

Our Leaguers and Recreation

A Paper read by Rev. W. H. Stevens, at the Montreal Conference E. L. Convention.

time, thought, to make money; therefore money is condensed life. If we cannot give our whole life, it is our duty to give as much of our life as we can afford, and to give it systematically, even as God gives to us the days, and the months, and the years. The world will never be won for Christ by the spare cash, neither by the far ends of our hands and services. Christ demands a whole-hearted surrender, and if we are true followers of the Man of Galilee, we shall give ourselves and all that we have and are, to be used for, and by Him. The field is the world, and to those of us who remain at home, as well as to those who are sent abroad, the call comes to work for Christ, and to meet the needs of suffering and dying men.

Shall we then, in view of the whole world's need of a Saviour, and the especially great need of the Christless nations, believe that Christ's command to disciple all nations is equally binding upon all His followers? Shall we look upon the open door now before the Church as a call to deeper consecration and increased zeal in the world's evangelism? Shall we say, "Trusting in the power of God, and in the promise of Jesus, 'Lo, I am with you,' we give ourselves unreservedly to Him, to be used, however, and wherever, He may see fit. We promise to do, by prayer, and the consecration of our means and our lives to Him, all that by His power we can do towards winning the world for Him.

This will mean more money, more missionaries, more converts, and to the whole world, a new revelation of God and His will. It will mean added power to the Church of Christ, and a deeper trust and peace for all God's children. It will mean to each soul a sense of comradeship with Him who went about doing good, and who, by giving Himself for others, found, not only that life again, but also new life for the children of men. "But whose hath the world's goods and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth."

Missionary Objective for Leaguers

In his address on this subject at the Montreal Conference Epworth League Convention, Mr. I. Hillard, K.C., outlined and emphasized the following four points, which are well worthy of acceptance and realization in all our Epworth Leagues:

1. Every member fairly informed of Missionary Literature.
2. Every member taking part once a year, at least, in the League Missionary Meeting.
3. Every member contributing financially to a given annual financial Missionary Budget.
4. Every member feeling the Call of the Master to give the Gospel to every creature.

To what extent is your League endeavoring to realize such an Objective as this? Every Second Vice-President, whether of the Conference, District, or Local League, should aim at making these four essential points actual throughout all our work. There would be no slacking of interest, no vague or indefinite prayers, no lack of money, and no shortage of missionaries. If Mr. Hillard's ideal were real, and surely there is no excuse for it not being so. Keep it before you for actual practice, and be satisfied with nothing less.

HAVE YOU A REAL MISSIONARY OBJECTIVE?

RECREATION is an elastic word of wide significance. Sometimes it means that which entertains, at once resting the faculties, and giving rise to pleasurable sensations. Sometimes it is in the way of diversion, which in word or gesture partakes of the nature of the witty or humorous—it may be the imitation of the peculiarities or idiosyncrasies of another.

Again it implies helpful exercise which, while it is free from the consciousness of toil, tends to recreate and stimulate one being. In considering the subject, "Leaguers and Recreation," we may accept the term in its broader significance, as comprehending all that pleasantly and restfully engages the attention, and results in richer fullness of life energy.

Rightly understood, there should be nothing but downright sympathy with all helpful forms of amusement, entertainment and recreation. All tollers need it, and it is the duty of society to see that all shall have ample opportunity for its enjoyment. Carlyle is credited with the remark that the "man who can laugh is not wholly bad." The playful, mischievous spirit is strong evidence of a healthy nature. Not less, but more recreation is what the world needs. Be it understood, however, that, in its recreation, and not dissipation or degradation of energy. Anything degrading in character does not recreate and should not amuse. In a wholesome life there will be nothing but contempt for what is debasing in its nature or tendency. When one takes pleasure in beholding the lewd and wanton it is an evidence that the animal is gaining ascendancy, and has usurped the place of our rational powers of thought and appreciation.

If amusements are permitted that do little more than train their patrons in vice, it is a serious reflection on our common Christian religion and citizenship.

Participation in amusements should be as the breath of Heaven. Every function of one's nature should gather inspiration in their presence. It should be regulated in quality and quantity.

GAMES

In the consideration of a question of this nature one naturally thinks of "Games." Those may be divided into three classes. Games of strength and skill, games of chance and skill, and games of chance pure and simple. For games of mingled strength and skill, such as lacrosse, football, baseball and hockey provided they are played under proper conditions in an honorable spirit, and not to excess, there can be nothing but commendation. They train the hand. They train the eye. They train to quickness of the movement. They train to almost instant balancing of probabilities, and they train to swift and definite decision. Indulged in, in moderation under reasonable surroundings, they tend to make men. The Monks and Ascetics swung to the extreme in viewing the body as an encumbrance, while the materialists have erred more seriously in regarding the body as an instrument of pleasure. The body is God's temporary residence for the human soul.

"Not in the world of light alone.

Where God has built His blazing throne;

Nor yet alone on earth below,

With belted seas that come and go,

And endless Isles of sunlit green
Is all thy Maker's glory seen,
Look in upon thy wondrous frame."

The Apostle Paul's statement is positive, "bodily exercise for a little is profitable." Was it not W. J. Dawson who gave us a bit of nutshell philosophy when he said: "Most vice is the result of suppressed perpiration." And another eminent theologian said, that of two questions he was inclined to ask a young man, the first was: "Do you pray?" and the second, "What is your game?"

We have in Canada the best outdoor games to be found the world over. They tend to develop that contempt of pain and danger which has ever been the mark of the true hero. Our national games, however, cannot be said to be free from attendant evils. This is sincerely to be regretted. However, if National Athletics have at times run low, it is simply because of the intrigues of a vile crew of parasites and gamblers who have their fingers on, and who care nothing for national honor so long as their own greedy souls are satisfied. "I never gamble, remarked a sane and good citizen. "I never gamble, for two reasons. If I won, I should feel like a thief, and if I lost I should feel like a fool." All praise to those Christian men and women who are practically demonstrating that it is the function of the Christian manhood of Canada to project into the athletics of our land such a measure of the Christian spirit as will speedily banish profanity, brutality, gambling, and the injurious wholesome sport, thereby raising all manly and healthful exercises to such a plane as will secure for them the highest possible favor.

Some of the greatest leaders in the present-day Christian world have been great athletes, notably; J. E. K. Studd, of Oxford; Robert E. Speer, of Princeton; and Stagg, of Yale.

The first was a foremost oarsman, Speer, great in football, and Stagg, a first-class baseball player.

Martin Luther is said to have possessed a physical development that would have enabled him to have thrashed any three of his theological opponents, John Wesley believed and practised wholesome and stiff exercises. And one of the best loved members of this Conference was still young enough to walk twenty miles on his own legs, and looks to-day as though he will be able to keep up the record when he enters the nineties. The lesson of all this, he who runs may read, viz: to get the maximum of service out of the human machine you must keep it in repair by regulating it according to the laws of health.

INDOOR GAMES

When one approaches the question of indoor games he finds that their name is legion. A pastime that is at present attracting considerable attention and is in the nature of a kind of craze is "The Moving Picture Show."

There are assuredly elements in its favor. I have known of Principals of Schools advising pupils to take advantage of certain representations of great historical battles.

The travel scenes exhibiting the physical, commercial and social conditions of European and other countries are not only beneficial but informing. The "Durbar Picture" were undoubtedly a spectacular representation, in color, of oriental life, and military splendor, sur-