

place in the small family of widow Gibbs. The house itself in which the lived gave evidence of thrift, and an air of cheerfulness prevailed where formerly discontent was manifest. Widow Gibbs herself was an altered woman, and as for Ben, the whole village was loud in his praise. He was commended on every side for his straightforwardness, truthfulness, industriousness, steadiness, and for the attention which he paid his mother, and the interest which he took in religious things. Indeed, Ben had united with the church; and had publicly related, what he had told his parent privately, that when in Boston, guided by Deacon Worklove, he had given his heart to Christ, and in imitation of his example, had determined to fulfil the mission of childhood. Well had his vow been kept, and now with the coming of fine days, his home would have been undarkened by a shadow, but for one thing—his cruel cough.

That painful cough, which first attracted attention after the long tramp through the snow, had increased in frequency and severity during the months of March and April. May brought no relief, and the warmer June failed to alleviate. The birds returned from their Southern migration, but health came not back to little Ben. The flowers bloomed at the wayside, but Ben only pined and sickened; the bright, cheery days grew longer, but alas! the days of suffering Ben grew drear and shorter. Winter was over and gone, but its frosts and snow had smitten that young life with the chill of death. All that skill could do was done, all that a mother's love could prompt was undertaken, but the insidious disease baffled both knowledge and affection. The terrible truth could no longer be concealed—the boy must die. For days he lay panting and helpless at the mercy of Death, who, grim monster that he is, seemed to play with his victim before he finally crushed him.

It was near the close of June, just as the soft light of the setting sun gladdened the apartment, that all around the humble couch fully realized that its disk would hardly disappear beneath the horizon's verge, when a young immortal would ascend beyond the zenith. Rachel sat weeping at the bed side, old Deacon Worklove, who had been sent for, stood near by, and several kind neighbors looked on in silent sympathy. The attention of all was aroused by the feeble voice of the dying boy,

"Mother!"

"Here am I Ben."

"Mother," he continued, "it is growing dark."

Here the Deacon ventured the remark "Yes, my lad, but the prophet says, 'At that day it shall be neither day nor night, and at the evening time it shall be light.'"

"Thank ye," whispered Ben, "that's a sweet kind of promise, and its true, for I feel while the darkness is increasing without it is growing lighter within. Mother?"

"Speak on, Ben."

He then spoke slowly and painfully: "Mother, since that winter day in Boston, have I been a good son? have I been of any comfort to you? have I made you think at times that you need not blush for me? Here the voice grew faint, and the words could scarcely be distinguished. His mother's sobs and her lips pressed on his thin hand, was the assuring answer he received.

"Well, then—I have one request to make," and his eyes gleamed with a strange lustre—"when I am dead—dead my dearest, call me no Ben-oni." The deacon looked significantly at Rachel, and Rachel, shuddered at the strange wish which recalled the dreary past.

"Do you hear me, mother?"

"Yes, oh yes;"

"When I am dead, call me not Ben-oni; but call me Benjamin."

Beneath his pillow the little Testament was found, with the page turned down at the second chapter of Luke, where these verses were marked:

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The divine example had been nobly followed, and the mission of childhood faithfully fulfilled.

A Cure by Imagination.

At a large hotel the not uncommon dilemma arose of there being only one room in the house vacant when two visitors required accommodation for the night. It was a double-bedded chamber, or was soon converted into such, and the two guests—who were both commercial travellers—agreed to share it. One of these gentlemen was a confirmed hypochondriac, and greatly alarmed his companion by waking him up in the middle of the night, gasping for breath. "Asthma," he panted out; "I am subject to these spasmodic attacks. Open the window quickly; give me air!" Terrified beyond measure, the other jumped out of bed. But the room was pitch dark; he had no matches, and he had forgotten the position of the window. "For heaven's sake, be quick!" gasped the invalid. "Give me more air, or I shall choke!" At length, by dint of groping wildly and upsetting half the furniture in the apartment, the window was found; but it was an old fashioned casement, and no hasp or catch was to be discovered. "Quick, quick; air, air!" implored the apparently dying man. "Open it! break it, or I shall be suffocated!" Thus adjured, his friend lost no more time, but seizing a boot, smashed every pane; and the sufferer immediately experienced great relief. "Oh, thank you; a thousand thanks. Ha!" he exclaimed, drawing deep sighs which testified to the great comfort he derived; "I think in another moment I should have been dead!" And when he had sufficiently recovered and had expressed his heartfelt gratitude, he described the intense distress of those attacks and the length of time he had suffered from them. After a while both fell asleep again, devoutly thankful for the result. It was a warm summer night, and they felt no inconvenience from the broken window; but when daylight relieved the pitchy darkness of the night the window was found to be still entire! Had invisible glaziers been at work already, or was the episode of the past night only a dream? No; for the floor was still strewn with the broken glass. Then, as they looked around the room in amazement, the solution of the mystery presented itself in the shape of an antiquated bookcase, whose latticed glass doors were a shattered wreck. The spasmodically attacked one was cured from that moment. So much for imagination.—*Chambers' Journal.*

Porcupine Christians.

Are there any professors of religion who deserve such a name? A recent writer speaks of "porcupine Christians," bristling all over with the sharp quills of prejudice, bigotry, censoriousness, exclusiveness, and all manner of unlovely things, and further says:—"I have personally come in contact with more than one porcupine Christian." So have we. Sometimes even when making the most friendly overtures we have discovered bristling quills. Chronically combative, many people so habitually assume the offensive that their fellow-Christians soon come to dread association with them, and their unamiable attitude excites fears which repel advances, and make it perilous to meet them. If approached, it must be very warily, or up fly their quills, and to avoid harm, it is found prudent to keep them at a distance. They meet every opinion and measure with a sharp criticism, and dissent from every view and plan which they have not originated. While showing no disposition to affiliate with others they are continually complaining of the want of love in the church, and instead of showing any sympathy with their brethren in Christian work, they manage to embarrass and obstruct every benevolent enterprise with objections to plans or with their chronic carping.

These "porcupine Christians" are especially annoying to the pastor. We heard one, only recently, referring to a not uncommon experience among ministers, who, upon making a call met with one of his class. Instead of cordial welcome, such as a spiritual shepherd might expect from one of the fold, he came upon a "fretful porcupine," and, with the quills bristling up, he had to hear the sarcastic remark, "I supposed you had forgotten I was a member of the church." We are surprised that, with the impression made by such a reception this pastor was led to say that he did not "hanker" to make many or lengthy visits to such people. We have too many of these "porcupine Christians" in all our churches.—*Baptist Weekly.*

Three Impossible Things.

(1) To escape trouble by running away from duty. Jonah once made the experiment, but did not succeed. Therefore, manfully meet and overcome the difficulties and trials to which the post assigned you by God's providence exposes you. (2) To become a Christian of strength and maturity without undergoing severe trials. What fire is to gold, such is affliction to the believer. It burns up the dross, and makes the gold shine forth with unalloyed lustre. (3) To form an independent character except when thrown on one's own resources. The oak in the middle of the forest, surrounded on all sides by trees that shelter and shade it, runs up tall and comparatively feeble; cut away its protectors, and the first blast will overturn it. But the same tree, growing in the open field, where it is continually beaten upon by the tempest, becomes its own protector. So the man who is compelled to rely on his own resources forms an independence of character which he could not otherwise have obtained.

Temperance.

A Boy Abstainer.

BY JULIA COLMAN.

One hundred years ago our boy abstinence was four years old. His name was John, and if you have read much of Arctic travel and adventure you have doubtless heard of him as "Sir John Ross." You may never have thought of his being an abstainer, however. The narrators of Arctic travel do not always put that in, or if they do they say so little about it that you hardly notice it. But Sir John Ross has taken some pains to write about it himself; he thought it worth his while, and some day soon the world will be of the same opinion; that is, if we do our part in talking about such matters.

He went as a sailor when he was only ten years old, and kept at it until he became an officer of some note, and then he was knighted for his faithful services—became "Sir John Ross." He does not tell us when he became an abstainer. They had no Bands of Hope in those days, and indeed no temperance societies such as we know. Possibly he was born an abstainer and always lived as such, and that is the way it should be. The children are nearly all on the right side at first, and if they use their powers of observation to as good purpose as John Ross did they will remain so. Hear what he says of himself when he started out at ten years:

"I went to Greenock, and was bound apprentice for four years, during which time I made three voyages to the West Indies and three to the Baltic. I had, therefore, a good opportunity of observing the injurious effects of intoxicating liquors in both climates. My first voyage was to Jamaica, where the captain and several of the crew died."

The West Indies have from the first been noted as very unhealthy. Strangers are often struck down with typhoid fever or yellow fever, and live but a short time. It was supposed to be owing to the climate, and strangers were warned that they must be very careful about exposure to the sun and to night air, about eating fruit and vegetables, and especially that they must take some kind of spirits very freely.

What did our young abstainer do? None of these things. He says: "Excepting that I never drank spirits, I took no care of myself. I was exposed to the burning sun, slept on deck in the dew, and ate fruit without feeling any bad effects. I soon lost my hat and shoes, and ran about bareheaded and barefooted; but I never tasted spirits, and to this alone do I attribute the extraordinary good health I enjoyed." He certainly was a tough boy; perhaps he had abstaining parents, and so inherited a better constitution than many of us. We hardly know yet what we might be able to do if we inherited no effects of alcoholic poison from our ancestors. It might not be necessary to follow fully the example of the future Sir John, though, truth to tell, the free exposure to the open air of itself goes far to make one tough. After having spent the summer in hot Jamaica, he spent the winter in cold St. Petersburg, Russia, and with the same hardihood.

"I was running about bareheaded and barefooted on the ice, but I never tasted spirits." He cared no more about spirits for keeping out the cold than for keeping out the malaria of hot climates. "My next voyages were to the Bay of

Honduras and alternately to the Baltic. (Look the-e up on the map, please). On the last voyage to Honduras all the common sailors, twelve in number, died, and I was the only person that went out in the ship who came home alive, which I attribute entirely to my abstaining from spirituous liquors."

Probably, then, it was the drinking of these liquors that killed the others. There was a fearful amount of drinking in those days, especially drinking for medicine. Almost every person drank to keep themselves well, and when sick they drank to make themselves well. We scarcely ever hear of such a case now where an entire crew is taken off either by sickness or drink; but you see this happened twice to the ships in which John Ross sailed while he was yet a boy. Let people who ask what we have gained by temperance think over such narratives as this. These were no mere boys' stories; they were written out when the boy had become an earnest Christian man, noted and respected, and who had gained much renown by his Arctic expeditions.

These notable expeditions occupied four years, from April, 1829, to October, 1833. He kept up his total abstaining still on this trip, and found it as great an advantage as ever. He was the oldest person on the expedition by twenty years, and all but three were thirty years younger than himself, for he was now between sixty and seventy. Too old, some would say, for the commander of such an undertaking, and yet he stood the cold and endured the fatigue better than any of these younger persons. How was this? He himself gives the reason—they "all made use of tobacco and spirits," and he used neither. He was the only one of all of them who did not have sore eyes.

It is a question that every young man who aims at endurance and achievement should ask himself: "Will he not do well to lay hold upon these simple and rational means to help his steps to fortune?"

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Mission of Baptists.

"I have never felt it to be my duty to make any person a proselyte to my belief, my sole aim has been to bring sinners to Christ." This was the sober utterance of an earnest, working Baptist a short time ago. Was it wise? Was it in harmony with the will of Jesus? Surely the teaching of James v. 19, 20, is binding upon every Christian, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know," &c. Here it is the brother, the converted, saved one, who was to be turned from his error. We believe that though many Pedobaptists are converted and saved, yet they teach and practice much error. Should we not endeavor to lead them to embrace the whole truth? Every redeemed soul is a scholar in the school of Christ, the Great Teacher. The alphabet of Christianity is a sound conversion. Is not Jesus, our Teacher, anxious that all His scholars should observe the "all things" referred to in the great commission, Matt. xxviii. 20? When His scholars have learned His text-book aright, will they not agree in their beliefs and practices? Is not the reputation or credibility of Christ and Christianity greatly injured in the eyes of the world by the unreasonable and contradictory beliefs of His scholars, since they all affirm that Jesus by His text-book and Spirit is their Teacher and Guide? But as Jesus does His work of teaching now by means of His scholars helping each other to understand the text-book, ought we not to sympathize with His scholars who have so grievously erred from His teachings? Could we possibly give better evidence of our love to Christ than by wise efforts to win the erring ones over to the truth? What further have we as the expressed will of Jesus on this point? We have it in the Saviour's last prayer, John xvii. 21: "That they (His scholars) all may be one." What kind of oneness is meant? "As thou Father art in me and I in Thee." What kind of oneness exists between the Father and the Son? Is there not a perfect oneness of every thought, motive or plan in regard to every person or thing in the universe? But some say that this prayer is fully answered when all trust in Christ for salvation. Let such persons read and accept Paul's comment on this theme in Eph. iv. 3-14, the

climax of which is, "That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." But says another, "It is God's good pleasure that there should be contradictions on doctrinal points among His scholars on earth, as more good is done by their separation into sects." Surely Jesus did not think so, for the next clause in His prayer reveals His conception of the results of this perfect oneness in His scholars which He longed for: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Certainly then all departures from the teachings of Christ, which are the only causes of the existence of different sects, are so many hindrances to the world's accepting Christ. We are now met with the taunt on every side, "There are 170 different religious denominations, and all of them said to be taken from the Bible, how am I to know which is right?" Since the devil is the author of all evil, is it not evident that he has begotten this confused state of things for the purpose of hindering men from accepting Christ? Surely we should not be apologists for his doings, and ascribe it to God's good providence that there are different sects, when it is clear the arch-enemy that has sowed the tares of error while Christians slept, which has produced the sad results. Again, let us look back over the ages; is it not true that the gradual defection from the truth, and the acceptance of error instead thereof by God's children, is the principal if not the only cause of the failure of Christianity, and begot much of the miseries of the dark ages. If they had retained the truth in its entirety, God would have continued to make them everywhere victorious. Since our success in soul saving and all other work for Christ is conditional upon our accepting of His policy and teaching ought we not to use the means best calculated to destroy error and establish the truth, for only thus will the Saviour's prayer be answered?

DIMOCK ARCHIBALD.

Halifax, Sept. 22, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger.

British American Book and Tract Society.

Dear Mr. Editor,—

As intimated in my last article, so kindly inserted in your paper, I have enjoyed the pleasure of a tour of three weeks through the Counties of Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Lunenburg. The places visited and subscriptions received in aid of our benevolent work are as follows: Yarmouth, \$78.36; Barrington, \$15.25; Shelburne, \$14.50; Lockeport, \$41.51; Liverpool, \$38.50; Milton, \$8.25; Brooklyn, \$7.75; Bridgewater, \$42.65; Lunenburg, \$65.10; Mahone Bay, \$18.12; Chester, \$12.90. These, with some smaller sums received, make about \$350. I desire to acknowledge with many thanks the hearty co-operation of ministers of the Baptist churches, and also the liberality of many church members toward our colportage work. There is no doubt that the small amounts thus contributed are well invested, and when combined with contributions from other branches of the church, will accomplish a great and good work, yielding rich returns to the donors. Judging from the largely increased donations, and the well nigh unanimous testimony from all classes as to the value and efficiency of the Society's work, I am pleased to state that the prospect for continued sympathy and practical aid is very cheering indeed. The people regard it as their Society, originated and fostered by them for the accomplishment of a much needed work among themselves. While their sympathies are enlisted in behalf of the destitute in heathen lands, they see the vast importance of seeking to save their neighbors. What more effective method of doing this can be adopted than is employed by this Society? Earnest, personal, prayerful effort is combined with the diffusion of soul saving truth. Many throughout these Provinces are found to-day testifying to the value of such work, and thanking God that good men have devised this way of reaching them. Hoping that all your readers who desire to see souls saved savingly acquainted with divine truth may aid us by their prayers and contributions.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,

A. N. ARCHIBALD, Sec'y.