

of a nation, and entail the loss of millions. And if there is a crack, a broken window or an untight door, through which or under which, it can penetrate the poor man's chamber, it will be sure to enter, as if with chilling purity to mock his helpless indigence. Under such circumstances it resembles a tract distributor, who leaves a printed exhortation to godliness instead of bread. Alas! for the unhappy wretch who is exposed to its lamblike gambols. If he has a questionable infirmity in his body it is sure to search it out; and if he should be predisposed to asthma, consumption, or to any other of the many ills to "which our mortal flesh is heir," his departure will probably be hastened from this weary world by the clammy offices of this hyperborean visitant, which seems to take delight in suggesting death, by sportively shrouding its victims before their time. Other evils have their terrors, whether they be wars, famines or plagues, which they display as soon as they put in an appearance; but this one comes silently and attractively, exciting joy in the hearts of children, and stimulating all people to unwonted mirth, as though it were a long-absent and much-desired friend, and, yet maliciously intent on working them inconvenience, mischief and destruction. Esthetically considered, it may be fair and charming, but ethically it is unbecoming and repulsive. The chief Pharisee of nature, the most persuasive hypocrite and pretentious fraud known on earth, the quicker it is trampled into mud, for which it has affinity, and is shovelled out of sight the better.

It was snowing on Sabbath morning in ancient Boston town, when Ben-oni, who had struggled through its drifts from Woburn-Centre, some eight miles away, sank weary and cheerless on the step in the uninviting door-way of the Old South Meeting House. But few persons were passing at the time, and they were too busy pushing their way against the storm for them to think of anybody, especially of a red-nosed, shivering wail. The only face that seemed to see him was that of the old clock in the tower, and the only hand that was extended towards him was the dim, golden one that usually circled round the dial. The face was unsympathetic enough, its blackness being flecked with white; and the hand, arrested in its course by the clogging snow, rigidly pointed towards the boy, more in accusation than in kindly greeting.

Ben-oni, for short called Ben by all who knew him, feeling utterly wretched and forlorn, crouched in the corner, and sheltered himself as best as he could from the pitiless tempest. Overcome by fatigue and despondency, and after experiencing alternate flashes of heat and cold, his heavy eyelids closed in sleep. Many a big saint had frequently slumbered comfortably inside the church, surely one little sinner might unmolested be allowed to nod outside the sanctuary.

Not so thought the Sexton, Mr. Verger, whose ideas of propriety were very much shocked when he found the door step of the sacred edifice desecrated by the sleeping youth, whom he at once set down for a worthless tramp. As he had to open up the pathway for the worshippers who might perchance assemble, he felt that his first duty was to remove this obstacle from the steps. With a rough hand he roused the dreaming Ben, and in an ungentle voice inquired what he was doing from his home, if home he had, and how it came to pass that he had dared to choose a spot so sacred for his couch. With the quick intelligence for which our Yankee boys are famous, Ben replied, "that he was anxious to attend the meeting." Wrathful Mr. Verger, perceiving as he thought what Lord Beaconsfield has called "conspicuous inexactness" in the answer, retorted "that there was no room in God's house for the likes of him."

"What! no room?"
 "None," spoken emphatically.
 "Well," said Ben, hitting nearer to the mark than he suspected, "none; why the building seems only to be full of emptiness."
 Such in truth it was, and such it had been for many years. The congregations were scant and scattered, and few persons cared to brave the solitariness of the Old South service. But this home-thrust was more than the patience of the sexton could endure—for sextons

are not angels by any means—and so taking the intruder by the shoulder, he pushed him rudely down the steps. The boy stumbled in the snow, but as he recovered his balance, he caught up two handfuls from the pavement and turned with flashing eye on his assailant.

"What right have you to strike me?" and forthwith rolled a volley of vile oaths from his young mouth, which, naturally enough startled the nerves of the stately, saintly sexton. No opportunity was allowed for explanation. Before the indignant official could frame an adequate response, a snow-ball struck him in the eye, another saluted his half parted lips, and mad with rage, he cried "police" as he rushed wildly to chastise the boy. More snow-balls and fresh oaths checked his advance; but still he persevered, and when he supposed that he had his heavy hand on the now retreating Ben, he was mysteriously and skilfully tripped, and found himself floundering uncomfortably in a snow drift.

When he regained his feet the imp of darkness, as demoralized Mr. Verger called him, had disappeared and could not be found even by the vigilant policeman, who came at last, as slowly coming Christmas does, to the scene of action, when the fight was ended. Ben knew better than to stay for leave-taking, and having humbled his adversary in the snow, if not in the dust, he regarded it as eminently becoming in him to beat a retreat. Away he sped up the nearest street, and soon found himself on a broad thoroughfare, with the sheeted Common on one side and stately buildings on the other. As he stood blowing his lukewarm breath on his chilled fingers, and drew his scant garments closer round his pinched body, he observed that many persons, some of whom were poorly clad, entered a great brown front edifice, darted in as soon as they came to it, as into a port of safety. Not knowing what to do with himself, he followed the throng, and when he came near enough to the building, he read over the wide open door, the words meaningless to him, "People's Church," and on a board placed conspicuously at the entrance, "The Wanderer's Sabbath Home."

As Ben paused irresolute on the threshold, a freckled-faced, sandy-whiskered man, whose smile habitually expanded into a grin, saluted him kindly and invited him to join the people who were assembling for worship in the upper hall. In distress any haven is welcome, and a cordial greeting always charms the heart; so, with a new sense of self respect, the wanderer carried his wet garments and his shivering body into the warm atmosphere of the great church above. The dimensions of the room impressed him; the gaudy colors of the organ arrested his attention; the singing of the multitude—in numbers depleted somewhat by the inclement weather from its usual proportions—overawed him; and the entire scene filled him with pleasure and delight. He drew very near to a steam coil, not far from the entrance, and remote from the platform, where he could thaw himself, and observe himself unobserved all that was taking place. A group of grave-looking gentlemen, like mourners at a funeral, gathered in front of the organ around the ghost of a bouquet of flowers, while in the centre, stood a huge, red-faced, bald-pated lamblike lion of a man, who was evidently the officiating clergyman. When the minister opened his mouth Ben was startled as if smitten with the breath of a sudden tempest, and all the time he spoke it seemed to the boy as though he were struggling with a whirlwind. But it was the intensity of the voice, not its loudness, that produced this effect. At times it would roar like the wind when attempting the passage of a narrow ravine with too much velocity and volume; then it would sigh and wail and moan as the wind does when it sweeps unhindered over the open plain, or disturbs the quiet of the reeds on the marshy coast; but whether high or low harsh or soft, it was always singularly fervent and intense, always soothing and persuasive.

The sermon was on the "Mission of Childhood," and the text was from Luke's gospel: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" After some introductory words, the preacher said, "In a universe like this,

where everything gives as well as takes; where the winds that receive warmth from the heated earth impart in exchange their coolness; where the plant, that derives life from the soil nourishes its benefactor in return with the richness of its decaying leaves, and shelters it with the grateful shade of its foliage; and where the laws of correlation and compensation are everywhere manifest, it may never have occurred to you that children are other than recipients—sands to drink in the fullness of parental beneficence, but unproductive and unprofitable." This conclusion he treated as unwarranted, and argued that every child comes into the world with a special work to do, which it must do as a child or it will never be accomplished, and if performed, will impart a radiance to its morning which will prove the harbinger to a glorious noon. Taking the youthful Jesus as an illustration of his theme, and showing that he not only served God when he was twelve years old, honored his parents by being in subjection to them, and his own nature by growing in wisdom and grace, the preacher claimed that the mission of childhood had to do with Him who is above, with those who are without, and with that which is within. He then proceeded to show how the young could serve God, illustrating his thought with the examples of Timothy, Anthony, Benedict, Thomas Aquinas and Edward VI. of England; and said "They can gather those of their own age into the Sunday-School; they can surrender some portion of their limited means to assist the poor; they can carry little gifts to the sick and cheer them also with a sight of their own fair, radiant faces, and they can help each other in their daily life, kindly, generously, nobly." But it was when the preacher spoke of home, of what boys and girls could do towards those around them, that Ben's interest in the sermon increased to painfulness. This was the passage that impressed him most. "Loving sons and daughters will cause their parents as little anxiety as possible. When the young are 'tetchy and wayward,' 'frightful, wild and furious,' then, as in the case of Gloucester, described by Shakespeare, 'age will be proud, subtle, sly and bloody.' An obedient child will be a source of consolation to a mother, and if he is cheerful, considerate, kind, he will make the entire household brighter for his presence." A gloomy picture was drawn of the pernicious power of a corrupt, headstrong boy on the family and his career was traced to its bitter end. It was shown that he who was sent by God to be a blessing to his parents under such circumstances, was a curse, and would be a curse forever.

The sermon continued with an earnest portrayal of what the boy owed to himself. Napoleon's words to the students of Brienne were quoted: "Remember that every hour wasted at school means a chance of misfortune in future life," and the preacher added, "He spoke wisely. Faithfulness to the soul within is the condition of all future successes in this world. Keep your hearts clean. Do not allow your eyes to rest for a moment on an impure suggestion. Flee from it as you would from the hot breath of hell. Preserve the blush of modesty, which Carlyle regards as the look divine, and cultivate an honor, such as Burke describes, 'so sensitive that it would feel a stain like a wound,' and

"To thine own self be true, And it shall follow as the night the day, Thou shalt not then be false to any man."
 (To be Continued.)

A Trial of Infidelity.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon says: There was once an evil hour when I slipped the anchor of my faith. I cut the cable of my belief. I no longer moored myself hard by the coast of revelation. I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind. I said to reason, "Be thou my captain," I said to my own brain, "Be thou my rudder," and I started on my mad voyage. Thank God! it is all over now, but I will tell you its brief story. It was hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought. I went on, and as I went the skies began to darken the waters were brilliant, with corruscations of brilliancy. I saw sparks flying upward that pleased me, and I thought if this be free thought it is a happy thing. My thoughts seemed gems, and I scattered gems with both my hands.

But, anon, instead of these corruscations of glory I saw grim fiends, fierce and horrible, start up from the waters, and, as I dashed on, they gnashed their teeth and grinned upon me, they seized the prow of my ship, and dragged me on while I in part gloried at the rapidity of motion, but yet shuddered at the terrific rate at which I passed the old landmarks of my faith.

As I hurried forward with an awful speed, I began to doubt my very existence. I doubted if there was a world. I went to the very verge of the dreary realms of unbelief. I went to the very bottom of the sea of infidelity. Just when I saw the bottom of the sea, there came a voice which said, "And can this doubt be true?" At this very moment I awoke. I started from my death dream, which would have ruined my soul if I had not awoke.

When I arose faith took the helm. From that moment I doubted not, faith steered me back. Faith cried, "Away! away!" I cast my anchor on Calvary, I lifted up my eye to God. And here I am, alive and out of hell! I therefore speak what I do know. I have sailed that perilous voyage; I have come safe to land. Ask me again to be an infidel! No, I have tried. It was sweet at first, bitter afterward. Now lashed to God's gospel more firmly than ever, standing as on a rock of adamant, I defy the argument of hell to move me, for "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him;" 2 Tim. i. 12.

Temperance.

Danger of the Bar-Room.

"A Parent" writes as follows to the Baltimore American, that her own three boys may see it, and that it may be the means of warning others of the dangers of the bar room:

Young man, has not your eye been frequently attracted to a sign having the following ominous word upon it: "BAR?"

Avoid the place; it is no misnomer. The experience of thousands has proved it to be

- A Bar to Respectability;
- A Bar to Honour;
- A Bar to Happiness;
- A Bar to Domestic Felicity;
- A Bar to Heaven. Every day proves it to be
- The Road to Degradation;
- The Road to Vice;
- The Road to the Gambler's Hell;
- The Road to the Brothel;
- The Road to Poverty;
- The Road to Wretchedness;
- The Road to Want;
- The Road to Robbery;
- The Road to Murder;
- The Road to Prison.
- The Road to the Gallows;
- The Road to the Drunkard's Grave;
- The Road to Hell.

Some, it is true, do not pass through all these stages; but intemperance, persisted in, always ends in the drunkard's grave, and, we have too much reason to fear, in hell. The bar-room is truly

- The Curse of the Drunkard's Wife;
- The Curse of the Drunkard's Child;
- The Curse of the Drunkard's Home;
- Those only who have known the bitterness of being a drunkard's wife or child can know the misery and horror of a drunkard's home.

Young man, before you enter the bar-room, stop! Ponder the paths of your feet ere it be forever too late.

Man of family, flee the bar-room as you would in honor fulfil the pledge of love made to her who is the companion of your joys and of your sorrows.—Texas Baptist.

A LESSON OF LIFE.—The following is from a speech by J. J. Talbot, who recently died drunk at Elkhart, Indiana. I had a position high and holy. The demon tore from around me the robes of my sacred office and sent me forth churchless and godless, a very hissing and by word among men. Afterward my voice was heard in the court; but the dust gathered on my open books, and no footfall crossed the threshold of the drunkard's office. I had money ample for all necessities; it went to feed the coffers of the devils which possessed me. I had a home adorned with all that wealth and the most excellent taste could suggest. The devil crossed its threshold and the light faded from its chambers. And thus I stand, a clergyman without a church, a barrister without a brief, a man with scarcely a friend, a soul without a hope, all swallowed up in the maelstrom of drink.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
 My Vacation.

Three weeks change from the routine of pastoral work, is a good thing. It stimulates and invigorates one for work. The opportunity afforded of seeing many old friends calls up reminiscences of the past, and affords matter for thought for many days. The first Sabbath after leaving home was spent at Mahone Bay where in January, 1855, my first visit was made, and missionary work done. God's power was gloriously manifest then in the salvation of souls, a general revival commenced which extended over the whole field, and continued for a year and a half. In the following June my first pastorate commenced here, and I was solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry. The sainted Bentley and Angell were at the ordination. Many who were then pillars in the church have passed away. Then there were only four or five Baptists at Mahone Bay; now there are quite a number. A fine Baptist meeting house has been built, and a flourishing Sabbath School is in operation. The Wesleyans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians have also since built new chapels there. From Mahone Bay I proceeded to Yarmouth. In passing through Bridgewater a great improvement in buildings may be observed. At Arcadia and Chebogue many old friends were met, where thirteen years ago, I tried for fifteen months to work for the Master. During the Convention a comfortable home was found in the kind family of Deacon Gridley. On my return a few hours were spent in Shelburne, where in 1859 it was my privilege to administer Christian Baptism to the first candidates ever seen immersed there, by the then residents. There was great excitement on the occasion. For the next eight years I did some missionary work there at intervals. The Baptist Church was then organized, and a site secured, on which now a fine substantial Baptist chapel stands. A large number of handsome dwelling houses have been built there during the last fifteen years. But now business is dull, and people are leaving.

The following Sabbath was spent at Ragged Island, where eight years of my ministry were passed. It is fifteen years since that pastorate closed, and the changes are very marked. At Osborne a commodious new place of worship has been built, and two thirds of the congregation were strangers to me. Many of our old friends are gone. The church there needs a pastor very much. Lockport has grown from being a small village to be a compact town. All around the country very great changes are noticeable. The Sabbath being past, and many friendly greetings interchanged, our furlough being up, I started for home without seeing many whom I would gladly have seen if we had had more time.

A. W. BARRE.
 Ingram River, Sept. 7th, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger.
 Alliance Convention.

To the Editor Christian Messenger:

DEAR SIR,—I take the liberty of asking space in your columns to refer to the Annual Meeting of the Nova Scotia Branch of the Alliance, which will be held in the National School House, Halifax, on Thursday, the 22nd inst. The meeting will be a Provincial Convention, and will probably discuss the whole question of Alliance organization and work, as well as general action for the submission, adoption, and enforcement of the Canada Temperance Act, the local license law, cooperation with the Council of Alliance, &c. The necessity and best means of securing adequate financial support should also be considered and decided upon, and a vigorous policy announced.

The Central Executive of the Alliance proposes to engage competent counsel to defend the Canada Temperance Act before the Privy Council, and appeals to the several Branches for funds for that purpose.

The advanced position Nova Scotia has taken is known throughout Canada. We expect the Nova Scotia Branch of the Alliance to be thoroughly efficient. We are deeply interested in the approaching Convention, as its discussions