

THE Canadian Epworth Era

DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF
WORK IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

At Home with the Editor

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The Making of a Citizen

True citizenship must have its foundations securely laid in the personal integrity of the individual, his intelligent acquaintance with the laws that govern the country, and a manifest spirit of loyalty thereto in all matters that concern either the private or public weal.

Our youth, therefore, should early learn that goodness is the prime requisite, that whether in one or a million, a righteous character is the first demand. They should be instructed in the underlying principles of good government, and become increasingly conversant not only with the governing statutes but with the nature of the bodies that frame or enforce them. They should be led to know and feel that true loyalty consists not of obedience to law that is compelled by outward superior force, but that it is the natural result of inward reverence for all that conserves or develops the general good. Given a body of citizens actuated by personal integrity, intelligence and loyalty, and united in respectful obedience to righteous law, we surely have the soul and secret of national glory and strength.

How are such citizens to be obtained? With native-born Canadians the home example and teaching come first. With the immigrants the school is of supreme value. With both the church has an important duty. A Canadian father may be expected to give the first lessons in citizenship to his own children, but a foreigner who is himself ignorant of the land of his adoption, and has to unlearn many things that in his own childhood he may have been taught, is unable to instruct his family.

Two duties devolve upon the church in regard to these parents. The first is to awaken Canadian fathers and mothers to their obligation to the country in wisely rearing their children. The other is to instruct the immigrant foreigner in the requirements of the constitution under which he and his family have come to live.

We expect a lot from our growing girls and boys, and sometimes err in preaching to them rather than to their parents. The home is the primary school in citizenship, and we might well wonder that many children turn out even as well as they do when we consider the character of the home influence and training in which they have been reared. Until fathers realize their responsibility for their boys, we may not expect to see better men growing up around us.

Home, School, Church—these three combined will form a unity to educate and train for highest citizenship and noblest patriotism, when the governing powers in each realize that neither can do most effective work alone. Our duty is clear. Stir up the parents, teach the children, train the youth, bring to all the Word of God, and from its living principles fit the individual and equip the nation for the practice of righteousness and the fulfilment of a glorious God-given destiny.

Is the Machinery Working?

This question is suggested by a sentence in a District Epworth League president's letter. He is reporting the state of the work on his district. After telling of the promising start the District League was thought to have had at the Annual Convention last fall, he voices his disappointment at the failure that now seems to stare him in the face, and sadly writes: "I fully expected that the district officers would use the opportunity of corresponding with each League; but none of my vice-presidents took the pains to write a single letter." In the face of this do you wonder at the question at the head of this paragraph? And, when machinery is not working, what? Would you oil it, fire it up, or "fire it out" working, what? We have abundant documentary evidence in our hands to show that there is a lot of Epworth League machinery that is lying idle, and that our brother who wrote the quoted sentence above is not the only district president whose executive officers do not officer the forces. It is not our prerogative to direct our friend in his distress, but we rather think a good warming up of those cold and indifferent vice-presidents would

be in order; in fact, we should not blame him if he "made it hot" for them. We fear many League officers are sadly negligent, and that there are many who count only at convention time. No, we are not pessimistic about the future, but we do sympathize with our correspondent. Still, we admire his grit; for he says: "I rather fancy that we made a failure of it this far, but we ought to get the Leagues into line for next year's work. I shall write the new presidents with that end in view."

What a consolation that there is a "next year's work." Happy man, if, after being left alone to direct the forces of his district during much of the year past, he can convene his next district convention and rejoice that, after all, his labors have not been in vain.

Does this article fit your district? If so, and you are an officer on it, wake up, do something, get a good head of steam on, and make the machinery go. The rust of idleness has impaired many a costly and valuable implement, and idleness has destroyed many a character valued many an otherwise useful life. "He that will not work, neither shall he eat," is a principle as true of Leagues as of Leaguers. Don't be idle.

The State of the Work

There are 133 districts in the Methodist Church. Not all of these are equally favorable or fruitful to the young people of work. In the very nature of things they cannot be. Some are new mission districts, others are in scattered territory where anything like district organization would be a physical impossibility, so that hardly one-half of our districts are organized according to the provisions of Discipline.

We have received during the past few weeks personal letters with more or less detailed reports from 118 district chairmen. The reports, of course, vary according to location and circumstances; but on the whole we believe the officers concerned have about correctly summed up the state of the work. A full or detailed statement here of these 118 letters would not be wise, but we wish to call attention to three extracts that are of immense importance. One is from a chairman in the East, the next from one of our most sagacious leaders in the Central Conference, and the other from the West. They each state what in the judgment of the writer is the reason for an unsatisfactory condition of affairs.

From one of the Maritime districts comes this summary: "Lack of experimental religion and aggressive spiritual life. There is not enough real religion among the young people to give them a healthy interest in studying the essentials of the kingdom of Christ." Our brother in the Central Conference says: "Spiritual life of the young people generally at a low ebb. Good machinery, but not diligently worked." The Western chairman is one of our oldest and most experienced leaders in that important field. He writes: "Men, young and old, and young women come here to make money and many active workers in the East, when they leave home, say 'Good-bye, God; I'm going West to make money and have a good time.' Cards, dancing, theatre, and moving picture shows are destroying the taste for anything better."

Many of the remaining letters contain similar expressions of opinion. The editor is not an alarmist, but he is concerned about the future of the young people's work. He has repeatedly said that a bigger question than the fate of the Epworth League is before the Church. If there were no League, there would still be the same thousands of young people, and their care would still rest upon the Church. Hence, the question of prime importance is whether or not the young people in our congregations are, right or wrong, living in proper relations to God or ignoring Him, doing their duty to their fellows or living in selfish indulgence.

That there is not as much of vital duty among the youth as is essential to active Christian influence in the work of God for the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven, perhaps no one will deny, and that a genuine revival of religion would work marvels perhaps everybody believes. That such is possible or to be expected to-day, some seem to question; but they, we fall to see. All Leagues are not dead, nor are they dying.

"A home is a poor place when it is only a warehouse for wealth."