

OUR BOYS' BAND.

There are absolutely no boys who will not prove true gentlemen and intelligent if rightly approached. The way we have found most successful has been by a boys' missionary band. It was started by two ladies six years ago.

At the first meeting no one came. We had forgotten to send postal cards. We quietly sent them to some dozen boys for the week following, when quite a number came; the short constitution was adopted, ways and means discussed, and our theory became a fact.

We meet on Saturday afternoons, once a month; on Saturday, because some of the boys work in mills, and that is their only half-holiday. What do you think of manly boys giving up coasting or foot-ball for a meeting? For three years the members increased and diminished, now it is a growing band with thirty-five members.

We have one regular programme, the interest being in the matter chosen each time; thus, Charley leading, the prayer will be made by Frank, the Bible-reading by Fred, then a hymn, sung by all, played by our boy organist; the reports of secretary and treasurer are followed by the report of our "Eliot Journal," published monthly by the boys. The boys read next their brief articles on the country for the month, to be afterwards combined into an article for the "Journal." Next they select their topics for the articles for the ensuing month; one will take the animals, one the climate, the cities another, the religion, the missions, etc., being selected as each prefers, and carefully noted down in my book, that each may be sure of his topic when I send the monthly postal cards. The especial topic for the year is in order. One year we had the games of the country for the month; one year a description of some especial city, the heroes, the legends, now the modes of travel. One lady has charge of this. In her charming voice she reads or tells the interesting facts she has taken such pains to hunt for us, and this also forms one article in the "Journal."

We cut items from daily papers on any available source, on any foreign country, only being careful they shall be interesting. These are handed around and read by different boys. A choice of leader, one for Bible-reading and prayer following, if any time is left we fill it up with facts about the country, allowing nothing to be read that can be spoken, and often passing over much good material in order not to break our rule of "one hour meetings." With a hymn, the Lord's Prayer, and a moment of silent prayer, the meeting adjourns.

The seats are arranged in semicircular rows in front of the leader's table, where he and the boy secretary sit. We, the two ladies, sit where we can command the whole room. The boys are always treated as gentlemen; their opinions asked for, and their decisions respected on all points. We tell them that, of course, they will prefer to hunt up their subjects themselves, but if they cannot find what they want we have plenty of leaflets, pamphlets, books, to lend. Sometimes a boy quietly comes after the meeting, to ask for help. The parents often are gained in this way. I am sure that the mother who lately told me she was now going to do all she could for foreign missions, felt so because of the intense interest her little boy took, and his joy in writing his articles himself. He is almost our youngest member. They range from eight to seventeen. If the older boys express any feeling about "such small kids" we

tell them how important it is for the little ones to see that older ones think it worth while to be interested, and it is very amusing sometimes to note the sort of fatherly look on the faces of the seniors.

Back of the table is a large turkey-red screen, a most effective background, on which we pin our pretty water-color maps, always one of the world, and one of the country for the month. They are painted on large sheets of foolscap, and cost but two cents and an hour or so of time. The first year's work was all that was needed. By the maps are pinned our picture cards. We use the bottoms and tops of large dry goods paste-board boxes; on these we paste classified pictures, cut from every available source. The *Illustrated Christian Weekly* has been a great help in this matter; a rough little paper gave us Persian, Japanese, and South American pictures. We borrow any curiosities we can.

American pictures and cards the boys collect, and we send them by mail to missionaries in Corea, Siam, India, in fact to any one, as we think best. Accompanied by a friendly letter, possibly by two (for the boys often write), they bring back to us such pleasant letters, making Africa and Corea very real to us. You may read these letters in our "Journal."

We have as "special object" a scholarship in Sunghow, China, whither go two yearly letters from one of the boys and from me, in return the mails bringing us our annual description of queer Chinese customs that would otherwise be unattainable. Any surplus money we vote on; this year the general fund, the debt, our church missionary salary, and the ship "Nassau" on the coast of Africa, receiving small amounts. This creates more general interest. We have no membership fees or fines. We elect officers every year, no one being able to hold office more than one year. On any question raised we allow the boys to decide, influencing them if possible, but endeavoring to make them feel it is their band. And now we want every church, everywhere, to have bands for boys and for girls. The smaller and poorer the church, the more need to be interested in foreign missions. There is nothing that causes growth like a living interest in the work that Christ left as his legacy to those who love him.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

TWO PURSES.

One for the Lord and one for myself. Let every one provide two purses, or boxes, or banks, made of no matter what, and no matter where. Only be sure to have two

places for money, one of which shall be consecrated to the Lord, and the other for personal and business purposes.

A young man once started out from home to "seek his fortune," with eighteen dollars tied up in an old stocking leg. It made a good purse, and from that beginning he made a handsome fortune, always being noted for his benevolence and Christian gifts. Anything for a purse, only be sure and have two.

A young lady said to her father, "I would like to put something into the box if it passes around on the Sabbath."

Her father willingly gave her part of his donation, and thus she added the influence of her example to the custom, but nothing to the increase of the collection. This did not satisfy her, for she felt more and more that she wanted to give something of her own. She had positively of her own only about six or eight dollars yearly of interest money on a small invested capital. This she had been accustomed to use for Christmas and birthday gifts among her friends.

She resolved to have two purses, and put into one for the Lord at least one-tenth of her income. Although it made but a small sum, she had more satisfaction in giving than ever before. But the delightful part came when from one cause and another, wholly unexpected, she received the next year a far greater sum for her own disposal than she had ever had before, and a good portion of it went into the Lord's purse.

"I never think of touching what is in the Lord's purse for any but religious purposes," said she, "and never borrow from it for my own use. It is sacred to the Lord. It is in his purse, and I never enjoyed my money before as I do now."

Another young lady who was listening said, "I also keep two purses and conscientiously put one-tenth of all I receive into the Lord's purse. It is not much, but I am glad to do it, and in consequence always have a little money ready for every good cause."

Ah, it is a good way: it is a right way. If you have not tried it, begin now and learn its blessedness by your own experience.—*Word and Work.*

Question Corner.—No. 18.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.

51. By whom, and on what occasion was it said, "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

52. How many times was the Jordan divided so that men might walk over dryshod, and when?

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The boys, little boy, why do you dream. Sitting alone on the bank of the stream? "I'm waiting, said he, till the stream has passed by For I'm thinking of crossing as soon as its dry"