief in families, in neighbourhoods, in communities, among nations, and, alas! in Christian churches. Every person should, therefore, very cautiously refrain from all tale-bearing, tattling, and mischief-making in all its forms, and never lend a listening ear to any thing of the kind.

For the Christian Messenger.

Concerning Common Schools.

MR. EDITOR,—

Amid the general silence of our Provincial press concerning our Common Schools, it was refreshing to see a short article in the late number of the Acadian Recorder on "Our Educational Wants." The Recorder says, "We want and must have a power in this behalf (Common-school Education), that will go down to the uneducated mass, not only to infuse a living desire for wholesome knowledge, but to place within its grasp abundant provision for the attainment of so laudable an end."

We have here the crying wants of the day well put:—begetting among the mass a thirst for wholesome knowledge, and making abundant provision for its gratification.

I wish to say a few words in the hope that others will say more, on this subject of prime moment. To the Recorder be the honor of so opportunely bringing this matter afresh to the public mind.

There is but one way in which a thirst for knowledge can be awakened, and that is, by knowledge itself. A little, well administered, begets a desire for more. If this be so, the "thirst" and the "provision" are reciprocals,—are, in fact, coordinate in action; or, rather, as a bit of political economy, the "provision" is the supply; the "thirst," the demand. Logically, the former is the antecedent; the latter, the consequent.

How far our present provision has shown itself adequate to beget this thirst, may be gathered by the astounding relation of the last census. After all the toils of Superintendents Dawson and Forrester, this Province can troop up its myriads of ignorance. I can point to-day to plenty of Districts in our wealthiest counties, where are to be found 50, 60, 70, aye, in some, even 90 children who ought to be at school, but who have not entered a school room for years. Good schools are by no means the rule, nor never were, even in the best districts; judge, then, the educational state of the poorer districts. Why this inefficiency—this miserable weakness? Let our Legislators answer. Our

Superintendents, as their reports in the Journals of the House, show,—have labored incessantly—have thought, planned, and begged the power to execute. Dr. Dawson struggled hard and well; but none in power were found to help. Canada said, 'Come over and help us.' And he went. Dr. Forrester has toiled in his work. His labors bid fair to succeed in the same degree as his predecessors.

Is it not high time, Sir, that we confronted this monster of popular ignorance now stalking so boldly abroad?

To my mind it has become the capital question of the times. God speed our Academies, our Colleges, and every just and well-directed effort in the educational field; but their instrumentalities do not, can not reach the masses. The school must be carried to the people—into their very midst. The whole must be leavened. How this can best be done is the greatest question, in political economy, that now pleads for a solution at the hands of our Legislators. In the mean time, allow me to comment in brief, upon some features of our present inefficient provision.

The system of Trusteeship was doubtless intended as a safeguard, for the Government on the one side, for the people on the other. But turn to the law. See how provokingly silent it is concerning the duties of Trustees!—If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch.

The statute is more plain as to the duties of Commissioners,—though there is need that some margin be left for discretionary power. The following are a few of the many evils aching for a remedy:—

1. Trustees countenancing more than one School in a District, unless the number of Children fit to School exceeds 75.

Two schools, where there should be but one, results in poor remuneration, poor Teachers, poor Schools, and, at last, no schools at all.

2. Granting money to Schools not countenanced by Trustees.

A sure and swift way to ruin the District School. Results as in No. 1.

3. Granting money to select Schools.

They are simply private speculations, and as such should stand or fall. They sap the support from the District School, and it withers away.

4. Granting a full allowance of money to wealthy Districts, that will not build a suitable School House, or even none at all.

Some rotten shell, or out-house, or ten-by-twelve room in a private house is "good enough," say they,— "the very pink of perfection." Ought public money to be squandered as a premium or such indolence, such wickedness? He that will not help himself shall have help from nobody!

5. Granting a full allowance to a School where the House is at one end of the District.

A School House should be central. The site should be determined, I think, by the Board of Commissioners. The people have shown their utter incapacity—to regulate this matter. It is a bone of contention, and rends Districts asunder to a sad extent.

6. Granting six-penny maps to able Districts.

There is a great lack of good maps in our Schools. This lack is directly traceable to the six-penny Government aid. Trustees canter off to the clerk of the Board and ask for supplies. Obtaining them, they fancy their school equipped,—falling, they wait year after year hoping their time may come at last. This practice works most injuriously; for it robs the poorer schools of their trifling tit-bit—hinders the introduction of large wall maps into schools well able to purchase them, and is a bounty on the parsimony of the people.

This list could be greatly extended, but I have already encroached upon your space. These are small things, but they are vital. We may patch the present system till we are tired, it can never be called an "abundant provision"—say, not even a provision at all.

I would not despise the day of small things. But we have had small things long enough. Their day ought to be about over. Smallest farms thankfully received, larger ones in proportion, say we. Can we dare hope that some better way will speedily appear, when our present mock provision will be swept away, and our Educational affairs be laid upon a sounder basis.

August, 1863.

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Caution.

DEAR SIR,—

I send you an extract of a letter I received from my son, who is in St. Louis, Missouri:

He says, "I was going to my hotel to breakfast, when I was stopped in the street by soldiers of the Dutch Guards, and the officers commanding required of me either to show my pass or go to the guard-house. As I had no pass, and remonstrance was in vain, I was taken there and kept until eleven o'clock and then with several hundred more was marched off to camp five miles distant, where every art was used by the Colonel to induce me to take the oath of allegiance. I told him I would die first, as I was a British subject. He said if I took the oath I could claim protection of the British Consul as that was the proper course. I told him he had no answer. When he found that neither flattery nor intimidation could move me from my purpose, he asked me if I would make oath (I was a British subject, I told him, freely. I then went and made oath and got papers made out, for which I paid \$2. Several others took the same oath and were permitted to go. One young man said he was an Englishman, took the oath, and left, when he was commanded to come back. He, not heeding the command, was pursued by a soldier and run through the body with a bayonet and killed on the spot.

This is the boasted land of freedom. He says further that "3 or 4 bodies of murdered persons are almost daily taken out of the River in front of the city. If suspected of secesh principles they are sure to be among the missing." He says "they hold the British Colonies in the utmost abhorrence as being opposed to the Federal cause, on which they will take ample revenge as soon as the rebellion is put down, which they say " will be, in a few days."

And now, my Dear Sir, I hope you will through the pages of the Messenger hold up a solemn warning to our young men not to go to the States at present, for many who are there wish to get home, but cannot.

Yours respectfully,
JAMES W. STEVENS.

Forest Glen, August 6th, 1863.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notice.

MR. DAVID WELCH.

Died at Westport, on the 1st of May last, aged 73 years. Mr. Welch was a native of Westport, and spent his life there. He made a profession of religion and joined the Baptist church in early life. He took a great interest in the Sunday-school, and was superintendent of one at the time of his death. He had been successful in business in his younger years; and although it might not be said in his case, that the hand of the diligent maketh rich, yet it made him very comfortable, so that in his last days his circumstances were easy. He held the office of Justice of the Peace, and was much respected in the community.

Mr. Welch's last illness was of several weeks duration. It was apparent to himself and others that his end was drawing near. He felt death to be deeply solemn; but he enjoyed a hope through the Saviour, that cheered and sustained him. It was his desire, that the writer should preach his funeral sermon from the 17th Psalm and 15 verse, "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." And requested that the audience should be asked the question: What is the world without Christ?

Mr. Welch has left a widow and several sons and daughters with other relatives to mourn their loss.—Communicated by Rev. John Miller.

MRS. SERETHA SHAW.

Died near Bridgetown, July 18th, Mrs. Seretha Shaw, wife of Mr. Thomas Shaw, and daughter of Mr. Charles Peters, of Bear River, aged 26 years. Mrs. S. made a public profession of faith in Christ about a year and a half before her death, and was received into the fellowship of the Baptist Church in Bridgetown. Her whole deportment bore testimony to the reality of the change which, we trust, was wrought in her by the grace and power of God through Christ. She was attentive to all the means of grace, public and private; and as a result she grew in knowledge, faith and spirituality. Her illness was borne with exemplary patience and cheerful submission to the will of God. Still she had a desire to depart and be with her Saviour, in glory and blessedness. When informed that death was come, she expressed joy with all the strength she had—that soon she would see Jesus, and love, adore and praise Him as she never could do here. May her bereaved companion, and friends be profited, comforted, sustained and blessed in their affliction, and her two motherless children be guided in the way to heaven.—Communicated.

MR. MOSES BROWN.

Died at New Ross, formerly Sherbrooke, in the County of Lunenburg, on the 16th day of July, Moses Brown, in the 75th year of his age. Brother Brown was one of the first settlers, as well as one of the first members of the Baptist Church, in this place.

For about three years he had been the subject of much suffering, yet he bore all with christian resignation to the Divine Will. Religion was