

"THE CRADLE ROLL."

MISS HARLOW—My good friends, thanking you for your very cordial reception, permit me to say: Every Primary teacher has in her class, more or less, a greater or lesser number of children who are there, not because they are sent, not because their parents care particularly about them being there, but they are there simply because they like to come. This liking to come is a very delicate thread, but it has tremendous holding power, and it will, and does, often keep the children in the school, in spite of invitations to go to walk upon the Sabbath day at the park, or stay at home with company. But that little thread is likely to lose its power by constantly rubbing against the non-church-going habits of the father and mother, and the example of older brothers and sisters, and it is likely to snap when the child is changed from the Primary Department to a new teacher. But the good book tells us that a three-fold cord made up of many strands is not quickly broken, and it was with a desire to multiply these delicate threads that should bind the child to the school by binding the home to the school, that the Cradle Roll had its birth.

The thought was not primarily to help the little child, but the primary thought was, how could that child be early drawn into the school with cords that should multiply as the years go on, instead of the thread growing constantly weaker, and perhaps not snapping suddenly, but just giving way when boys and girls get to that age when they think they know a great deal more than anybody else in the world.

By the Cradle Roll we mean those children who are under Sunday School age, but whose parents desire to have them under the pastoral care of the school, with the understanding that when the child becomes of Sunday School age he shall enter the school.

To bring this matter tangibly before our children we had a little cradle, eighteen inches long—a little wicker cradle that was enamelled and decorated as a mother decorates her own baby cradle. And that was brought into the Sunday School, and then the children were told about it. And these children were told that in their homes there were brothers and sisters whom, perhaps, papa or mamma would like to have under the care of the school. Would the boys and girls bring the name next Sunday and lay it in the cradle. Then a note went home with the children saying that we had a class in the school, and that we would be very glad to enroll the children under the care of the school, with the understanding that if the child was ill at any time the home would send word to the teacher, and the teacher would respond with anything in her power in the line of helpfulness. We also told the children that the next Sunday after the name was brought to the Sunday School, the baby should receive a card showing that he belonged under the care of the school. A very beautiful card