

going down, and all the poor wretches fighting for their lives in the boats—out of them, which was about an equal chance. We could just see one another in the starlight or the white gleam of the waves—groups of struggling men (happily there was not a woman on board), some paralyzed and silent, others shrieking with terror, some sobbing and praying, others only cursing: for heaven, which we all were straight going to—or hoped to go—seemed to be the last thing we ever thought of. We only thought of life, dear life—our own lives—nobody else's.

"People say that a shipwreck brings out human nature in all its brutality: 'every man for himself, and God—no, not God, but the devil, for us all.' I found it so. To see those men, old, young and middle-aged, some clothed, some half-naked, but all clinging to their bags, full of nuggets, which they had tied round their waists or held in their hands, eager to save themselves and their gold, and utterly reckless of everything and everybody else—it was horrible! Gradually it dawned upon some of the feeblers among them that they would hardly save themselves, to say nothing of their money. Then they no longer tried to hide it, but frantically offered a quarter, a half, two thirds, of their gold to any one who would help them. But in vain—utterly in vain.

"For me. I was a young fellow—young and strong. I had never faced death before, and it felt—well, sad and strange. I was not exactly frightened, but I was awed. I turned from the selfish, brutal, cowardly wretches around me; they had shown themselves in their true colors, and I was disgusted at myself for having put up with them so long. I didn't like even to go to the bottom with such a miserable lot. In truth, it felt hard enough to go to the bottom at all.

"The biggest of my nuggets I always carried in a belt round my waist, but the rest of my 'fortune' was in my bag. Most of us carried these bags, and tried to get with them into the boats, which was impossible. Some had to let them go overboard, but others, shrieking and praying, refused to be parted from their 'luggage,' as they called it. They were not parted, for both soon went to the bottom together. I was not inclined for that exactly, and so, after a few minutes' thought, I left my bag behind."

"How much was there in it?" some one asked.

"I don't know exactly, but I guess" (Uncle Dick still used a Yankee phrase now and then) "somewhere about seven or eight thousand pounds."

We boys drew a long breath. "What a lot of money! And it all went to the bottom of the sea?"

"Yes, but as the Bible says, 'What will not man give in exchange for his soul?' or his life—for my soul troubled me mighty little just then. I hardly knew I had one till I lost my money; so you see it was a good riddance perhaps."

We stared. Uncle Dick talked so very oddly sometimes! And then we begged him to continue his story.

"Well, I was standing waiting my turn to jump into the boat—the last boat, for two had been filled and swamped. Being young, it seemed but right to let the older fellows go first; and, besides, I wanted to stick by the Captain as long as I could. He, I told you, determined to stick by his ship, and went down with her. He had just given me his watch, and his last message to his wife, and I was trying, as I said, to keep quiet, with all my wits about me. For all that, I seemed to be half dreaming, or as if I saw myself like another person, and felt rather sorry for myself to be drowned on my twenty-fifth birthday—drowned just when I had made my fortune, and was going home to spend it.

"Home!" the word even had not crossed my lips or my mind for years. As I said it, or thought it—I can't remember which—all of a sudden I seemed to hear my mother's voice, clear and distinct through all the noise of the storm. And, boys, what do you think she said! Nothing wonderful, nothing strange. Only, 'Richard, how could you take your sister's grapes?'

"It flashed upon me like lightning: something that happened when I was only ten years old, and yet I remembered it as if it happened yesterday. I saw myself—young wretch!—with the bunch of grapes in my hand, and my

mother, with her grave, sad eyes, as, passing through the dressing-room into my sister's bedroom, she caught me in the act of stealing them. I could hear almost through the open door poor Lily's short feeble cough: she died two days after. The grapes had been sent her by some friend. She had so many friends! I knew where they were kept; I had climbed up to the shelf and eaten them all.

"Many a selfish thing had I done, both before I left home and afterward: why should this little thing, long forgotten, come back now? Perhaps because I was never punished for it. My mother, who at any other time might have boxed my ears, or taken me to father to be whipped, did nothing, said nothing except those few words of sad reproach, 'How could you take your sister's grapes?'

"I heard them through the horrible tumult of the winds and waves, and poor souls struggling for life. My life—what had I made of it? If I went to the bottom of the sea, I and all my money, who would miss me? who would care? Hardly even my mother. If she ever heard of my death to-night, she might drop a tear or two, but nothing like the tears she shed over my sister, who in her short life had been everybody's comfort and joy, while I—

"Mother!" I cried out, as if she could hear me these many thousand miles off—"mother, forgive me, and I'll never do it any more!"

"I had not said this when I was ten years old, and took the grapes, but I said it, sobbed it, at twenty-five, when the 'it' implied many a selfishness, many a sin, that my mother never knew. Yet the mere saying of it seemed to relieve me, and when directly afterward some one called out from the boat, 'Jump in Dick; now's your turn,' I jumped in to take my chance of life with the rest.

"It was given me. I was among the eighteen that held on till we were picked up—almost skin and bone, and one of us raving mad from thirst—by a home-bound ship, and landed safely in England. No, boys, don't question me. I won't tell you about that time; I can't."

It was not often Uncle Dick said, "I can't"; indeed, it was one of his queer sayings that "can't" was a word no honest or brave lad ought to have in his dictionary. We turned away our eyes from him—he seemed not to like being looked at—and were silent.

"Well, I landed, and found myself walking London streets—not the rich, healthy, jolly young fellow who had come to have his fling there, but a poor shattered wretch almost in rags, and just a bag of bones. All that remained of my fortune were the few nuggets which I had sewed into my belt. I turned them, not without some difficulty, into food and clothing of the commonest kind, to make my money last as long as I could. I did not want to come home quite a beggar: if I had been, I should certainly never have come home at all.

"By mere chance—for I had altogether forgotten times and seasons—the day I came home was a Christmas morning. The bells were ringing, and all the good folk going to church—my mother, too, of course. We met at the garden gate. She did not know me, not the least in the world, but just bowed, thinking it was a stranger coming to call, till I said, 'Mother!' And then—

"Well, boys, that's neither here nor there. It's a commonplace saying, but one can't hear it too often, or remember it too well, that whatever else we have, we never can have but one mother. If she's a good one, make the most of her; if a middling one, put up with her; if a bad one, let her alone, and hold your tongue. You know whether I have any need to hold my tongue about your grandmother."

"But I can't talk about her, or about that Christmas day. We did not go to church, and I doubt if we ate much Christmas dinner; but we talked and talked straight on up to ten o'clock at night, when she put me to bed, and tucked me in just as if I had been a little baby. Oh, how pleasant it was to sleep in sheets again—clean, fresh sheets—and have one's mother settling the pillow, and taking away the candle!

"My room happened to be that very dressing-room behind the nursery where Lily died: I could see the shelf where the grapes had stood, and the chair I climbed to reach them. With a sort of childish awe I recalled everything.

"Mother," I said, catching her by the gown, as she said good-night and kissed me, 'tell me one thing. What were you doing on my last birthday? that is, if you remember it at all?'

"She smiled: as if mothers could forget their boys' birthdays, even such scapegrace-boys as I had been! Then a very grave look came into her face.

"I was cleaning out this room, turning it into a bedroom for any stray bachelor, little thinking the first would be you, Richard; but I did think of you, and, to tell you the truth, I was thinking of something very naughty you once did—here, in this very room."

"And you said, over again, 'How could I take my sister's grapes? I heard it, mother—heard it in the middle of the Atlantic.' Then I told her the whole story.

"Now, boys, I ask nobody to believe it, but she believed it—to the day of her death. It made her happy to believe it, to think that in some mysterious way she had helped to save me, as mothers never know how or when some word of theirs may save their wandering sons.

"For I was a wanderer still: I staid with her only a month, while my nuggets lasted; then I worked my way back to Australia, and began again in the same way and yet a new way—new in one thing, at least, that on every Sunday of my life I wrote home to my mother. And when at length I came home, too late for her, alas! it was, I hope, not quite too late for the rest of you. Bad is the best, maybe, but I've tried to do my best."

"Oh, Uncle Dick!"—for he had been as good as a father to some of us—sent us to school and to college, and, what we liked a great deal better, taken us fishing and shooting, and given us all sorts of fun.

"So boys," said he, smiling at our demonstrations of affection—and yet he liked to be loved, we were sure of that—"you have a sneaking kindness for me, after all. And you don't think me altogether a villain, even though I did take my sister's grapes?"

NOTE.—It may interest readers to know that this incident is really "founded on fact"—one of those inexplicable facts that one sometimes meets with in real life, which are stranger than anything we authors invent for our "stories."

A BLIND MAN CLIMBS MONT BLANC.—That a blind man should undertake to climb the highest peak in Europe would seem at first sight to be about as useless and foolhardy an undertaking as could well be conceived. It appears, however, from the mountain climber's own account, to have been a fair climb, pluckily undertaken and manfully carried out for a reasonable purpose. The climber, Mr. F. J. Campbell, of the Royal Normal College for the Blind, has devoted his life to the elevation of the condition of his sightless countrymen, and he finds that in order to carry on his work, it is necessary to keep up his pluck, energy, and determination by all sorts of athletic efforts. Skating, swimming, rowing, riding, have contributed their share to this end, and last year he went to Switzerland to try mountain climbing. He went again this year, ending with the ascent of Mont Blanc, a task that taxes the capacity and all the powers of those who have no lack of faculties, and can enjoy by sight the grand view which the mountain summit offers as a reward for the hazardous undertaking.

The Rev. W. Stott, of St. John's Wood, London, speaking of the importance of everyone being in time at the Sabbath services, said that on a recent occasion he told his own people that he had something important to communicate on a given Lord's Day Morning, and those who desired to know what it was would have to be in their places precisely at eleven o'clock. The result was that everybody came, with the exception of two, who were only a trifle late, when the news so eagerly anticipated was an expression of the pleasure felt by the pastor at seeing how all could be in time if they chose.

M. Somzee, a Belgian engineer, proposes to use the safety lamp for the revealing the presence of fire-damp in collieries. It is well known that the flame of the lamp elongates and acquires a higher calorific power when in air which contains light earburetted hydrogen, or marsh gas. A piece of metal is so placed as to be elongated by this flame; this produces electric contact, and causes a bell to ring.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Acadia College Scholarships.

Mr. Editor,—

A review of the Legislative enactments in connexion with Acadia College throws some light, I think, upon the questions propounded in your last issue by "A scholarship holder." It appears that the Governors of the College were incorporated by an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1840, which, with some slight alterations, received the Royal assent in the following year. By this Act, the government and entire management of the College was committed to eighteen persons, twelve of whom were to be appointed by the Nova Scotia Baptist Education Society, and the remaining six by the Lieut. Governor, Legislative Council, and House of Assembly respectively, each to have the appointment of two. In 1851 the Charter was amended by making the President of the College ex officio a member of the Board, and placing the appointment of all the Governors in the hands of the Baptist Convention of N. S., N. B. and P. E. I. The original Act was in other respects unchanged, and the powers and responsibilities of the Governors remain as in the first enactment. It seems that in 1852 the Board of Governors, with the avowed object of encouraging persons to contribute to the Endowment Fund of the College, passed a bye-law to the effect that all persons who had contributed, or who should thereafter contribute the sum of \$400 to the College funds should have a right to take part in business meetings of the Board, and to vote as fully and effectually on all questions as the Governors themselves. The concessions thus granted were confirmed by Act of Parliament in the following year in these words:

"The proprietor of a Scholarship shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges attached to a Scholarship by the bye-laws and ordinances of the Trustees and Governors of the College, and shall not be liable for any debts of the College."

Now what is the effect of all this? The right of the Governors to make bye-laws is a chartered right; and, surely, no one will question the authority of the Legislature in the matter. It strikes me, however, that this last enactment must be read in the light of the original Charter to be rightly apprehended. The "bye-laws and ordinances" to which the statute makes reference, must, of necessity, be such "bye-laws and ordinances," as the Governors had legally enacted. In other words, such bye-laws and ordinances must not be inconsistent with the provisions of the Act by which the Governors were incorporated, nor at variance with the general law of the country. Suppose for example that just before the enactment under consideration the Governors had passed a bye-law declaring that all students should be subjected to a religious test, or that the President of the College should be ex officio a member of the House of Assembly of the Province, would it not be manifestly absurd to contend that by passing the law above mentioned, the Legislature had given validity to such a bye-law? It would be said, I think, that a bye-law of such a character was illegal if not void, having been made ultra vires, and that a statute so general in its terms could not give effect to it.

Something very like what I have supposed has really been done. The Charter says that "the Governors, or the major part of them shall have power to have and use a Common Seal to be appointed by themselves, and to make bye-laws and ordinances for the regulation and general management of the said College." "They, or the major part of them, may nominate and appoint the Professors and Scholars of the said College," &c., &c. The Governors as such have no power or authority to make bye-laws or other provision for the election of the governing body, in whole or in part, as in effect by their bye-law they have attempted to do, and the bye-law being in itself illegal and unconstitutional cannot be made efficacious to that extent by a statute so general in its character as Chapter 39 of the Acts of 1853. An examination of the statute law on the subject has satisfied me that no resolution passed at

a meeting of the Board of Governors of Acadia College is of binding efficacy or effect unless occurred in by a majority of the Governors then present, however strongly it may be supported by Scholarship holders or other persons. I am inclined to think, too, that the proprietors of Scholarships have some vested rights which they are entitled to assert, but, while they may not be excluded from participating in discussions and voting at meetings of the Board of Governors, such votes, it seems to me, must be held to be advisory, merely; and not as of any binding effect in the government of the College, which duty has been by law wholly entrusted to the Board of Governors.

Yours, &c., ANOTHER SCHOLARSHIP-HOLDER.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

P. E. Island.

Dear Editor,—

Cold winter has again visited us and thrown his snowy mantle over our land, reminding us that "our days are gliding swiftly by." As each season returns in its regular order we are led to think of the time when all these things shall have an end. How pleasing the thought, that when the end comes, and all these things with which we are familiar here, and which engage so much of our attention, shall have passed away, we shall enter upon a life in which there are no changes, but where "everlasting Spring abides."

Diphtheria, that dreadful scourge, is making sad havoc among the young in different parts of the Island; visiting alike the palace and the hut, and with a ruthless hand striking down many who were the objects of hope and love.

The present seems to be a time of great spiritual declension, and yet there are some of God's faithful ones earnestly praying, and anxiously looking for the saving power of the Holy Spirit to be manifested among us, and we are hoping for better days.

You are aware that Bro. E. B. Corey is our pastor. It is evident his heart is in the work to which God has called him. His sermons have in them the true, vital energy of a living soul, the pure air of evangelical piety, the outgrowth of Christian experience, which is a personal necessity to a preacher of the divine word; without which it is impossible for any man, however adroit and learned, to be successful in the Christian ministry.

The successful preacher of Christ's gospel must have the spirit of Christ. Men without this create discord and strife in churches which are so unfortunate as to call them to the pastorate. The demand of the time is for men "full of the Holy Ghost," men who "study to show themselves approved of God" not of men, and these are the men that will not wear out in a few months.

We have just heard of Bro. Gordon's illness. He has the sympathy of God's people here, and it is their prayer that he may soon be restored to health.

Tryon, Dec. 8, 1880. H.

P. S.—Brother Corey is at present spending a few days at South Rustico, assisting Bro. Woodland in holding special services, where a good work is being done.

HANTS COUNTY.—Dear Editor,—By the blessing of God, I have still further good news to communicate from Hants County. On the 12th inst. three more received the hand of fellowship at Noel, and at the close of the sermon on Sabbath morning twenty persons commemorated the Saviour's death. This is something new and wonderful for Noel so far as our denomination is concerned. Most of the communicants for the first time received the emblems of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood. The hearts of all were subdued by the presence of Jesus. Several others will probably soon profess their faith. The little band hold regular weekly prayer meetings which are well sustained. They constitute at present a branch of the Maitland Church, but the propriety of their being organized into a separate church is under consideration. Many of the members are highly gifted in singing, and this adds much to the interest of the meetings. Through the kindness of Bro. A. P. Shand, of Windsor, they are supplied with Sankey's No. 2 Gospel Hymns.