

each Friday evening. These exercises have awakened a general interest in elocution, and vocal and instrumental music. As a result large training classes under competent teachers have been formed for instruction in singing, public speaking, and playing upon the violin, mandolin, and guitar.

The boys, however, have not been reached by this society so well as the girls. They are by nature and habit wild and rude. Music and poetry do not appeal strongly to them. Some other plan had to be discovered to reach them. Shy of the pastor and cramped in his company, they kept their distance from him.

Catching a number of them together one day, the versatile young minister sought to encourage the boys' interest in the young people's society. As he talked to them they were listless. He knew that his words had little weight with them. With a parting word he left them, and doing so, caught the word 'gymnasium.'

'A gymnasium, boys? Who wants a gymnasium?' asked the pastor.

'All of us,' chimed a chorus.

'Well, boys, that is not impossible.'

In a second he was surrounded. After a few words of encouragement, an engagement was made to meet at the close of the next Young People's meeting, and discuss the matter. At that appointment twenty-eight boys met him with interest in the occasion tuned to the highest pitch.

The pastor had prepared a blackboard diagram with which to greet them. On one side was a floor plan of a gymnasium, a bath-room, a reading-room, and a game-room. On the other side was a list of the proposed gymnasium apparatus. With delight the boys ran their eyes down the list: Horizontal bars, parallel bars, swinging rings, suspension ladders, revolving ladders, trapezes, shoot the chute, Indian clubs, boxing gloves, punching bags, vaulting horses, dumb bells, etc., etc.

No mother hen ever got closer to her nestling brood than did the young preacher to his aspiring athletes on that happy evening.

'Now, boys,' said the minister, 'if I can raise the money to provide this gymnasium for you, will you make good use of it?'

'Yes sir-r-r,' rang out a merry symphony.

'Let us see if we are agreed as to what a "good use" of a gymnasium is' suggested the minister.

'We are all agreed,' he continued, 'that it is to build up muscle, to develop your bodies, and afford you moral, mental, and physical improvement. Is that so?'

'Yes sir-r-r,' was the ready answer.

'Now, boys, cigarette smoking is a habit that will ruin any boy's constitution. No gymnasium can build up boys as fast as cigarettes can pull them down.'

He looked into the faces of the boys to see if he had thrown a coldness on the meeting. Some of the eyes fell as the minister looked into them. He was encouraged, however, with the nod of approval that greeted him from several.

'Swearing is another evil practice that boys some times indulge, to their moral injury,' continued the preacher. 'And, in many respects, the most dangerous of all, is the drinking of intoxicating liquors. These vices destroy health and character. We are planning a gymnasium to build up health and character. Will you boys give up tobacco, profanity, and intoxicating liquors for the gymnasium?'

Every hand went up, and every eye met squarely the searching glances of the minister.

The pastor drew from his pocket a pledge prepared in anticipation of this successful conference, and the boys signed it.

The next day the minister, who enjoyed the confidence and good-will of the entire community, carried his paper and signatures to the business men of the city, and they cheerfully subscribed the necessary five hundred dollars for the enterprise.

Close to the young pastor's home a site was donated, and a neat box building, thirty by seventy-five feet, was erected. This was equipped as designed, both parties to the contract keeping their respective agreements with sacred fidelity.

The cheap shows, bowling alleys, shoot-

ing galleries, and billiard rooms have lost the patronage of a large majority of the young people of this little city. The entire community has felt the force of this great movement.

Without ostentation the young preacher is watching every opportunity to carry on his reformation. It was with great dread that he anticipated the opening of the county fair. All kinds of temptations are usually put in the way of young people at these great gatherings. The leader in this grand reform movement planned his campaign of battle against these open doors of vice with consummate skill. He first announced a special service at his church to be held the Sunday evening preceding the fair week, under the auspices of his young people's society. The theme of his sermon was to be, 'The Evils and Temptations of the County Fair.'

No small interest was awakened by these announcements. As a rule preachers attack the evils of great social events after they have been perpetrated. Their exposures (?) are usually delivered the Sunday after it is all done. Not so with this sagacious pulpiteer, leading his young army against the popular vices of the day.

On Wednesday before the announced Sunday night discourse he called at the office of the president of the fair for an interview. He was received kindly by the affable gentleman, and was assured of being given any information he sought.

'Mr. Kelly,' the minister began, 'I have a boys' athletic club of eighty-five members, and a young people's society of over one hundred and forty members. On next Sunday night I have announced special services under their auspices, and I will preach a sermon regarding the temptations of fair week.'

'I have prepared some questions in writing which I will ask you to kindly answer, that I may speak intelligently and do the fair full justice in that sermon.'

The president's interest was at once enlisted in the interview, seeing that it had a most decided and important purpose. He promised to give the desired information.

'Mr. Kelly,' asked the minister, 'will there be any intoxicating liquors sold on the fair grounds?'

'Most emphatically not, sir; not a drop,' the president answered vehemently. The minister wrote the answer upon his paper.

'I want now to ask you if there will be any shows or exhibitions improper for ladies to witness?'

'We have sold privileges for some shows, but I am not certain of their character,' was the answer.

'It is likely that some of them will be indecent, we may suppose,' suggested the minister.

'In that event, what will you do, allow them to exhibit, or will you suppress them?' asked the minister with pencil in hand, waiting to record the answer.

'They must be suppressed,' said the president, and excluded from the grounds. I see the importance of the matter, since you speak of it. We had failed to give this feature due consideration.'

With pleasure the preacher noted the manager's declaration.

'I wish now to ask, Mr. Kelly, if any gambling privileges will be allowed?'

'I think there will be, to be frank with you. There are now on deposit five hundred dollars to pay for the gaming privileges, and there remains but a minor point to be settled before the matter is closed.'

'Mr. Kelly, this is a fearful thing,' said the minister gravely. 'This gambling, I am told, is carried on adroitly by means of slot machines, that boys and girls are enticed into its patronage. The purchasers of this privilege must expect to do a royal business with our people to be able to rob them of enough to pay you five hundred dollars for the privilege, and then pay our county officers their take-out, and make a round sum for themselves. I shall be sorry to have to speak of these things from the pulpit, holding you and your colleagues responsible for this licensed robbery,' observed the minister, as he began entering a note upon his paper.

'Hold on a moment. I have had nothing to do with this part of the work. I am op-

posed to it myself, though I doubt if my protest will avail. I will see the director who has this matter in charge.'

'I will call again to-morrow,' said the minister.

'No, sir, in twenty minutes I will return. Keep your seat if you have the time to spare.'

In a short while the president returned to his office.

'Write in your note-book,' said he, 'that no gambling privileges by any name or device will be granted under any circumstance. We have talked the matter over hurriedly, and see our mistake. We expect to lose money, and we will go still deeper in our pockets, if necessary, to protect the youth of our town.'

After a few pleasant words the young minister bade the president good-day.

At the Sunday night service the minister spoke in the highest praise of the fair and its promoters.

The work in behalf of these young people is going gloriously on. There are difficulties and problems to be met day by day. Wise and prayerful leadership is accomplishing great things. The outlook is exceedingly hopeful. If there be a secret to the success of this undertaking it is an open one, and that is the leader is neither a worldlyling nor a puritan; but a consecrated and Spirit-filled, happy medium.

A Prayer.

Wearied of sinning, wearied of repentance,
Wearied of self, I turn, my God, to thee;
To thee my judge, on whose all-righteous
sentence

Hangs mine eternity;
I turn to thee, I plead thyself with thee—
Be pitiful to me.

Wearied, I loathe myself, I loathe my sin-
ning,

My stains, my festering sores, my misery;
Thou the Beginning, thou ere my begin-
ning

Didst see, and didst foresee
Me miserable, me sinful, ruined me—
I plead thyself with thee.

I plead thyself with thee who are my
Maker,

Regard thy handiwork thatc ries to thee;
I plead thyself with thee who wast par-
taker

Of my infirmity,
Love made thee what thou art, thy love of
me—

I plead thyself with thee.

—Christina Rossetti.

Prayerful Preparation.

Spiritual sympathy is indispensable for the sound interpretation of books written to convey spiritual truth. Hence arises the need of prayer in connection with study of the Bible. Only in the atmosphere which prayer creates, the atmosphere of sympathy with God and truth, of the desire to know the truth, to act in accordance with it and to bring others into fellowship with God through it, can the teacher gain a true insight into the truths which the Bible teaches.—M. C. Advocate.



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