

## How We May Improve Our Epworth League Meetings

BY MISS MAUDE LYNE.

LET us think of some plans whereby we can improve upon our present method of conducting the League service, and so raise the standard of the whole society, for the success of the League depends too largely on the interest of the meetings. The right condition of things should be that the work of the members during the week take the first place and then the public meeting the secondary part. It would be an ideal society where the members are so intensely interested in its success, and all the time work so earnestly for its best interests that good helpful meetings would follow as a natural consequence.

In order to have interesting, profitable meetings we must have variety.

Let us not develop one department at the expense of another, but give the Literary and Social departments something to do as well as the Missionary and Christian Endeavor. It is sometimes thought that too much emphasis is laid upon the Missionary department when the truth of the matter is—not that too much time is put on the Missionary department, but not sufficient on the others. We must have all the committees at work. Our aim should be to have every member on a committee and every committee working.

During the summer months hold several out-door meetings. During the autumn and winter months have some debates, Bible contests or evenings with the poets. A programme has been carried out consisting of short addresses on Canada, such as her resources and her standing educationally, politically and religiously.

At the close of the Literary programme the Social department should look after the strangers and serve refreshments.

### WHAT WILL YOU GIVE?

"A ROUND Christmas, people are distracted with the question as to what to give friends. It is a blessing that there is such a time, else sordid, selfish humanity would soon shrink into a mere caricature of the beauty and grace in which it was originally fashioned. Yet we are, in this matter of giving, in imminent danger of another unfortunate extreme. It is to be feared that the gift 'habit' is growing upon us, and that what is supposed to convey thought, is becoming a meaningless form, or a mere quid pro quo. A gift is precious, not as it represents intrinsic value, but the thought and affection of the heart. When 'consideration' enters, value in a gift as between friends disappears. It may be ever so simple, but let it stand as the silent ambassador of love, and it is transformed into a priceless treasure. We do not want things; we want love; and only as things represent this have they true worth. Let us not sit down to gift-making as an enforced task that entails the expenditure of so much time and money. Let love make our little gifts at this season bright with a joy to ourselves and others, that they may not perhaps have hitherto known."—From "Stray Shots."

In this way the two committees working together would provide several more interesting as well as profitable evenings.

The entertaining of two or three of the surrounding Leagues is a source of inspiration to all, and interchange of thought helpful.

If any special meeting is going to be held there should always be a notice in the local papers the week previous, and the members, by talking and inviting, can do a great deal of advertising. Never neglect to have an announcement placed in the minister's hands to be given out in the public services on Sunday.

The League room should be well lighted and the seats so arranged that there is no wide space between the leader and audience.

Train the members to occupy the front seats. See that there are plenty of hymn books for all before commencing the service. Try to get into the habit of starting on time instead of half an hour late. Let us have for our motto, "Start on time, close on time."

It is not wise to commence the service in the same way night after night. Open with prayer or the doxology or a few verses of Scripture or a quotation from some popular author. By all means vary the way in which you conduct the devotional exercises. Do not always call upon the pastor to lead in prayer, but get different members to pray, and especially those who rarely do so.

So much depends on the music for the success of the meeting that we ought to pay more attention to it than we generally do.

Upon no one does the success of the meeting rest so much as upon the leader. In some leagues it has been found best

to have one member lead the meeting and another take the topic. In this way you can induce many of the younger members to take part who would not give a paper or an address. If the meeting is in charge of one of the younger members it must be supervised by one of those more experienced in the work.

It is not so much what a leader does for a meeting, but what he gets the others to do that makes it a success. The real test of a meeting is the number who take part, especially the timid and backward ones who would not have done so without the leader's help.

The leader is largely responsible for the success or failure of the meeting. If he comes to it in an indifferent or cold spirit the chances are that it will be comparatively lifeless throughout, but if he is intensely interested, his enthusiasm will be contagious, and the whole service will be inspiring to all. The leader should make good and thorough preparation. He should study the topic thoroughly and repeatedly. He should pray that he may have the aid of the Spirit of God in leading the meeting, and that the Spirit of God may be in the hearts of the members. He should see some members during the week and get them pledged to take part, by leading in prayer, or in giving a thought in the discussion.

Now as to taking the topics:

Persuade more of our leaguers to give talks. In nearly every case they are far more interesting than a paper, but if a paper is given, let it not be a borrowed one, but one in which are some of the reader's own thoughts, and the expression of his own convictions. If a paper is only a repetition of some one else's thoughts we cannot expect it to accomplish much good, but when it comes warm from the heart of the writer then we may expect it to appeal to the minds and hearts of the hearers.

In preparing and giving a paper, (1) Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Give the paper as if you considered it a privilege.

(3) When reading let your voice be heard to the other end of the room.

(4) Invite discussion.

In different ways timid members might be persuaded to take part, by reading a verse of Scripture, or a pointed paragraph, or by asking a question. But the best plan of all is for the leader to ask several persons through the week to be ready to speak.

How often during the discussion there are several of those death-like silences that are so hurtful to the whole meeting, and then as soon as the benediction is pronounced what a buzz of talk there is all about us. We lack the courage to face the very life of our whole League organization depends upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Above all things before the meeting closes there should be some clear-cut, helpful impression on the minds of those present, and this impression must grow naturally out of the topic.

Sometimes it is wise for the leader to reserve the most forcible thing he has to say on the topic for a closing word, or to seize upon some of the remarks of others that have best illustrated the topic, and clinch the truth expressed in a few decisive words. The pastor might occasionally be asked to close the study of the lesson with a few forcible remarks.

If there is any business to be transacted let it be done in a business-like way.

Written monthly reports should be given showing the work being done by the different departments. This will have a tendency to better work in the future.

Let us take for our motto, "Prayer, preparation, participation, punctuality, and progress." To be more earnest in prayer, more thorough in preparation, to always endeavor to be punctual, and by every means possible to induce each active member, not only to be active in name, but also in deed, is to ensure that our Society will progress, be a successful League, and one that will be a help and an inspiration to all concerned in it.

Thornbury, Ont.

### League Resolutions

Commence the New Year with the resolve to make your Epworth League more fruitful by:

1. Frequent prayer for Divine Guidance.
2. Personal canvass for increased membership.
3. Regular Committee meetings and reports.
4. Prompt participation in the weekly meetings.
5. Organize national union meetings with the juniors.
6. A well thought out programme for every service.
7. Being satisfied with nothing less than saving souls.
8. Uniting all your forces to help the pastor in his work.
9. Studying and serving the interests of the Sunday School.
10. A more general use of THE EPWORTH ERA in your League.