

the business columns of the daily newspaper, while the meal is being taken; they hurry off to their work without a care as to the young folks, upon whom their influence for good is nil; and, when they return in the evening, their minds are so occupied with business that they cannot be troubled with such a thing as family prayers, or with finding out how the children are being trained and educated for God. We do not say that this state of things is universal (no, thank God, there are many noble exceptions among our laymen), but it is far too common. And, when Sunday comes round, they take it as a day of rest, that is of idleness and indulgence, and forget the gathering of themselves together in God's House, for common prayer, and praise, and worship. They need this rest, they say, to fit them for the business of the new week. But, is their business any the better for this day of idleness and sloth? Not at all. The men who do care for spiritual things, who do go regularly to the House of God; who do take a real interest in the spiritual welfare of their brethren; who do teach in our Sunday schools and so obey the Blessed Master's command to "Feed my lambs;" who do invite others to join them in the church's worship, and who see that these strangers are provided with seats and books when they come to church; these men are not "slothful in business" because they are fervent in spirit; they are as successful in the main as are these others. Only the other day I was told of a young lad in Winnipeg who was kept working on Saturday night till nearly eleven o'clock. His mother said to him, as he retired to rest—"You had better take a long rest to-morrow, you need not get up for the early service." His reply was an index of the influence which the example of older men have over young folks: "Oh! I shall be all right in the morning. Mr. — will be out at church, and he has been working as late as I have. If he can get up after a hard day's work, so can I." So much for the influence of example.

We do not place the sermon upon the high pedestal that many do: at the same time, the exposition of The Truth has its own place in the service, and that one of considerable importance. If our clergy would only take more pains with the preparation of the teaching they are to give to their people, many men would be drawn to church to hear the sermon, and, as the Truth broke in all its fulness upon them, they would come from higher motives,—to pray, to worship, to adore. There is too much of the mere commonplace in the pulpit of to-day. Platitudes are linked together so as to form a goody-goody twenty minutes talk; the faith, for which the apostles and martyrs gave their lives, is in too many cases conspicuous by its absence. The clergy have a good deal to answer for in respect of this indifference on the part of laymen. These come to get food for their higher natures,—to get a fuller knowledge of their own place in the world of grace,—to get something that will be a real help to them in their home life, in their business life, in their life as members of the community,—and, in too many cases, they are offered chaff without a grain of nutriment in it. The truth of this is well seen in the fact that where the clergyman does make careful preparation,

and does give of his best, the men are more in evidence than elsewhere.

Our laymen need to be taught. They need to understand what the Church of Christ really is; what claims it has upon them; what advantages and privileges it offers towards making life worth living. When they have grasped this, and not till then, we shall see a greater number of our men at every service. The Holy Communion will once more become what it was in the church of the first days—the viaticum, the one great means of grace to strengthen men for the battle of life.

### THE BOYS' BRIGADE.

Of the various schemes and organizations which have been devised to solve the problem, "How to keep hold of our 'big boys,'" we feel no doubt the most successful has been the Boys' Brigade.

There is a peculiar attraction about soldiering that attracts the boys who are wild and difficult to handle, and so makes this a most useful bait for catching fish otherwise most shy of religious bait.

For the benefit of those who know little of the Boys' Brigade, it may be well to state briefly what the Brigade is.

To begin with, then, a regular company of militia boys is formed much on the same lines as any ordinary militia company, the age limit being from 12 to 17. Every boy is clearly told that while there will be military drill and soldiers' camp, the aim of the Brigade is distinctly religious, as the constitution plainly sets forth, it is "to advance the Kingdom of Christ among boys;" and, this great aim should never be lost sight of. Like the Y. M. C. A., with its reading room, gymnasium, baths, etc., it is "seeking to save" all the time.

The Boys' Brigade aims at doing its work more by quiet personal influence and talks, than by set and formal methods of spiritual work, though the Boys' Brigade Bible class, which is voluntary, should be a centre of company work. The idea is that each officer should be a definite Christian, who will seek through the company to gain a personal influence over the boys under his care, and make it his great aim to lead those boys to Christ.

That the Brigade is meeting with general favor may be judged by the following statistics.—Of the Boys' Brigade, in the United Kingdom, there are 790 companies and 35,000 boys; and in the Church Lads' Brigade, a similar organization on church lines, there are 783 companies and 31,300 boys, or a total of 66,300 boys.

In Canada there are many companies; and the organization is making its way steadily among us.

In addition to the winter weekly drills, ambulance classes and other instructive courses are often given. A reading-room and gymnasium have often been added, and have proved most useful counter attractions to the temptations which the street offers.

Beside the great general aim of the Brigade, carried out by the individual work of the officers, the Brigade has un-