



Practical League Problems



Why Different Departments?

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(From an admirable address given at the Belleville District Convention, at Foxboro.—Ed.)

Why do we require so many departments in League work? Because the members of our Leagues are engaged in a mighty exploring expedition. They are searching for the vital principle within men. They are looking for human living hearts, and in order to find them they must follow up certain natural channels. Livingstone, while engaged in exploring the pathless wilds of the dark continent moved along the winding banks of the great streams until he reached the fountain heads among the hills. He knew that he must find the source if he patiently followed the natural channel of the stream. One day he asked his native guides "where does your great river flow?" referring to the Zambesi. After a moment they replied, "we suppose it is lost in the sand." Livingstone knew better. One great thought prompts us to search on for the great vital principle within the lives of men.

This great moving, flowing river of humanity is not to be lost in the sand, and therefore we must reach, direct and control it at the source. We want to sweeten and purify its waters at the fountain head, and so send them rippling, sparkling, and singing down through the vast solitudes of a songless, tuneless, sin-cursed world. In order to find the source we must move along the natural channels, that is all. And in the different departments of League work we have these various channels.

The first is the Christian Endeavor, that of devotion and prayer. At the end of this channel you will always find a human heart, for it is natural for men to pray. The savage, in his ignorance, stands in his native home while a storm is beginning to gather. He watches the hurrying clouds in the distance. He listens to the wind and the tempest as they awaken the giants of his forest home. The waves begin their mad play on the seashore, the lightnings flash, the thunders roar, and he trembles for his life. He believes, however, that there is a power behind the wind and the storm and feeling his own weakness, he begins to implore the help of the storm god, and so he prays.

A few years ago I was walking up the streets of a strange city in the United States and came to a beautiful Methodist Church. The doors were wide open and a large bulletin board stood at the one side of the entrance with these words printed in great letters of gold, "Come in, and rest and pray."

I hadn't very much interest in the church of God at that time, but these words seemed the sweetest I had ever heard and the verses which with me were stirred to their depths. The invitation sought me along the natural channel and it found a living responsive heart.

Let the Christian Endeavor department have a prominent place in your league.

We come next to another natural channel—the Missionary department, which is broad in the field it offers for heart development. It is natural for man to love. It is but a natural thing for us to desire to help one another. The spirit of the good Samaritan is broad in the

world to-day. It has always been so more or less. It must always continue to be so, for while there is a human heart left on earth, it must feel for a neighbor's woe.

This loving sympathy for others develops hearts with mushroom growth, for it always produces a dual fruitage.

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed—

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

The next natural streamlet is the Literary department. How natural it is for us to reach out after knowledge. Our forefathers were an inquiring pair to begin with, and the thousands of questions asked by little ones to-day show us that it is but natural for man to be pleased when he is gaining new ideas and possessing himself of fresh information. Many a young man or woman can be appealed to along this channel who would be hard to reach along other lines. It is not simply for entertainment, or even to impart useful knowledge, that we are emphasizing this department of League work. This is not the end but the means only to the end, and should therefore always be considered secondary. We are spiritual navigators, and we are using this channel to reach the heart and to centre its devotion upon God.

The culture of head and of heart, however, should proceed together. Education has a prominent part in the development of christian character. Have a Literary evening once a month and make it a matter of study and prayer. Keep all these programmes on a high moral plane, and never present anything which is coarse or vulgar. Remember the motto for each and every department, "Look up and lift up for Christ and the church."

We have still the Social department of the League, by no means the least important of the four. It is also a natural channel proceeding from the throne of the human heart. On its waters many have toiled at the oars until they have been abundantly rewarded in touching the heart, and in directing its flow Godward. The attitude of some towards this department is one of doubt and suspicion, but it may be made one of great value. We should avoid entertainment for the sake of merely entertaining, but many are easily appealed to along the line of their social natures when other efforts to reach them have failed entirely. We may profitably entertain in our League with the view of arresting the world in its hastening march, and of giving it a vision of eternal things.

Don't forget the value of a hearty hand-shake, a smile, and a "glad you are with us, come again." We all appreciate a little attention from others.

Don't forget the value of a mutual acquaintance among the members, and a warm friendly interest for each other. Anything that promotes this spirit is a benefit in your league.

Don't forget also the value of the home when its parlors are opened and consecrated to the Master's work.

Above and beyond all let us always bear in mind in each and all these departments, that the great aim and object before us is to find the heart, and to centre its affections upon God.

Book Shelf

All books mentioned here can be procured from the Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto.

Living Teachers. By Margaret Slattery, published by F. M. Barton Company, Cleveland, O. Price 35 cents.

Every teacher, especially every Sunday School teacher, who would be really alive, and who would make the lesson live both before the mind and in the heart of the scholar, should read this little book. We know of no other that is so agreeable with life, or which to so full an extent demonstrates the essential power of a teacher's personality.

The Story of the Years. By H. L. Platt. Price 35 cents.

This gives in attractive form the history of the Woman's Missionary Society for the first quarter of a century of its life. As Part 2, it deals with the work of the Society in Japan and China. Its 150 pages contain information that every woman in Methodism should possess. The wonderful growth of the Society is cause for thanksgiving. That its work may increase yet more and more every lover of Christ's Kingdom will pray.

Order this book from Room 20, Wesley Buildings, Toronto.

Where the Fishers Go. By Rev. F. W. Browne. Published by The Cochrane Publishing Co., New York. 376 pages in cloth. \$1.00.

This is the story of Labrador, profusely illustrated, and contains a mine of information regarding the lands and seas of which it treats. It is a regular encyclopaedia of facts, but it is by no means written in dry, encyclopedic style. The author has been personally acquainted with Labrador for many years, and writes entertainingly of what he knows so well. We have much enjoyed its pages, and expect to keep it at hand for frequent reference. To those who desire reliable historic data regarding Newfoundland and Labrador, and who appreciate a story that is not "just a story," we are sure this book will be of much value.

Tilda Jane's Orphans. By Marshall Saunders. Published by L. C. Page & Co., Boston. 245 pages in cloth, illustrated. Price \$1.50.

"Tilda Jane first appeared several years ago in *The Youth's Companion*. But in the passing of the years her story has grown, and in this new book the author has given in most attractive style more of the fortunes of the orphan and her dogs. The history, moreover, of Milk-wood, the magnificent and companionable horse, adds much interest to the story. This is one of the books, none too numerous in these days of "No end to looks," that young people will read with avidity, and put down with a sense of regret that it wasn't longer, while they go away with wholesome, uplifting and beneficial thoughts and impulses to right living and kindly doing, even though the world is not yet free of Perlettas. May "Tilda Jane's spirit be universal.

Short Studies of Christ—The Ideal Hero. By Emma A. Robinson. Published by The Cochrane Publishing Co., New York. 150 pages in cloth. Price 50 cents net.

This excellent book is intended to convey to young life the One Ideal Character, Christ, magnifying more especially the heroic elements in His life. It consists of the main of twenty-six studies, divided into six sections as dealing with the various stages in our Lord's career.

It will be particularly valuable to Junior League Superintendents who wish to give more than a mere passing notice to the Life of Christ.

"Pay as you go, and if you don't pay, don't go."—D. L. Moody.