

At nine p.m., as we were about to sleep, we heard the faint sound of a gun, fired deliberately three times and we all knew that our young men with food were not very far from us. The next morning, about seven a.m., the bold and welcome purveyors arrived in camp with just enough millet seed to give each soul one good meal. This the people soon despatched, and then demanded that we should resume our journey that afternoon, so that next morning we might reach Suna in time to forage.

(To be continued.)

Creeping Up the Stairs.

Is the softly-falling twilight
Of a weary, weary day,
With a quiet step I entered
Where the children were at play;
I was brooding o'er some trouble
That had met me unawares,
When a little voice came ringing:
"Me is creepin' up a stairs!"

Ah! it touched the tender heart-string
With a breadth and force divine,
And such melodies awakened
As words can ne'er define;
And I turned to see the darling,
All forgetful of my cares,
When I saw the little creature
Slowly creeping up the stairs.

Step by step she bravely clambered
On her little hands and knees,
Keeping up a constant chattering
Like a magpie in the trees—
Till at last she reached the topmost,
When o'er all her world's affairs
She, delighted, stood a victor,
After creeping up the stairs.

Fainting heart, behold an image
Of man's brief and struggling life,
When best prizes must be captured
With noble, earnest strife:
Onward, upward, reaching ever,
Bending to the weight of cares;
Hoping, fearing, still expecting,
We go creeping up the stairs.

On their steps may be no carpet;
By their side may be no rail;
Hands and knees may often pain us,
And the heart may almost fail;
Still above there is the glory
Which no sinfulness impairs,
With its rest and joy forever,
After creeping up the stairs.

The Story of a Brass Band.

In the year 1861, I became a member of a brass band composed altogether of the sons of farmers. This band had been organized about one year. My early recollections of it are all of the pleasantest kind. The average age of its members was twenty years. Life was all before us, with its bright and glorious expectations and possibilities. It was for us a happy meeting when, every Tuesday evening, we assembled for our weekly music lesson, after a hard day's toil, to drop for the time being all thought of labour or care, and thoroughly enjoy our lesson and each other's company. And we did truly enjoy both. I think there could not be easily found fourteen young fellows who were happier in each other's company than we were, being all, or nearly so, of a cheerful, sunny disposition.

The climax of our success was reached when, in September, 1862, by invitation of the whole neighbourhood, we attended and played for the farmers' harvest-home picnic. It was a grand gathering of friends. There was no disturbing element present. Everybody was sober, clothed and in his right mind. And, in consequence, as happy as good crops, good health, and, above all, a good conscience, could make him.

In my mind's eye I can see the young band—in fact, I have an old photograph of the band taken at the time—as we stood up to play on the picnic ground, before that large gathering of admiring friends and relations, in all the glory of new uniforms, bright instruments, and last, though not least, the happy consciousness that we could actually play a few simple tunes to the delight of our friends and the satisfaction of ourselves. No doubt every member of that gay band looked confidently forward—as he had good reason—to a happy, prosperous life.

And now, dear reader, if you will accompany me, we will try to trace the history of each member of that once merry, hopeful party—the pride of the neighbourhood—down to the present.

In this band there were three staunch teetotalers. One of them is now living on his own farm, earned by himself—still sober, prosperous, and happy. The second is a market gardener, on his own land—still a temperance man, moderately rich, and, judging by appearances, he is certainly as healthy, happy, and sunny-tempered as ever. The third became a mechanic, and in due time got a business of his own, which he has lately sold, and retired. He, too, is both healthy and happy, having added to temperance the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The other members of the band were all very moderate drinkers, and at the time of which I have written they would have been ashamed to be seen at all under the influence of liquor. I must, however, except our teacher, the band-master. The enemy had mastered him. He had an appetite for whiskey. We watched him closely, to guard him from temptation, and succeeded pretty well as long as he was with us; but after a time his musical talent—which was of a very high order—procured for him more remunerative employment in a large city, where the temptation was much greater, and he was soon laid in a drunkard's grave.

I am very sorry to have to relate that the moderate drinkers have, in almost every case, followed our poor band-master. One got employment on the Grand Trunk Railway. He was warned that if he did not stop drinking he would lose his situation. Poor Joe did not heed the warning, and very soon after lost not only the situation, but his life, while under the influence of intoxicating liquor. The second, a brother of poor Joe's, went into liquor-selling, and died drunk, in his own tavern. The third was the finest specimen of a strong, healthy man, in the whole band. He served with me, in the Volunteers, on the Niagara frontier, in 1866, escaping unhurt the Fenian bullets and bayonets, and withstood the hardships of one hundred and eight days of camp life, apparently uninjured. Two years later he succumbed to the same old enemy that killed his band-master. The fourth began to drink hard, and was speedily changed from a very kind-hearted, pleasant young fellow, to a quarrelsome inebriate. He went west, got killed in a tavern fight, and his heart-broken parents received home and buried the bruised dead body of their once bright boy. The fifth left the farm, and came into the city to drive a team. Here the temptation was too great for him to withstand, and he was soon overcome by the same cruel enemy that conquered his comrades before him. I do not know when the death of the sixth occurred, but I have been told by his friends that it was the usual end of a moderate drinker. Death slew him while he was still a young man. The seventh I met a short time ago, on King Street, Toronto, for the first time in twenty-five years. He recognized me at once, and remarked that I was hardly changed at all. I am sorry to say that I could not return the compliment. I did not know who he

was until he grasped my hand and called me by name; then I remembered the tones of his voice, and detected a semblance of the good-natured smile he used to wear in the days when he was my comrade in the band. He was transformed from a sprightly, good-looking young fellow to a bloated, gray-bearded, purple-faced old man. I wondered what had altered him so much. In the course of conversation he told me that he had been keeping tavern up the country for a number of years. I marvelled no more at the change in his appearance. The eighth kept a tavern in Toronto for a number of years. He patronized his own bar until he became a drunken sot—a shame and disgrace to himself and his still loving friends. But I have good reason to believe that he is now rescued from the downward path, and is no longer a drunken tavern-keeper, but a sober grocer. May God help him to continue such! He has suffered enough from the accursed traffic in his own person, and in the fact that number five—who perished as above stated—was his brother. Numbers nine and ten are still what is termed "moderate drinkers," with an occasional spell of immoderate tipping. Their circumstances are quite as moderate as their habit of drinking.

Dear reader, this is no fiction, but as true a history of facts as can be given from a retentive memory, unimpaired by alcoholic beverages. My recollections of the early days of the band are to me very pleasant, and bring back some of the happiest days of my life; but to trace the history and downfall of the majority of that once jolly crew, who have been sacrificed to the liquor traffic, is to me painful in the extreme. The history of these friends is to me a good and sufficient reason—if no other could be given—for loathing and hating, with undying hatred, the traffic—not the poor creatures engaged in it—which has destroyed so many of my companions. When that traffic restores the lost members of that band to their loved ones, and the positions they would have occupied if the liquor-traffic had been destroyed instead, then, and not till then, I may perhaps entertain the idea of compensation to the agents who are engaged in the destruction of my friends.—*Canada Citizen.*

The Man Who Took Himself to Pieces

MR. LITTLE, in his book on Madagascar, tells an amusing story of a friend who, on a journey from the coast to the interior, was much troubled by the curiosity of the natives. Being a fine-looking man with a flowing beard he excited the admiration and amazement of all. Natives crowded the doors of his hut and jostled one another to get a peep through convenient chinks, giving him all the time their opinion of his eyes, nose and general appearance. In vain did he shut the door of his hut. They crowded back again, and at last sat down in rings outside the hut to discuss his want of good manners in sending them away. At last the stranger could stand it no longer.

It was a bright moonlight night; he suddenly rushed to the door of his hut, threw it open, and with a loud shout sprang toward the natives. At the same time he drew from his mouth two rows of false teeth and waved them in the air.

The natives took one look at the dreadful sight, and then fled in horror from the presence of "a man who could take himself to pieces."

THE work of character-building is worth all it costs of time and toil. Beautiful lives are worth more than palaces. Bright, buoyant, well-balanced girl and boys are what we want among the crowds of weary ones we meet everywhere in life.