

such self-evident force, as generally to secure for them a joyful reception by his serious hearers, in whatever system the latter might have been trained.

But there was another circumstance connected with my aged friend, that attracted me towards him with still greater force than those above mentioned. It was the memories he had preserved of a generation, and a state of things that have now passed away, and of which no record remains. It is true we have several publications relating to the early settlement of Upper Canada; but these generally present the subject from a public standpoint. They never really introduce us to the interior life of the people—their domestic, social, and religious state and habits. From all we can learn from those publications, we might suppose that the difference between the condition of the early settlers and our own, consisted chiefly or wholly in the hardships and privations which they had to endure, from which we are exempt. The singular fact that a large body of people, all of them of one class—the humble, illiterate, uneducated,—moved on beyond the boundary of civilization, into the trackless, roadless forest, unaccompanied by their clergymen, their schoolmaster, or even their physician, or any educated class; totally unsupplied with any literature; unknown to the press;—that this body of people and their descendants, subsisted under these circumstances, during two entire generations, not only in material things, but also in culture and intelligence, is passed over in silence, as not of sufficient consequence to attract notice, though to me it seems a most interesting phenomenon.

We generally expect a sad deterioration of morals to accompany or follow similar emigrations. Bodies of men moving into the wilderness in advance of permanent settlements, unaccompanied by their religious teachers are apt to give license to their passions, forget their early training and become profane, intemperate, reckless, and not unfrequently bloodthirsty and cruel. Such has been the complexion of the movement westward, of most of the advanced settlements in the United States, and many of us still remember the accounts we had of the deplorable state of society (if it can be called society), in California after the hasty emigration of '49 and '50. But in the settlement of this province no such effects followed, but on the contrary, a satisfactory state of morals was maintained throughout,—nay, a satisfactory state of religion: For though they had no educated clergy or teachers, they improvised a Christian ministry for themselves,—weak and simple it is true, and from one standpoint might be considered very defective, but it met the wants of the time. The morals of the people were preserved. The worship of God was maintained. The Sabbath was honored. Churches were organized, and walked in fellowship and Christian discipline. Nor was the education of the young entirely neglected. Every settlement erected its school house—a primitive structure indeed; built of log and roofed with split clapboards, which were held in their places by poles (*twigs of cedar*) laid horizontally atop them. The school house was also the meeting place of the church. The school was only kept open in winter. It was thought desirable that every child should

be taught to read, and as many as possible to write and *cypher*; but beyond this, except in very few settlements, nothing was attempted, or even thought necessary.

Having learned so much of those early days, chiefly from anecdotes related at different times by my friend, Elder Oldham, I became very anxious to obtain from him a more detailed and connected narrative of them, and my opportunities have at last prevailed; and I now propose to report to the readers of the "CHRISTIAN HELPER" the substance of our conversation on these subjects. Happy shall I be if they, your said readers, shall share with me the interest I have felt in pursuing those enquiries: as in such case I shall expect them to be satisfied with the hasty manner in which they are now reduced to writing, at intervals snatched from other avocations.

LUTHER.

Essay.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CLASSES.

A paper read at the Annual Meeting of the London Sunday School Union, May 3rd, 1877.

BY MISS MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

There are few sights more pleasant and cheering than that of the girls' department in the Sunday school. Who cannot recall the long straight rows of bright faces, the eager, listening attitude, or the mischievous quizzing of hats and aspirates, the tender glances of eyes that look out into life, the careful expression which tells of a too early acquaintance with sorrow, and other characteristics which may be seen on any afternoon in any ordinary Sunday School? When the lessons are over, and the scholars rise to join in the well-known hymn, or bow the head in prayer, who does not think of the lines by Mrs. Hemans:—

"Haste, 'tis a holy hour, the quiet room
Seems like a temple, while yon soft light sheds
A faint and starry radiance through the gloom.
And the sweet stillness, down on fair young heads
With all their fair young locks untouched by care,
And bowed, as flowers are bowed at night, in prayer."

But there is a contrast to this. We look on another picture. It is evening, and in the dirty streets the gas-lamps are dimly shining. At a corner, opposite a low theatre and music hall, and in front of a gin-palace, there are groups of young men and girls. The latter are pale, but bold and coarse. They are dressed in flaunting finery, and are saying words which chill the heart with a sickening horror. Were they ever happy girls in the Sunday School? Yes, some, perhaps many; but they have forgotten the old songs, and are far removed from the old influences. They have almost nothing in common with the thoughtful girls who sat in the class and listened to the earnest words of the teachers. And yet there is a link binding the past to the present; for keen ears can detect, beneath the loud voices that appear to jest, some such lamentations as were heard in ancient times, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Little wonder is it, indeed, that the church and school, looking at this contrast, should be anxiously asking, "What can we do to retain our senior scholars?" Not to

keep them is to see months and years of toil for nothing. It is as if the farmer should diligently prepare the ground, and carefully sow good seed, tending it through all the dark days of winter and the bright ones of spring, and then let the harvest slip from his hands. Happily, in the present day there is manifested a determination to do something to prevent the departure of girls from the school at the age when, above all others, they need the friendly help of the teacher, and also to seek to bring back some who have become wanderers from the fold.

There is heard to-day a chorus of agreeing voices, and the burden of the song is this: "We will not lose our harvest: we will, by the help of God, ourselves gather what we have sown."

In considering this subject there are four particulars in regard to which thought is necessary:

- 1st. The teachers.
- 2nd. The scholars.
- 3rd. The room in which they meet.
- 4th. The conduct of the classes.

THE TEACHERS.

That which is wanted is *good women*—and are not good women as plentiful as primroses? This want can surely be met, since the world has many who will heartily enter into this work, consecrating themselves to it, as work for which they are naturally fitted, and with an intense and passionate longing to have the joy of leading their scholars to the Saviour. There may be cases where classes of senior girls may be given into the hands of Christian gentlemen, but they should only be those very rare ones in which Christian men are more numerous than Christian women. How can men, however good their intentions, enter into the feelings of girls? but women know instinctively how to read their hearts. It may be said—and, indeed, it often is said—that suitable teachers cannot be found; but how can that be when there are hosts of women with unfilled hearts and unemployed hands—women who love Christ and wish to serve Him—some of whom, unless other work be found for them, will enter sisterhood or settle down into repining old maids? These are the women for the work.

It is very desirable that those who undertake the care of senior classes should be able to show in their life, temper, and conversation the sunny, joyous side of Christianity. Girls do not admire long faces and mournful tones; they would not attend a class where every lesson was given sadly. And those teachers who delight to speak of this world as a "vale of tears and a howling wilderness," who dwell in perpetual November and never have a May, will not be popular with the young. Girls in senior classes believe in flowers and sunshine. Sorrow and pain come to them as sad surprises, and if they are to be won for Christ, it must be by other means than by beholding how gloomy some people are, either because of or in spite of their religion. Senior class teachers must be full of sympathy, love, and joy. They must be living illustrations of the fact that Christ's ways are ways of pleasantness, and His paths of peace. They must love girls not with that sort of love which is always saying, "How good it is of me to be so kind" but with that love which, though it