

## Junior Department

Conducted by REV. S. T. BARTLETT, Colborne, Ont., Vice-President in charge of the Junior League section of General Sunday League and Epworth League. For editorial correspondence from all Junior League workers to add interest to this Department of the Era.

Note.—Mr. Bartlett's columns in the Junior Topics did not arrive in time for insertion this month, but we have filled these pages with valuable material on the Junior League.

### How to Organize a Junior League

In answer to the question "How can we get a Junior League started here?" we suggest as follows, and these points are more or less applicable to all places where a Junior League is being considered. To have a Junior League you need the juniors, and then you require to adopt the League methods. Having the boys and girls and being desirous of organizing them according to the constitution of the Junior League, proceed slowly. By that we mean, do a lot of preparatory work. Get yourself as the organizer, whether you are minister, teacher, man or woman, into intelligent and sympathetic acquaintance with Junior League principles. Study the constitution yourself, and even if you think it is not perfect, don't "tinker" with it. Use just as much of its suggested plan of work as you deem wise, but keep the foundational principles well in mind and don't plan to deviate from them. Master the pledge. Get it firmly fixed in your own mind before you try to get others to sign it. Then prepare the juniors. Personal explanation is best. When you see that they are inclined favorably to the League by intelligent acquaintance with its purpose, call a public meeting. There make explanation of your purpose to organize a League; but do not be in a hurry to organize at this first meeting distribute constitutions, pledge cards, etc., among the young. Have these taken home and studied. Enroll none whose parents (or one of them) have not also signed the pledge. The pledge is as much for the parent as the junior. Then one by one, at the second meeting or perhaps the third, as you see most wise, let the juniors write their names in the General Roll of the League. At the head of this roll let the pledge be written and as the signatures are affixed, you have the active membership duly entered. Let the children, say under nine years of age, be considered probationers or trial members. By this we mean that while they may be very sincere and earnest, they ought not to be counted as active members until to the satisfaction of both parent and superintendent, they have a clear and intelligent idea of what is required of them. Children that cannot read are hardly in a condition to take the active membership pledge. Now, having your membership list well started, call a meeting for the election of your officers. The Superintendent, of course, has been duly appointed by the minister in charge of the circuit. From your active members let your officers be elected. The number is not binding. Have just such officers and committees as your work needs, no more. Do not overburden the League with organization so that the life is squeezed out of it. Go slowly, be content to grow and grow as the necessities of the work show the desirability of larger efforts. Let the Superintendent and officers consult together as to the details of the meetings. Let the committees stand for something, and see that they do the work for which they may have been formed. Much depends on the tact and push of the Superintendent, as to whether committee work will be a success or failure. The boys and girls want to work; but they do not know how. The purpose of the committees is to train them to

work intelligently and unitedly for a well-defined end. Having organized according to these general terms, adopt a definite plan in your weekly meetings. The weekly topic study should not be discarded. If your League is going to do good work it must work to do good. Without this willingness to work there will be little if no good accomplished. Conducting a Junior League is not play. It means study, planning, constant watchfulness in oversight and guidance, and unless the Superintendent is prepared to work it along these lines it is bound to fail. This suggests the question often asked, "What kind of a person is needed for a successful Junior League Superintendent?" and this we will try to answer in our next number. Meanwhile go ahead and organize. Do your best, and none will appreciate you better more than the juniors among whom you work if you see that it really is your best. But superficial preparation showing every mark of hurried or no study at all, they will soon discover and condemn.

### Junior League Work

BY MISS S. MERKLEY.

When our blessed Lord was here upon earth he loved the children and longed to make them a part of his fold. "Suffer the children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," was the command of his greatest of teachers. He longed to have their earliest service, for in such a service he saw grander possibilities than could ever be attained through a life half lived for him. History reveals to us the fact that the men who have shone out with the most resplendent beauty of character have been those who early began to think about and to work for God. The idea of forming children into classes, given to the world by the father of Methodism, never seems to have occurred to any thought beyond that of the children, like many of our older people meeting together twice a week for testimony and prayer. The idea of making the weekly meeting a rendezvous to discuss practical work was not developed until of late years.

The value of such a spiritual organization in our church can only be estimated when we notice some of the results of it. The more spiritual the church is the less are its adherents associated with crime. The Methodist Church, which we believe to be the most spiritual, is responsible for less crime, proportionately, than any other of the four great denominations. So it follows that by pushing the work among the boys and girls with greater energy and earnestness we will enable the bulk of the future to be, in a more marked degree, the best friends of the State in regard to the reduction of crime. Many parents may not realize what this Junior Society is doing for their boys and girls, but in the future the works of this organization will be revealed and there will be shown to us as useful citizens and aggressive Christians as an outcome of the Junior League. Allow me, before proceeding further, to briefly outline the Junior League Constitution for the benefit of those who are as yet not acquainted with this organization. The object of the League is to win the boys and girls to accept Christ, to train them to work for him everywhere and at all times, and to guide them in the formation of Christian character. It shall be so managed as to contribute to the interests both of the Sabbath-school and the ordinary juvenile church classes. The members of the Junior League shall be boys and girls under fourteen years, except as may be otherwise determined as to age by each local branch of the Junior League itself. The earnest co-operation of the parents

shall be solicited, and, where practicable, obtained. Meetings may be held Saturday afternoon or otherwise as may be found convenient, for instruction in the Holy Scriptures, in our catechisms, doctrines, history and biography, in moral movements and temperance reforms, in all the spirit, manners and practices of the Christian life and intercourse, and in such other subjects as the pastor may choose and direct. Any Junior Epworth League may adopt what departments of the ordinary Epworth League it prefers, but must maintain those departments covering the ground contemplated in the disciplinary catechism classes and the exercises necessary to give effect to the instructions there set forth. The officers of the Junior League shall be the superintendent (either the pastor or a person approved by him), who shall also be the honorary president of the Junior League and have oversight of the work and all its affairs; as many assistant superintendents (honorary vice-presidents), as there are departments of the League. A president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Committees may be formed such as are needed (the officers of the same appointed, shall be elected annually by the members of the League). The active member's pledge is as follows:

"Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise him that I will try to do whatever he would like to have me do; that I will pray and read the Bible every day; and then just so far as I know how, I will try to lead a Christian life. I will be present at every meeting of the society, when I can, and will take some part in every meeting."

The associate member's pledge:

"I hereby promise, with the help of God, to try always to read the Bible daily; to come to every meeting of the society when I can; and to be attentive and orderly while present."

Such is a brief outline of the constitution, and we must admit it is a society possessing a most worthy aim, and with earnest, effective work grand results can be expected in the future. There is no department of our Epworth League so full of promise as the work among the juniors, and there truly is none of greater moment, or of graver concern. As we do not see and realize the potent forces for good or evil that are awaiting development in our youth, how anxious we should be to bring them early to Jesus and secure for them a start in his service. The Junior Society is the latest agency put in operation to aid in this good work. It does not seem to supplant but to supplement those that were in operation before its organization.

In many Methodist Churches the work among the children is left wholly to the one lady in Sunday-school each week, but this is not a adequate for the proper and sufficient equipment of the young for the work of life. Hence the Junior Society seeks to supplement the work of the Sunday-school by making practical, personal application of the truths of Christianity to the minds, hearts and lives of all children. Time will only tell of the grand work which this Junior Society, as yet in its infancy, is doing and shall do among our boys and girls. There is much discouragement attached to the work at times, but let us remember, if we succeed in saving but one our efforts will be repaid. Some years ago the late Horace Mann, the eminent educator, delivered an address at the opening of a reformatory institution for boys, during which he remarked that if only one boy was saved from ruin, it would pay for the cost and care and labor of establishing such an institution. After the meeting was over a gentleman called Mr. Mann upon his statement, and

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