

straight rail was so very straight and the crooked rail so very crooked that even Big Paul was struck by the contrast. Besides, there was a great hole between the two, a hole big enough for a pig to crawl through.

Big Paul stood regarding the opening for a moment; then he nodded his head knowingly, and forthwith proceeded to put another straight rail below the crooked one. It was still the same; the hole remained.

Big Paul stepped back a pace or two, and again eyed the opening critically. Another idea struck him. This time it must have been a very bright idea indeed, according to Paul's way of looking at it, for he nodded his head more wisely than ever. Then he stepped toward the fence, took off the rails, turned the crooked one over toward the ground, and placed one of the straight ones above it. The opening was still there, only now it was directly above the ground, easier for the pig than ever.

'Paul,' said the missionary's voice at that moment, 'you'll never get the hole out of the fence until you take the crooked rail out. You might try all day, it would still be the same; for Paul, the hole is in the rail itself.'

Big Paul looked at the missionary stupidly. Could it really be as he said? Was the hole in the rail?

'Take the crooked rail away, Paul; use only the straight rails to build the fence, and see then if I have not spoken truly.'

Paul did as the missionary advised, when lo! the result was a panel of fence good to look upon from bottom to top. No pig could crawl anywhere through that.

'That one bad rail, sure enough!' declared Paul regarding it thoughtfully. 'It make all the trouble, as you say, missionary. While it there, hole there; when it gone, hole gone!'

'Yes, Paul, my friend,' said the missionary earnestly, 'and as it was with the one bad rail in the fence, so it is with even the one sin in the heart. While it is there, all is wrong. Never mind how many good things may be placed on top of it with the hope of hiding it from sight, it is there all the same, and it will spoil all else as did the one bad rail in the fence.'

'Paul got crooked rail in him heart. Paul love to gamble,' said the Indian, suddenly looking at the missionary, and the heart of the good man thrilled as he noted the amount of feeling in Paul's voice.

'Yes, Paul,' replied the missionary, 'the crooked rail is in your heart, the one sin that keeps you back from God and all the good things he would give you. Get the crooked rail out, Paul. Quit gambling. Say "No" to Spotted Tail, Coyote Joe, and all the others who would entice you; say "No," and say it firmly. Don't try to compromise, to do some other way and still keep the sin there. Remember how many times and in how many ways you tried to make the crooked rail do, to build the fence with it. But it wouldn't, Paul, never mind how you turned it. As long as it was there, the whole panel was spoiled. It was only when you took it entirely away that the fence could be made without the hole.'

On the Sunday Paul joined the church he said to the missionary: 'Missionary, the crooked rail done gone out of Paul's heart. Paul himself took it. It cost heap, missionary, much heap; but Paul make great pull, and it come. Now, missionary, give Paul the straight rails to build fence in him heart.'

We can guess with what readiness the missionary complied.

Young Christian, beware of the one crooked rail, the pet sin that will make all else go wrong.

I think it was the venerable Methodist pastor, George Hughes, who editorially mentioned the following circumstance in the columns of the 'Christian Standard,' of Philadelphia, two or three years ago: 'Once in our early days, when we unhappily had the smoking habit, we received a terrible rebuke. An Indian spent a night at our house, having an engagement to lecture on 'Indian manners and customs.' After supper we invited him to take a cigar. His reply was, "No; that is a part of civilization that I have not learned yet." The words went to our heart like a dagger, but the time of yielding was not yet. It came at length, thank God! We have been free from the ignoble bondage for over thirty-five years.'—'Christian Statesman.'

## Correspondence

Apsley, Ont.

Dear Editor,—My brother has taken the 'Messenger' for about five years, and I like to read the stories in it, especially the Correspondence. I never wrote to you before, so I thought you would let me be one of your correspondents. I am ten years old, and I am in the third book. I have four brothers. One is older than myself. All my brothers are going to school, but one, and he is not old enough yet. MAGGIE W.

Dixville, Que.

Dear Editor,—I have a twin sister, her name is Ethel. It is two miles and a half from our house to the village. I saw in the 'Messenger' a little girl, and her name was just like mine, Edith, and she was eleven. I want Edith to write again if she will.  
EDITH S. (aged 11.)

Toronto.

Dear Editor,—I have a little brother, and his name is Harry. I go to Sunday-school and like it very much. We get the 'Northern Messenger.' My papa is the superintendent. I go to school every day. My teacher's name is Miss Chowan.  
BLOYE BAGSLEY (aged 7.)

Hamilton, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I will tell you about my holidays. I went to the country with my cousin, to my aunty on the farm. I was lonesome till my mother came. I thought that I would have a great time with the colts and lambs. They had seven horses, ten cows, and thirty pigs, forty chickens, fourteen geese and twenty-eight sheep. One day we took some salt down, and the sheep came to lick it. They put me on Billy's back, and I had a lively ride up the hill. I picked some wool. Mother carded it and spun and knitted it into stockings for me.  
N. J. S.

Halifax N.S.

Dear Editor,—I live in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. I am nearly nine years old. My father takes the 'Witness,' and I get the 'Messenger' every week, and like to read the letters. In this city we have plenty of Queen's soldiers, and I often see them drilling on the common. There are strong forts, and from the citadel a big gun is fired each day at noon. Also in our beautiful harbor, we often have many large warships, and great steamers, and other vessels coming and going every day. I hope your paper will prosper.  
J. ALASTAIR FORBES.

Homeville, C.B.

Dear Editor,—We have a little colt, he is four months old, and a tame pigeon, he came in a snow storm four years ago, and stayed with us ever since.  
OLIVE E. H. (aged 9.)

Compton, Que.

Dear Editor, I have a little brother named Courtland, and a little sister named Gladys. My little sister is a year old, and my brother 8 years old. I go to school every day, and like my teacher.  
BERNICE V. (aged 9.)

Lower Granville, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have been taking the 'Northern Messenger' one year, and shall continue to take it, as I like it very much. I succeeded in getting ten new subscribers for which I received as a premium a Bagster Bible, for which I thank you very much. I am very proud to have such a nice Bible of my own. My papa has taken the 'Witness' eighteen years, and we think we could not keep house without it. I live beside the beautiful Annapolis Basin. My home is between church and school-house. I like to go to school, and am fond of study, particularly mathematics. I am in the seventh grade, and academic arithmetic. I have a sister older than myself, and a brother nearly five. I read the 'Messenger' stories to him.  
SYBIL (aged 10.)

Manchester, N.H.

Dear Editor,—I belong to the Junior Endeavor, and the Good Templars. I have lots of fun here.  
ROBERT (aged 9.)

Lynn Valley, Ont.

Dear Editor,—Grandma takes the 'Messenger.' I like reading the stories very much. I was seven years old the last of October. I go to school every day. We have five cats. Fanny and Puss are cats, and Flossie, Tiny and Tip, are kittens. I have one brother, 13 years old.  
BESSIE A.

Weston, Mass.

Dear Editor,—I have been getting the 'Northern Messenger' for three years, and like it very much. My grandma sends it to me every year for a Christmas present.  
WILLIAM (aged 8.)

Stone Settlement.

Dear Editor,—My papa takes the 'Witness' and we like it very much. My grandma took the 'Messenger' when my mother was a little girl. We live on a small farm. I like to hear mamma read Ethel's and Vera's letter about the monkeys.  
PEARL S. (aged 6.)

Minnedosa.

Dear Editor,—The ponds near here are very hard, and my brother and I are fond of skating on them. We have got a pair of skates each. I have an aunt living in Portage, which is 80 miles from here. I like to go and visit her very much. My youngest brother is staying there.  
J. H. B.

Carrs Brook, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I live near the sea-shore, and in summer I go in bathing, I also gather shells and stones. I have two pets, a dog and a cat; my cat's name is Tiger, and my dog's name is Ponto. We have taken the 'Messenger' ever since I can remember. This is the first letter I have ever written to the 'Messenger.'  
GEORGIE E. E. (aged 9.)

Quebec.

Dear Editor,—I belong to the High School Cadet Corps, and I go to the Methodist church, and I get the 'Northern Messenger' every Sunday. We have been getting the 'Messenger' for a long time. When father was a boy he used to learn three and four hundred verses a Sunday. I belong to the Mission Band, and the day we meet is Wednesday.  
P. W.

Algonquin, P.O.

Dear Editor,—One night as I was reading in the Correspondence, I noticed a letter with the name signed Beulah M. My name is Beulah, too, and I never heard it but once before. Will Beulah M., please write again and tell about the country she lives in? In the winter there is a great deal of snow here. As we live near the ice I often go skating. One of the branches of the Nation river flows through our farm. It is not very deep here, but farther on it is quite deep. In the spring time when the water is high, we can go on the water in a boat.  
BEULAH M.

Carleton Place, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I go to Sunday-school every Sunday, and get the 'Messenger.' I like it very much. I always read the Correspondence first. I am in the Sunday-school choir.  
BESSIE McL.

Ipswich, Mass.

Dear Editor,—I live in Ipswich. It is a very pretty place in the summer. I get the 'Messenger' every Sunday, and like it very much. I am a member of the Junior League. We meet at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon.  
M. L. HILLS (aged 10.)

Bendale.

Dear Editor,—I get the 'Messenger' from Sunday-school, and like it very much. I have two sisters and five brothers. My eldest brother is in Manitoba. I have had the rheumatics. My youngest sister's name is Amelia. She could walk when she was nine months old. Her birthday is New Year's day.  
FLORA T.

Sherbrooke, P.Q.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm two miles from Sherbrooke. I keep five pigs. I have to feed them every morning. I have thirty-five hens, and I get thirty eggs a day.  
NORREY W. (aged 8.)