

## Children's Work.

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DEAR CHILDREN,—I wonder if you are all remembering that our missionary to Japan will be leaving very soon now. We should be thinking about her very much and praying for her very often. We must not forget how hard it will be for her to leave home and friends and go off into a far away strange land. We cannot form an idea what it will be like, but we all know that it will be very hard at first. Will all the bands make a point of remembering Miss Rioch in your meetings during this month? She is to leave Cincinnati the first week in October in company of a party of missionaries who are going to Japan from the States. This will be so much more pleasant and safe for her than going out alone. It would be interesting to get your geographies, and study the route she will take. Start at Hamilton, from there to Cincinnati and on to San Francisco by train. From there by steamer to Yokohama, and then to Tokyo, her future home. I forget whether I told you that we must try and raise \$150 this year towards keeping our missionary in Japan. Three months of the year are gone, the holidays are all over, and now you will be ready to set to work in real earnest. I shall be looking for some reports soon; as yet I have received one from the Warton Cheerful Givers, who always report regularly. J. E. I.

### A Boy's Mission Band.

AN ADDRESS BY MISS LOTTIE STARK AT THE UNION MEETINGS, TORONTO.

So much has been written, intended as suggestive, for Mission Band Workers, that it would seem as if useful information where well nigh exhausted. And yet as long as the crying need of "something new" exists and Band Workers from experience learn to meet that need, so long with fresh ideas, new modes of work, and better plans for carrying them out, suggest themselves to be acted upon with more or less success according to the individual needs of differently conducted Bands. Experience is everything in this branch of work, as has been proven in our own Band. As president of a Boys' Band it must be of the boys, and our own work with them, that I must confine myself if the few hints I may be able to give are to be from experience.

I believe that a Boys' Mission Band is an institution generally held in fearful respect by young lady workers. If you enter on your work in that spirit, the writer can heartily sympathize with you. Brotherless, knowing nothing of the traits of these young lords of creation, it was with considerable apprehension that I heard of my appointment to the vice-presidency of a Boys' Band. I had enjoyed work for some time with the girls and the change was not a welcome one. Now after five years' work in our band let me say to the credit of a few of those dreadful boys, that the step taken in fear and trembling has never been regretted, never; nay, I glory in it, and am thankful to my Master for the privilege of working among those bright, energetic young souls, and there is nothing I am prouder, gladder of to-day, than the fact that I am President of a Boys' Mission Band. You will pardon this personal reference for the sake of the many who ask how I manage "those boys," and to whom I would give all the encouragement I can to perseverance; keep on! for in due time ye shall surely reap.

Our band at Bloor street started

some eight years ago with boys and girls together, Saturday afternoons, and one of the first things we found was that we must separate boys from girls. We found we could have two bands each as large as the united, more easily managed and readier for work. We started meeting fortnightly, but at the children's request changed to weekly; which plan we have followed for years with the greatest success. Nothing would induce us to meet less often. Of course it is harder for the leaders but it pays, the children take more interest and come more regularly. Perhaps one of the most important lessons our leaders have learnt is, that the more work the children do the better will be the band. Of the four meetings held during the month, one belongs entirely to the boys. This is named "Boys' Night," and is in their estimation the best. During the week the boys come to my home for practising music, recitations, readings and dialogues, all strictly missionary. The treasurer's and secretary's reports have been seen to and we are ready for an enjoyable evening. We open, of course, with spiritual exercises, and in all these the children must take part. Sometimes after a heartily sung hymn we each repeat a verse, or together a familiar psalm, concluding with the Lord's prayer in concert. If you are sitting beside me I am sure you will notice two boys who sit very straight and important, looking as if something were weighing heavily on their youthful minds. Allow me to introduce you to my treasurer and secretary, who have reports to read presently. These reports I am proud of. The secretary's contains a synopsis of the month's work. Notes what subject was taken up each night, which was the most orderly and best attended meeting, and regretfully alludes to any boy who has been sent out for misdemeanour during the month.

The treasurer's report gives the sum total collection for the month, that for each night and the average, and then compares with it the corresponding month's collection for the preceding year, that we may see in how far we have progressed; for of course we must do better each year.

And now we are ready for our programme. The leader will have made it out carefully and interestingly.

As a rule we have a kindly attentive and appreciative audience, and the applause is ever hearty for any effort however feeble. The little men especially are loudly applauded, and often encored. Some may question the wisdom of such a proceeding, querying if it be wise to sacrifice an evening of instruction to one of pleasure and questionable good. But we maintain that apart from pleasing we *instruct* the children. I have found again and again that a touching reading or recitation has done more to impress a simple truth on some little heart, than a whole evening's discourse on my part. For instance on one particular "Boys' Night," there was to be a recitation on "Giving" by a small lad. He had practised it studiously and he said it well. A few minutes before opening he came to me looking so troubled that I said, "Why, what's the matter, little man; you are not afraid of your piece are you? I am sure you will say it nicely." "It's not that, Miss Stark," was the doleful reply, "I forgot and spent my five cents in candy and how can I get up and tell the other fellows they shouldn't spend pennies on candy and bats and balls?" With an end in view I persuaded him to say it. The piece concluded with a short soliloquy on the many, many pennies spent for self, the *very few* for Jesus and I was not wrong in surmising for the seri-

ous griefed rendering the repentant little fellow gave.

Now a word about our officers. We have all we can. At present our staff consists of treasurer, corresponding and recording secretaries and a chairman of a lookout committee. We can as a rule depend on our officers for helpful attention. If we think they are shrinking their responsibility, this notice is given out: The officers of band will please remain after meeting to consult on business matters. And then, as with equal partners in the work, we ask them what they think of this or that scheme. Moralize on the behaviour of the boys, ask them to sit among some unruly members and help us keep order. Give a word of praise to the secretaries, talk figures to the treasurer, get out last year's book and compare '91 with '92's collections, gravely shake our heads over deficits and be boastfully happy over increased collections. And we do this *often*; try to never let them forget that it is *their* band, we want to run things to please them and if they are not satisfied, it is their business to come and tell us.

On one occasion when the order for some time had not been up to the mark, I thought it wise to give them a pretty sharp speech, the substance of which was that I was sensible of the honor conferred in electing me as their president. That as *their* president I was going to do my best to make theirs the best band in the Dominion of Canada, but I could not do this without their help. Of late things had not been as they should; something was wrong; either they or I were not doing our duty. If the evil lay at my door I was only too willing to try and remedy it. If they thought best I would give up the presidency, hard as that sacrifice would be. For once those boys were speechless, but when they did find their tongues it was to acknowledge the fault was theirs, and to make promises for the future, so well kept that we had ideal meetings for some time. We try to do everything in a businesslike manner. Our officers are always elected by ballot, minutes approved and signed, if correct (woe betide the secretary if they are not) reports adopted and filled. The boys enjoy this and we find it most helpful in keeping order. Of one of my officers I have purposely omitted speaking until now, that I might give him more attention. The chairman of the Lookout Committee—a helpful innovation to our band. Have you a large roll and but little time to look out absentees? then get a lookout committee with a good chairman. I simply chat with the latter, supply them with pad, postals and absentees to look out. If he is too busy to make a personal call I bid him write a postal. When I instructed our chairman to sign himself chairman of the lookout committee, he halted on one foot and said something about the other fellows laughing. But I looked incredulous and asked him how else they would know who he was or on what authority he wrote? and finally convinced of his responsible position he left me to be a pattern of propriety in band for the next three weeks. Then, alas, the novelty wore off and I had to put my thinking cap on, or rather drawing it down closer, for a band leader must *never* leave it off, and sent him as nice a letter as I could, asking him if he would kindly help his president in some matter, and concluded with "I want to thank you for your helpful attention, your president appreciates it." That leaven is still working. A few weeks ago his mother told me he said he was going to be a missionary. God grant he may! Our boys know how terribly disappointed we would be if none of them become such. It is referred to often,

looked for, prayed for. Some weeks ago I had the pleasure of listening with the boys to a busy city missionary, formerly a member of our band. How good it was to hear her tell of her call to the work and of how much the instruction she had received in the band had influenced her to give herself to God for foreign missions. How interested the children were and how heartily they promised to pray for her. Just here let me urge the plan of having mission-wise friends come to speak to the band. We try to have some one at least once a quarter. One can always find friends willing and pleased to help in this way, and it makes such a pleasant and instructive change. Have you two hands in your church, and do your boys' leaders speak to the girls occasionally, and *vice versa*? I have spent some very pleasant hours in girls' bands, and the boys always listen attentively to an officer from girls' hands. They all seem to feel she is "taking notes" and show off amusingly. The plan of our month's work is as follows: 1st meeting, Boys' Night. 2nd, Home Missions. 3rd, Biography. 4th Foreign Boys' Night. I have already referred to Home Missions. "By Canoe and Dog Train," Letters from our Missionaries, The Visitor, and other Home Missionary papers, are my helps for this evening. The boys never tire of hearing of the Indians and "Canoe and Dog Train" they knew by heart. Then we are indebted to several missionaries for letters direct to the boys and full of interesting home mission news. Several of these letters are extracts from the Visitor. A map and a blackboard with the names of the missionaries written thereon, together with their stations, will provide an interesting programme. Children always enjoy repeating things in concert and the lesson on the board so studied will not prove as tedious as might be supposed. Especially if you run your roll on the plan suggested by Mrs. McKay in April's "Link," then they will be interested in hearing all they can of the station or missionary for whom they answer. If any leader does not know to what I refer, let me advise her to get a copy and look it up, or, better still, if the "Link" does not come to her home, subscribe to it. I cannot see how any leader can run a band without the "Link" and "Visitor." In fact the more papers you can subscribe to the better. The writer will gladly give addresses of several excellent ones she takes and is indebted to for much helpful matter. City Missions also came under this head. Get in touch with some branch of this interesting work. I wish I had time to tell you of a never-to-be-forgotten Christmas tree we gave to some 70 of Miss How's city arabs three years ago and of an entertainment our boys purpose giving her boys.

Biography.—There is abundance of material for this interesting subject. What could be more thrilling, more inspiring to noble deeds than the story of Judson's or Paton's work for Christ. Don't attempt to read it; *study* it till you are master of it, till you can stand up and for 20 or 25 minutes hold those children spell-bound with the story of what God wrought through His servants. Talk of it being hard to interest boys! My experience is that they form a more appreciative audience than girls, that if they don't listen it's *my* fault not *theirs*. Put your own soul into it; feel, see, what you say. Laugh heartily over the amusing bits and let the boys laugh, and don't be ashamed to let them see how the touching parts go to your heart. Hard work? Yes! and responsibility so heavy that at times it *does* seem more than one can bear, but is that not when we are trying to bear the yoke alone? It means *study*! Three, four, five or

six hours hard work for one half-hour's talk! But you will not regret it. The more you study your subject, the more attentive your audience and the better you will speak.

Foreign.—Here again there is no lack of material, or will be none when a history of our Telugu Mission is written. Of course our own mission will have the first attention, and to those who are not familiar with "Children of India" and "Band Lessons on India" (the latter advertised in this "Link") let me recommend them. "Children of India," "Children of China," "Children of Africa," leaders will find a boon; every bit of them can be utilized. Perhaps that query, "How I manage those boys" is still unanswered satisfactorily. Well, first there *must* be sympathy between manager and managed. Do they understand that you *love* the work? Love every one of those boys and want to help them make their band a success. Let them feel your interest, your confidence, even your dependence on them and they will respond. Better they should feel that you depended on *them*, than they on you. At the same time let it be clearly understood that as president, they are in subjection to you. Not because some one in the church asked you to fill that post, but because *they* elected you to the position and by so doing indicated their willingness to be led and advised by you. Study the boys individually, find out what they can do and try to make use of every one of them at some time, in some way. You may not have time to go and visit them. Then go to meeting *early*; it is so helpful to be alone with your Father in His house for a few minutes before your young braves come in with a whoop and a cheery salutation. Now try to be a boy for five minutes, be bright, talk, show pictures seek advice at their hands, counsel or praise them, in short, *be* do what you see takes. Is there anything more restless than a boy? I row not, and if we can by some means keep them still, we may feel proud of our achievement. They will listen like mice during your talk; but the preliminary exercises, these must be made interesting. Certainly let the children take part in them as far as possible. Never let them think they are of no consequence, to be hurried over in any fashion, or you will lose your officers sure. A month ago my secretary gave me notice and I had to write him a letter addressed "Secretary of the W. W. M. B.," explaining my dependence on his minutes for reports, to make him see the error of his ways. How much I owe to my pen; how many converts made by a postal with Secretary, Treasurer or Chairman of W. W. M. B. thereon. It works like magic, a safe cure for inattention, listlessness and a thousand other ills that bands are heir to.

But the bad boy, the incorrigible, I know him! Well, first put him to work; if that doesn't do, send him home; if he doesn't feel the disgrace, pass a law (which we have found helpful) that any boy sent out of band for two consecutive meetings shall not be allowed to return till he has promised to be orderly and attentive for the future. Then in our band if the boy is sent out he is excommunicated from the picnic with which we close, the prospect of which we find helpful in keeping up the attendance during warm weather, when out doors is so attractive. It need cost you nothing, this picnic. We had a grand time last year at Rosedale woods.

Finally, sisters, let us be strong in the Lord and go on. This is a grand work we are engaged in. Do we realize our opportunities? If we send *one* missionary out of our band, think what it means! 100, 1000 jewels for His crown! Let us look at our boys and girls and see in them laborers for the field. Look for it! work for it! pray for it! pray! not only on band days but every day. Let there be a continual cry going up to God for these mission bands. One has said, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Who shall gainsay the fact that band workers shall be a powerful factor in the evangelization of the world? for through them shall go out men and women from Jerusalem to the ends of the world. Then band workers let us be up and doing with a brave heart, a *thankful* heart, to the work whereto God has called us.—*Canadian Missionary Link.*