

How the Boys Bought the Books.

(E. B. Buckham, in 'United Presbyterian.')

The young people connected with the church of the little town of Marshall were few in numbers, but nevertheless enthusiastic and interested, and always on the watch for an opportunity to be of service, or to do some good or kind deed. They were in the habit of holding meetings at their several homes Sabbath afternoons, and often these little gatherings were the beginning of some good or commendable undertaking.

One Sunday afternoon in the early spring such a meeting was in progress at the home of Ben and Harry Searles. Just before it closed, Ben proposed that they make an attempt to purchase some much-needed volumes for the Sunday-school library. The suggestion met with the hearty approval of all; but how was the money to buy them to be secured? The question was warmly discussed, without any satisfactory solution being arrived at. Finally it was agreed that each should begin in his own way to do what he could toward raising the much-needed money, and with this the meeting adjourned.

'Well, what is your plan?' said Ben to his younger brother after all the little company had gone. 'I don't know, just yet,' was the reply. 'But wait. What do you say to this? You know that Farmer Perkins, away over in the farthest part of the town, has been losing a number of sheep lately, from one cause or another. He thinks that a catamount must be lurking somewhere about the mountain, and offers a reward of twenty dollars to anybody who will bring him its skin. How would it do for us to go on a hunt after it?'

'No,' replied the older and more prudent brother, 'that plan is too visionary. Our chances of success would be altogether too small. We must put our time and labor in where it will be sure to count. Now you know that there is an abandoned sugar orchard over in the pine woods back of the hill, how would sugar-making suit you?'

'Splendid! Just the thing. We'll do it!' and Harry fairly danced with joy at the thought of the successful project before them. The boys tended school, so that it would be necessary for them to do their work after school hours, but this fact did not disturb them in the least, and they were soon busy at their task.

First of all they secured a number of buckets and pails, then whittled out some spouts with their knives, and repaired to the sugar grove. Holes were now bored in the trees with an auger, the sap spouts inserted in them, and the pails adjusted to catch the sweet liquid, as it dripped from them. The old sugar house had been long deserted, but a few hours' work put it in fair order again, and all was going on finely, and the prospect ahead was of the very brightest.

Now one Friday night, some two weeks later, as it would not be necessary to attend school on the morrow, Ben proposed that they take some provisions with them, and stay all night in the sugar-house, keeping up their sap boiling as far into the night as they pleased.

'Yes, and we'll take the rifle with us to ward off any danger, so that we will be perfectly safe!' added Harry enthusiastically.

The consent of their parents to this arrangement was finally reluctantly given, and the boys set out for the sugar house, to be gone all the following day. It was splendid fun, they declared, being all alone in the woods at night, watching the fire and the sap boil. But along toward morning, after they had been asleep for some time, they were suddenly awakened by a strange sound outside, which was not unlike a long drawn out 'snuff' of some animal, prowling around the camp.

The two sprang to their feet, and, seizing the rifle, peered cautiously out through a crack in the boards. The fire had burned low, but by its dim light they could distinctly see two great staring eyes, looking toward them out of the darkness like coals of fire. Ben raised the rifle to his shoulder, and taking aim at them as steadily as his trembling hand would permit of, pressed the trigger. There was a commotion as of a struggle for a time, and then all was quiet outside, but the two were too frightened to sleep any more that night, and sat waiting for the dawn. When at length the light of day crept through the woods, they stole out of the sugar camp to see what their night visitor could have been. There on the snow near the fire lay a catamount stretched at its full length. It had probably been attracted by the smell of the cooking, or the boiling sap. Ben stooped down, and ran his fingers through its long fur.

'It's pelt alone will pay for the books,' he remarked, 'without saying anything at all about the value of the sugar we have made.'

A Turning Point.

Last winter the confidential clerk of a firm in an inland town was sent to Philadelphia on important business. He had always been a steady fellow, was married, and was fond and proud of home, wife and child.

But he was young, and it was his first visit to a large city. He was elated with the importance of his errand, and had a vague idea of 'seeing life.' A single secret sip of the intoxicating pleasures of a large city could surely do him no harm. He hid the thought away almost out of his own sight.

Arriving at the city on Saturday night, he went to one of the principal hotels, registered his name carefully, reading it over after the manner of unaccustomed travellers, and went to supper.

Before he had finished, the waiter brought him two letters.

'Already! why, these are from the city! Nobody knows I am here!' he exclaimed.

'City folks mighty wide awake!' ejaculated John.

Our traveller tore open one envelope. Within was an invitation to a variety theatre of a bad reputation that evening, with a hint of a 'sacred concert' on the next day, and 'unlimited fun.'

The young man's face reddened, and his heart throbbed hotly. The door was open for that secret glimpse into inquiry. What harm could it do him—or anybody?

He opened the other letter. It contained a few words:

'Dear Sir: In order that you may not pass a lonely Sabbath in a strange city, we enclose a list of churches open to-morrow near your hotel, in any of which you will be cordially welcomed. Our rooms

and libraries are also open at your disposal. You will find friends there who will be glad to serve you.'

It was signed by an officer of a Christian Association.

'These invitations of both kinds are left at the hotel, and directed to each guest as soon as he registers his name,' explained the clerk. 'Which will you accept?'

The young countryman colored and laughed. 'The first is tempting. But that,' touching the second, 'has the true ring about it. I'll accept that.' He kept his word. It seemed to him as if he was close to his wife and little boy all day. Going to the hotel in the evening, he saw a group of pale, bloated creatures coming out of the 'sacred concert hall.' One or two were arrested for disorderly conduct.

'They have been "seeing life,"' said the clerk. 'They accepted the other invitation.'—Source Unknown.

A Sturdy Little Champion.

The true spirit of chivalry is well exemplified by a little incident which happened the other day. A ragged little girl was selling flowers at a busy corner where many trams met, and a burly man, in his effort to catch his car, accidentally pushed against her, knocking her against the side of the building, and upsetting her flowers.

All unconscious of his act, he was hurrying on, when a newsboy, who had seen the whole proceeding, stepped up to him defiantly, and said:

'What do you want to kick a girl for? Hit me. I'm big enough.'

The gentleman stopped and looked at his diminutive antagonist in surprise. Then he saw the little girl, and for the first time realized what he had done. He stepped back, handed out enough money to pay for her entire stock, and said kindly:

'I am very sorry, my dear, if I hurt you. Really, I didn't see you.'

And then to the boy: 'You said you were big enough, young man, but you are a deal bigger than you think. Men like you will have a lot to do with keeping this old world in a condition of self-respect.'

The children stared at him, hardly comprehending what he said and meant, and the man went his way.

That boy was supporting as well as he could an invalid mother and a crippled sister. From such sturdy little types as this develop the useful and successful men and citizens.—'League Journal.'

The Attraction of Revival.

That house of God which becomes noted in a neighborhood as a place in which many sinners have been 'transformed by the renewing of their minds' will, by a certain instinct of our redeemed humanity, soon become a centre of attraction, not only to those who, with scarcely any light, are groping after the truth, but even to many who are still hardly going on in sin. The greatest fame of Christianity is the fame of the cures she works.—Rev. W. Arthur.

Autumn Offers.

See the special autumn offers announced in this issue. The boys and girls have the opportunity of securing a premium and at the same time extend the usefulness of the 'Messenger' by circulating it among their friends.