

THE FIVE LOAVES.

WHAT if the little Jewish lad,
That summer day, had failed to
go
Down to the lake, because he had
So small a store of loaves to show!

"The press is great," he might have said,
"For food the thronging people call;
I only have five loaves of bread,
And what are they among them all?"

And back the mother's word might come,
Her coaxing hand upon his hair;
"Yet go for they may comfort some
Among the hungry children there."

So to the lakeside forth he went,
Bearing the scant supply he had;
And Jesus, with an eye intent
Through all the crowds, beheld the lad.

And saw the loaves and blessed them.
Then beneath his hand the marvel
grew;
He brake and blessed, and brake again;
The loaves were neither small nor few!

For, as we know, it came to pass
That hungry thousands there were fed,
While sitting on the fresh, green grass,
From that one basketful of bread!

If from his home the lad that day
His five small loaves had failed to take,
Would Christ have wrought, can any say
That miracle beside the lake?

—Central Christian Advocate.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLKS:

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 28, 1882.

MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETIES.

THE late General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada took an important step in the direction of promoting home culture and self-education among the young people of our congregations. On motion of the editor of PLEASANT HOURS, seconded by the Rev. Dr. Burns, of the Wesleyan Ladies' College, Hamilton, it was unanimously resolved that the General Conference strongly recommend the establishment, in connection with each of our churches, of a Mutual Improvement Society for the study of the Word and works of God; and that certain definite lines of reading should be adopted which should further this object. The last General Conference of the great Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States passed a similar resolution, and kindred societies are largely in successful operation in connection with the Mother Church in Great Britain.

It is, we think, the duty of the Church to promote as much as possible the intellectual as well as the moral and religious training of the young people committed to its care. There are many young people who are compelled to leave school early in order to earn a living; and there are others, young women, for instance, who having left school have a good deal of leisure and do not know how to make the best use of it. There are those, too, whose youth is past, but who feel that they should try to cultivate the minds which God has given them, but do not know how. Indeed whenever God converts a soul he implants a strong desire for knowledge and firm resolve to make the most of the God-given powers of the mind. To meet the needs of all such the Rev. Dr. Vincent has matured a scheme which promises to be the most useful of any ever conceived in oven his fertile brain. This is the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. This organization is only four years old, yet it has about 20,000 persons now pursuing its four years course of study, and last August about 2,000 persons completed the course and received their diploma. It was this course which the writer had in view when he proposed his resolution, and he so stated to the Conference. While not asking the Conference to commit itself to that particular course, he asked for and received its endorsement of the principle of home study and reading on definite lines, and societies for mutual improvement like the Chautauqua circles. We hope that Sunday-school teachers and superintendents, and the ministers of our Church will kindly endeavour to carry out this provision of what is now the Discipline of our Church. Such societies will do much to elevate the character of the social entertainments of the Church and of the home, so that instead of being as they sometimes have been occasions for frivolous, not to say pernicious, amusement they may conduce to the spiritual as well as the intellectual improvement of those who take part in them.

We beg to call attention to the following announcement of the C. L. S. C. which we highly commend to our readers. We have had numerous letters of inquiry about it from places as far apart as the Bermuda Islands, and the Province of Manitoba, and shall be happy to answer any further inquiries that may be made:—

THE CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE.

J. H. Vincent, D.D., Superintendent of Instruction.
AIM.

THIS organization aims to promote habits of reading and study in nature, art, science, and in secular, and sacred literature, in connection with the routine of daily life, (especially among those whose educational advantages have been limited,) so as to secure to them the college student's general outlook upon the world and life, and to develop the habit of close, connected, persistent thinking.

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