

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By Rev Charles Tupper, D. D.

CHAPTER X.

A YEAR ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

(No. 3.)

Dr. Watts says of charity, or love,

"She lays her own advantage by To seek her neighbor's good."

It is to be feared that the instances are comparatively rare in which this is verified; but it is possible to carry this excellent principle to excess. From the sequel it seemed that a case of this kind once occurred in my experience. Candor, however, requires the acknowledgment that, had the painful consequences which resulted from it been foreseen, this act of incommensurate self for the accommodation of another would not have been performed. On the 14th day of December, 1833, I went to a blacksmith to get my horse's shoes removed, and the corks sharpened. Another who went thither later entreated me to give him my turn, and postpone till a future day. His request was granted. The next day, which was Sabbath, while returning from meeting in the evening, in a comfortable state of mind, and teaching a son who was riding behind me a hymn, just as I repeated the words,

"But if Immanuel's face appear, My hope, my joy begins,"

the horse slipped on a piece of ice covered with snow, and threw me on the frozen ground. My right shoulder was dreadfully bruised, the cords seriously affected, and probably a bone fractured. The distress was great. After some time however, I ascertained by repeated trials, that by holding my right arm with my left hand in one particular position, I could walk, though in much pain; and thus returned home. This hurt rendered my arm powerless; and confined me to the house for a number of days. One circumstance made my situation peculiarly distressing. When attempting to sleep I was obliged to lie in one exact posture, without the slightest change. As, however, we sometimes learn the value of blessings enjoyed only by being deprived of them, so in this case the privation endured taught me to appreciate the privilege of a change of position as occasion requires, for accommodation and comfort, so as it had never before been prized by me. When so far recovered that I could be taken to a place of worship, my labors were resumed.

In the course of my year's residence on the Island, besides discharging pastoral duties, I visited generally those parts where the gospel had been previously preached either by any of my Baptist brethren or by me, a number of places not visited by us before. Though no marked immediate results were manifested, yet my labors appeared to be attentively and gratefully received; and undoubtedly, through the divine blessing, good was effected. It afforded me much pleasure, also, to aid in extensive and successful efforts for the furtherance of the important cause of Temperance.

Toward the close of the year, however, the indications of Providence seemed to point out my return to Cumberland as the path of duty. My place in Amherst was so remote from the Village as not to be convenient for a professional man, or a mechanic; and there was not land enough for a farm. Consequently it would not be sold for its value, nor let to advantage. I had, therefore, no means to purchase a place on the Island; and a suitable house could not be hired within the bounds of my field of labor. That first occupied by me, called the "Bedque House," was spacious, and no rent was required. But it was offered for sale, and notice was given me at the first, that whenever it should be sold, and required by the purchaser, it must be vacated. It so transpired that we were obliged to leave it in the autumn, and to move into a very small house, (about half a mile distant from water,) and even this could not be obtained for another year. Moreover, the people did not appear to be able to furnish sufficient support for my family. In general they were obliged to pay yearly rents for the lands on which they lived, owned by proprietors in England; and their finances were quite limited. They agreed to give me, for the time spent among them, at the rate of £100 a year; but this, if paid, would have been only equivalent to about £84, N. S. currency; and some, through earnestness of desire to secure my services, subscribed much more than they could pay. If not deceived in myself, I was willing to submit to

inconvenience in order that the poor might have the gospel preached to them; but it seemed to me undesirable to place myself in circumstances that would oblige me to have recourse to means quite apart from the gospel ministry for the support of my family. In addition to the considerations now named, my labors were greatly needed in Amherst, (where were my house and land,) and in a number of adjacent places; and many people urgently requested me to return. In view of all these circumstances, it appeared evidently to be the call of Providence that I should return to Cumberland.

It became, therefore my painful duty to communicate my conclusion to the Church under my pastoral care, and assign my reasons for it. The members expressed their appreciation of my labors, and their ardent desire for the continuance of them; but the order of Providence seemed to them so manifest, that they felt constrained to acquiesce. They accordingly gave me a certificate, expressive of esteem and affection. This amicable arrangement afforded me much consolation. It was also a source of great comfort to me, to leave the church in a state of mutual harmony. As the 'sowing of discord among brethren' is one of the most effectual means [employed by the grand enemy to mar the interests of true religion, and to blind the minds of the unregenerate to their ruin, it can not reasonably be matter of surprise, that some cases of dissension had occurred. These had necessarily given me much anxiety and disquietude. A divine blessing, however, had evidently attended diligent efforts put forth for the removal of them; and the entire union now evinced tended greatly to cheer me under the trial of leaving these dearly beloved disciples of Christ.

For the Christian Messenger.

Memoir of Mrs. Mary Ann Armstrong, wife of Rev. George Armstrong.

DEAR BROTHER,

Providence has deeply afflicted me and my children, in the removal of my beloved and worthy companion. She died at Bridgetown, on Friday the 11th inst., at 4 1/2 o'clock, A. M. Her departure was sudden, but serene. When hurriedly called from unquiet slumbers, which watching, weariness, and the living counsel of the departed compelled, we had time only to see her breathe her last; there was no time to say farewell to the departing spirit, or, rather no power to recognize and return it.

Mrs. Armstrong's health had been failing for more than three years,—indeed since Diphtheria had visited and prostrated nearly every member of our family, all of them recovered, except one. That period of affliction, anxiety and watching, left, no doubt, a death mark on my poor wife, which never wholly disappeared. But throughout she manifested so much spirit and energy, zeal and earnestness, for the welfare of her family, and bore up so well under the repeated visitations of disease, that we came to hope that she would be spared to us for years. But the hope was fallacious. The malady,—consumption,—though imperfectly and slowly, was yet surely undermining her constitution, till about a fortnight before her death; then gathering up all the force it possessed, there was begun that series of attacks which proved fatal. The struggle was terrible. The pain, the agony, was indistinguishably severe; but was borne with fortitude that never faltered, and with a patience that seemed perfect. But not bodily suffering alone pressed upon her; the conflict of her spirit with doubt, unbelief and temptation was severe, and continued for days. Though she had often before contemplated death without dread or misgiving as to her eternal interests, and had felt willing to tread the dark valley that immediately leads to eternity; yet now, when brought face to face with death, and to look further and deeper than ever into the eternal future, and to comprehend more fully than in the past, the infinite holiness, justice and power of God, and also the unspeakable sinfulness and pollution of sin, she shrank back almost in despair, fearing to meet the all-piercing eye of God, the judge of all. She communicated the state of her feelings, and deep and tender interest was felt for her spiritual deliverance and comfort. The writer was enabled to set anew before his stricken and sad companion the love of God, the power of the atonement of Christ to take away sin, the fullness and freeness of divine grace, and its complete adaptation to meet the utmost wants and desires of the human soul, and prepare it for death and a blissful eternity. Having heard with great attention and interest what was said, and being asked what she thought of it, her response was,—“It is all true and good;—I know that Christ is ‘the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely’;” but she expressed fear lest He might not be such to her. But thanks be to God—even this fear was removed. When her husband left the room for a short time, she said very earnestly to the friend attending,—“I will trust in God my Saviour, and will doubt no more.” And I am pretty sure she did not. Henceforth even in her most poignant sufferings she thought, as we were assured from her own lips, of her suffering, sympathizing, and ever faithful Saviour, and thus reposing, as it were on his bosom, she was perfectly resigned to his pleasure, whether for life or death. She had no

raptures;—the battle was too hard fought for that,—they could not be entertained. But her resignation to the will of her Heavenly Father was complete, and the victory I doubt not, was hers, through the blood of the Lamb. I had, in the case of my companion, a new demonstration of the power of the Gospel—the faithfulness and love of God. The discipline of a sick bed and converse with death and eternity, brought out before her mind with unwonted clearness and power, the exceeding sinfulness and deformity of sin, her own pressing spiritual wants and her great responsibility to God, the searcher of all hearts. But she found Christ's righteousness fully competent to justify and cleanse her by faith, and his grace sufficient to supply her richly with all spiritual blessings. In her last illness she felt as never before, the necessity and infinite importance of being always prepared for death and judgment—always clinging to Christ, and, as she said, always doing our duty in all things, and mingling prayer with every thing. Her sufferings were so severe that she was deeply conscious that if the work of preparation for eternity had not been commenced before, it could not in all probability be undertaken when she required all her strength and attention to confront disease and struggle for life every moment. Her view on this point came out in a tender and forcible manner. At the close of a severe attack she said to one of her children who had made a profession of religion, and for whom she felt much solicitude, that he should by a godly consistent life adorn the doctrine of the Redeemer,—“O live near to God;—a death bed is a poor place for repentance.” Truly it is so;—but how few, except the dying, believe it! In the view of my departed friend, Christ is the supreme source of happiness,—the sun that illumines all the saint's heaven. To a dear little daughter who with earnest and very hopeful faith had been setting before her weak and sinking mother, the happiness the latter would soon enjoy of seeing and talking with her departed father and mother, and her own dear little Annie, &c., she responded,—“Yes; but what is infinitely better, I shall see and converse with Jesus, my God and Saviour.” Though we mourn, we yet rejoice that she is now free from all earth-born cares, sufferings, labours, and all temptation, and not a cloud now intervenes between her and the ever-to-be-adored and loved Saviour of sinners.

Mrs. Armstrong was the eldest daughter of the late John Johnson, of Horton;—she was brought up under pious influences, was punctual in her attendance at the house of God, became deeply serious when in her 24th or 25th year, and was, it is believed, converted to God, about that time, made possession of the change wrought in her soul, was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Fryer, in the Spring of 1843, and became a member of the Baptist Church in Wolfville. In the Autumn of the following year she was married and resided subsequently in Chester and Port Medway; from which latter place we removed in the Spring of 1854 to Bridgetown, where the greater part of her married life was spent, and the most important event of her life occurred,—its close. Up to the time of her last illness nothing very marked appeared in her christian career, beyond the fact that she held on her way, but did not make as rapid progress as she desired. Quiet, unobtrusive, and reserved as to the expression of her religious emotions she yet felt much, and manifested in other ways sincere regard for religion, and desire for the spread of the Gospel in the world.

In connexion with piety from principle, Mrs. Armstrong possessed some excellent qualities,—for mentioning some of the most prominent of which perhaps you will pardon me.

- 1. Good common sense,—a sound judgment which rarely was at fault in the estimate, which she formed of people, character, conduct, and circumstances.
2. A large degree of firmness,—which, if perhaps not always faultless, was generally exercised in the right spirit, and to the right end.
3. Deep sympathy for the poor, which when her slender means and the pressing claims of her own family, would at all permit, showed itself in deeds of true benevolence.
4. Intense devotion and self-sacrifice to the interests of her family. She laid herself out for the benefit of her household, she greatly loved her children, and laboured and prayed earnestly for their present and eternal welfare. The power of divine grace was evidently seen in her willingness to resign us all and depart hence, if such were her Heavenly Father's will, though for our sakes she desired to remain with us a few years longer, if Infinite Wisdom so ordained.
5. In the management of household affairs she well understood, and faithfully practised true economy. With the small and irregularly paid salaries—on which too many people, having at best only an impoverished and feeble christianity, seem, in their blameful, if not blissful ignorance, or hard and cruel covetousness, to think that a minister, his wife and children must subsist, and be and appear all that they should be,—a proper economy is an essential requisite in a minister's wife. Without it all in his habitation must perhaps suffer much—but the minister himself most of all—in ease, spirit, credit, influence and usefulness. With a straitened salary, and the increasing demands of a large family. There is imposed on the minister's wife a heavy burden, which taxes to the utmost, her patience, strength and faith. It is hoped that reform has already begun. With increasing piety in the members of our churches, a proper sense of obligation, and responsibility to Christ and his cause, a correct estimate of the happiness to be enjoyed, and the usefulness to be attained in consecrating all to Christ and the Gospel, the burden that insufficient support imposes on so many ministers and their faithful companions will be removed, or greatly lessened. In the mean time the Lord is not unmindful of those

who serve, or suffer for Him; and in due time He will reward them accordingly.

My beloved companion, as her end approached obtained grace equal to the day and moment. With her gaze fixed on Christ and his cross, and feeling the efficacy of His sacrifice in her own experience, she teared not death. For this we desire to feel deeply thankful to God. Her removal from earth, is to her an unspeakable and everlasting gain; but to us who are bereft it is a very great loss. How the eight motherless children left to my care are to get along without their loved and faithful counsellor, guide and friend, I know not; but trust and pray that our Heavenly Father will care for us, and supply all we need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus our Lord. The funeral took place on Monday the 14th of January. The Rev. N. Videto preached on the occasion a forcible, impressive and faithful sermon, from Psalm. cxvi. 15. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” The word of the Lord afforded us much comfort. The prayers of our brethren, and the songs of Zion, befitting the occasion and so touchingly sung, tended to relieve and soothe our hearts.

The pressure of our affliction was lightened by the sympathy shown by ministers of my own and other denominations in the vicinity viz., Revs. N. Videto, J. Wallace, Wm. H. Porter, (Baptist) H. Daniel, George Miller, Thos. H. Davis, (Wesleyan) D. G. Gordon, (Presbyterian) H. P. Almon, and H. deBlois, (Episcopalian); the first four of whom took part in the solemnities of the occasion, while the rest testified their respect and sympathy by their presence. The sympathy and kindness received from my own church and congregation, and from other friends in neighbouring churches, and in other communions have helped us to bear up under the severe blow which has fallen upon us. To all these ministers and friends we feel very grateful; and also to Dr. Forsythe, our Medical attendant, which did all in his power for the relief of my suffering friend and companion.

It remains for us to make the best possible use of our bereavement, to promote our spiritual and eternal interests. Death and eternity should seem very much nearer to us than before, our accountability much more solemn, impressive, weighty and real, heaven much more glorious and attractive,—and Christ exceedingly more desirable and precious.

May this brief memorial of respect and affection to the Pastor's faithful wife, companion, friend and helper, be made a means of stirring up some to greater zeal, diligence, faithfulness and self sacrifice in the service of Christ and his Gospel! May God “so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom,” and to live for eternity! Till the light of the Celestial City dawn upon us in its overwhelming glory, we shall often sadly, but hopefully sing:—

“Soon we shall meet again,— Meet ne'er to sever; Soon will peace wreath her chain Round us forever: Our hearts will then repose Secure from earthly woes; Our songs of praise shall close— Never,—no, never!”

I am, Dear Brother,

Yours in great affliction,

GEORGE ARMSTRONG,

Bridgetown, Feb. 11th 1866.

Died, during the month of January last at Upper Stewiacke, two Mrs. CHARLES COXES, adjoining neighbors.

The elder was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abram Newcomb—well known to many in Kings and Colchester Counties. It was the brother Newcomb whose life in U. S. spoke volumes for the efficacy and value of experimental or experienced religion, and whose dying utterances left on “long record” that remarkable saying:—“I have during my life-time on earth made conscience of seeking and obeying truth, and now that I am about to pass into the presence of God in eternity, I do not regret it. Ah, men may try to make error appear to be truth, but truth is mighty and will prevail.” It was his companion, the mother of our now departed sister, who, when about to die, called him who had been her minister close to her bed side and requested him not to “preach any more against the Baptists, for she believed them to be right.” It might be expected that such regard for experimental religion, such attachment to divinely-receptive truth, would in some measure verify the promise, “The generation of the righteous shall be blessed.”

Sister C. Cox, Senr., whose death we now have to record, as only however the second in a large family of children, the youngest of whom has nearly reached the age of fifty, had long been a professed and we hope real follower of the Lord Jesus in connection with the Baptist church at U. S. and was, at least among the female members of that church, a standard-bearer. Possessed by nature of more than ordinary mental capacities, when divinely enlightened and regenerated and ever afterwards, she was found to have clear perceptions, strong convictions, and Scripturally-correct conclusions respecting the cardinal doctrines of grace, particularly the extent and degree of human sinfulness, the sovereign freeness and omnipotent efficacy for pardon and justification of the Saviour's blood and righteousness, the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and His fruits, in the renewed soul, such as faith, obedience, love, joy, sanctification, &c. She held strong denominational attachments, yet truly loved the reflection of Christ's image in whomsoever she beheld it, especially towards the close of her earthly pilgrimage.

Probably owing to the wasting and somewhat stupefying effects of disease of which she had long been a subject, the near approach of death was evidently by herself unperceived: but it is suffi-