

returned in the evening, the wife said, 'There was a queer old man here to-day, who talked to me about my soul, and before he left, he knelt down and prayed for you and me.' 'If I had been here,' replied the husband, 'I should have told him to go about his business.' 'If you had been here, my dear,' quietly answered his wife, 'you would have thought that he was about his business.' Soul winning was the business of John Vassar. All other things, however important, were incidentals. The individual and the crowd always suggested to him the possibility of saving a soul. He seemed to love people with the very heart of Christ, so intensely that he cared little about their possessions of wealth or culture. To him every soul was so infinitely valuable that he could see little difference in people. The streets they lived on, the clothing they wore and their social position did not affect him in the least; it was the souls he was after, and all else was of minor importance until Christ possessed the soul.

His work was, therefore, in season and out of season; rather every season with 'Uncle John,' as his friends familiarly called him, was a soul-winning season. He did not look forward for months to the harvest, but regarded each day as a harvest time, and every community a ripe field. He carried the sickle all the time. He sowed seeds of truth, but he could not be satisfied without reaping.

Dr. Perkins, of Brooklyn, told me that he was walking with 'Uncle John' along a country road near Poughkeepsie one warm summer afternoon when a farmer, passing with his team, invited them to take seats beside him and ride. Dr. Perkins said: 'I talked with the farmer about the weather, his crops, his horses, anything that I thought would interest a farmer, but "Uncle John" did not say a word until there was a lull in our conversation, when, in his quiet, earnest way, he looked up into the farmer's face and said: "Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" The farmer acknowledged that he did not, but before the ride was finished he was rejoicing in the Lord who can save to the uttermost.'

On another occasion 'Uncle John,' seeing a farmer at work in his field, left the road and preached Christ to him as they stood in the freshly ploughed furrows. Before he left they were both kneeling in the soft earth, praising God for salvation. When dining at another farmer's table he noticed that the young man, son of the farmer, for whom they had been praying, was absent, and 'Uncle John' surmised that the cause of absence was the desire to escape religious conversation. He took this for a good sign that the Spirit of God was moving upon the young man's heart, and, rising from the table, he started in pursuit of him, but he was nowhere visible. 'Uncle John' searched and called, but there was no response. At length, the earnest seeker found the young man in the barn at the bottom of a large hoghead into which he had jumped, hoping that he would thus remain unobserved, but 'Uncle John,' nothing daunted, leaped into the hoghead beside the young man, preached unto him Jesus, knelt in prayer, and before they left the hoghead the young man was rejoicing in Christ.

In the army John Vassar won hundreds of soldiers to Christ. They believed in him and welcomed him at all times and places. He made such a stir in the 150th New York Regiment that General Ruger sent a soldier to summon the enthusiastic evangelist to his presence. The soldier found him in a religious meeting. Touching him upon the shoulder, he quietly informed him that the General wanted to see him. Not the least agitated 'Uncle John'

said, 'Boys, go right on with the meeting, the General wants to see me.' General Ruger's rather rough question was: 'Who are you, and what are you here for? You are not the chaplain of either of these regiments. We shot a man as spy who came into our camp as you have come to-day. By whose authority are you here?' 'Uncle John' replied: 'I am agent of the American Tract Society, and I know the whole of the 150th Regiment, and I have passes from President Lincoln through all the Army of the Potomac. And now, General, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? We can have a little season of prayer right here.' 'No, no,' said General Ruger. 'Here, orderly, take this man back, and I will see Colonel Katchum about him;' and before the meeting from which he was taken was closed 'Uncle John' was back with the boys in a rapture of prayer and of praise. He was captured by a company of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart's cavalry. When brought before the General and asked about himself, 'Uncle John' replied that he was an agent of the American Tract Society, and the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Oh, yes,' said General Stuart, 'I know that good old Society, and we need have no fear of one of its agents.' 'But, General,' continued 'Uncle John,' 'do you know and love the Lord Jesus?' One of the soldiers who was guarding him said, 'I think, General, we had better send this man back across the lines, for if we do not we shall have a prayer-meeting from here to Richmond.' So 'Uncle John' was passed across the line, and they were relieved of his troublesome importunities. The Confederate soldiers were not in a frame of mind to be converted by a Federal tract agent.

These sudden questions often startled and sometimes repelled strangers, but there were few instances where permanent harm was the result. An infuriated husband once drove him from the door because he suspected that the purpose of his visit was to pray with his wife, and he was determined that there should be no praying under his roof. 'Uncle John' went very meekly away, but, after several hours of prayer in his room, returned to the house. The husband then informed him that he might come in provided he would promise not to pray. This 'Uncle John' refused to do, but he was nevertheless admitted, and prayed as much as he wished. In a certain town his sudden question and earnest persistence so angered a society belle that she circulated the report that he had insulted her. The people refused to come to his meetings, and spurned him from their own doors. He left that town with a heavy heart, unable, he said, to understand why God should permit such a thing; but the young lady was so stricken in conscience by her evil deed that she came with her young friends into 'Uncle John's' presence, and made public confession of the lie she had told, saying, as she begged his forgiveness, that it was the meanest thing she had ever done in all her life.

John Vassar, though so bold in his attacks upon sin and sinners, was one of the humblest of men. He delighted in calling himself 'The Shepherd's dog.' His work never displaced, but always supplemented, the work of the pastor.

At the close of his life he lingered for a little while, with infirm body, in the twilight of the morning, and his last word was 'Hallelujah!' as he passed into the presence of the King he had so faithfully served.

Your Own Paper Free.

'Northern Messenger' subscribers may have their own subscriptions extended one year, free of charge, by remitting eighty cents for two new subscriptions.

Strength Sufficient.

(Minnie Leona Upton, in the 'American Messenger'.)

From the depths one cried in anguish,
All human help withdrawn,
In the blackness of the midnight,
When distant seemed the dawn,
'All thy waves and all thy billows
Over me, Lord, are gone!'
The Lord of the sea drew closer
To this child in deep despair:
'Hast thou forgotten the promise
That should strengthen thy soul to bear?
When thou passeth through the waters
I will be with thee there.'
Then this soul looked up to the Father,
And to His hand held fast,
Fearing no more the billows,
Heeding no more the blast;
And, filled with peace ineffable,
Through the turbulent waters passed.
O, better to breast the billows,
Holding that mighty hand,
Than to walk in thine own strength trusting
Through a fair and sunlit land;
Far better than peace unworthy,
With Him in the storm to stand.
Cling to His strength in failing,
Though thine own strength decline;
So shall thou taste unflinching
The bitterness of the brine;
So shall thou know thy Father
And the power of love divine.

I Mean Business.

'Let's go in.'
'Oh, I guess not.'
'It certainly can't do us any hurt.'
'It can't, that's a fact.'
Two young men stood in front of a Gospel Mission in the city of Louisville, Ky. Both were wanderers and strangers in the city, and had been arrested at the threshold by the sound of music. Sweet the refrain sounded as it floated out to them,

'Come to Jesus, come to Jesus, just now.'
'Then I say we go in,' urged Charles Cox, the one who had first made the proposition. And the two descended the steps and found themselves in a long, narrow basement.

Mr. Stephen Holcombe had invited a lady to speak that night. Something in her voice and manner reminded Charles of his early home and his tender mother, who for years had been in her grave. When she had finished, and Mr. Holcombe was giving an invitation, she came and stood beside him, and, laying her hand on his shoulder, asked:

'Are you a Christian?'
'No.'
'Would you like to be?'
'Yes.'

Very earnestly she pointed out to him how simple a thing it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. While she was talking with him, his companion, a Jew, arose and went out.

When the services were ended Charles went to the room the two were to occupy together and for the first time in years ere he retired, knelt to pray. His companion laughed, then joked him, then tormented him. At length Charles looked up, still remaining on his knees, and said firmly:

'Not another word; I mean business.'

Ah! I like a young man that in religion, as well as in everything else that is good, means business. There would not be so many half-hearted Christians, nor so many wordy professors, if all young people, when they commenced a Christian life, resolved that it should be for time and eternity.—'Standard.'