

Winning the Boy

By Rev. A. D. Robb,
Harriston, Ont.

A WIDOW, the mother of a bright boy of sixteen, said to me, "I wish you could remain long enough on this field to get hold of my boy and get him established in the right way." That was a compliment, and it was evidence that the mother thought her boy was saving. But every mother thinks the same thing, and they are right. Every boy is worth saving.

I knelt one day in prayer with the mother of two boys. She was a beautiful mother who loved her sons with a mother's passion. They had strayed. The burden of our prayer that day was that they might be saved. One boy was handsome, the other had bright red hair, big face, and large hands covered with freckles. I was very fond of the latter boy. A few months after both of them were soundly converted. Years passed. One day I met the Rev. C. P. Holmes, now of Japan, and with him in his buggy was a big, broad shouldered man with a face wreathed in smiles. They were coming to my place. This big husky fellow had come all the way from the West to see me. I looked at him. He had changed, but immediately I recognized him. He is a Methodist minister in the Manitoba Conference. His life is full of good works, and he is adding in winning the West for God. He was the boy with the red hair that a fond mother and her Minister prayed for. I have long since learned that one of the first essentials in saving the boys is earnest, believing prayer.

It is necessary to go after the young men, too. That takes time, patience and skill. On one of my circuits I had a splendid lot of young men. Many of these had come to Jesus, but we had a hard struggle with some of them. The enemy was at work. Saloons, pool rooms, and fast company constantly made a bid for them. There was one young fellow who belonged to one of the best families. He was handsome, with a wealth of wavy hair, and large blue eyes. His mother, a widow, might well be proud. He was the kind of a boy that would easily be led. Large hearted, good natured, and with a heart unsuspecting, he very nearly went astray. His mother appealed to me again and again to go after her son. The angel found a responsive chord in my heart. This boy had strayed beyond the front gate and out of his mother's reach. My plan was not the mother's. I did not run after the young man, but I ran with him. Nor did he suspect my purpose. Snow shoeing, photography, riding, fishing, and driving, were his favorite sports, and they became mine. But all this time no word was said about pool rooms or bad company. We had no time for such in our conversation. Little was said about religion, but much was taken for granted. I saw a change, a deepened interest in our young men's work. I thought I had won him. But one day I saw him emerging from a place of evil purpose. Another day, in questionable company, I saw him enter. My heart sickened. I knew the danger, the evil, the type of men who frequented such places. To know the influence centred there, to see one of our loyal workers I confided my trouble. He said, "Don't take on so. You have done your best. You have given him good advice. If he is bound to go astray, it is not your fault. Why should you worry?" "Oh," I replied, "I loved him less I probably would care less, but it is not easy to see a bright boy walk into danger and not tremble

for him." I resolved then that God helping me I would win that boy. I prayed for help and I got it. To that young man I pointed out his danger. I appealed to his honor. I directed his mind to the claims of himself, of his mother, of his future, of his family, of his Saviour upon him. As his great blue eyes, glistening with tears looked into mine, it was impossible to conceal my emotions. He put his hand in mine on that gloomy, drizzling day, and I knew as he bade me good bye that he had won a victory and that I had won a boy. That is some years ago, but to-day he is one of Methodism's most loyal Christians.

Some object to that method. It is so undignified to chum up with a boy, to root at a lacrosse match, to umpire a baseball game, to go snowshoeing and dive headlong into snow banks. To eat peanuts and "lasses" taffy at a football game with boys unbecoming in a Minister of the Gospel. Can't help it! There are some times more sermons and better ones preached to boys on the campus or round the fishing pond than in the Sunday School room where we are forever preaching at him. There is a lot of re-

fifty in the church. I said to the pastor after I became acquainted with the situation: "Doctor, why don't you get out on your church steps, and with your young people have an outdoor service? You've got a voice big enough to be heard two blocks away. You can attract the people by use of the corner. Then you can preach to them. You can invite them to an after meeting inside the Church." The Minister liked the suggestion, but thought he would bring the matter before his session, composed of twelve good men. They discussed the matter and decided against it, for, as one of them put it, our Church and some of the people might come over from the park and step on the grass." The grass plot is velvety, the Church is nearly empty, but the park is full and a Socialist hoists forth every Sunday night, addressing more people in one night, than that pastor reences in one year." Thankful we are that the glory of Methodism is in its adaptability, its ministers preach in cap and gown in flannel suits and top boots, in snowshoes and fur coats, in broadcloth and patent leathers, in a cathedral or in a log hut, in chapel or school house, in church or park, wherever there is a man with a message and a man to hear. The garb of the place is no hindrance. I have never did our Lord by lakes, in synagogues, on house tops, in homes, or fields, or moun-

JUST BUSINESS!

3N sending fourteen new subscriptions for the "Era." Rev. J. H. Wright, Ladner, B.C., wrote the Editor: "Your work on the paper is appreciated, but many of our Leaguers are dilatory. I think that appeal on page five of the January Number ought to be kept in or repeated in another form until every League takes the 'Era' . . ."

So we again make our request for an increased subscription list. We ought to have 5,000 new names, and if all our Leaguers would do proportionately as well as our friends in Ladner, we would have them. How many can you send?

If our Leaguers do not read the "Era" there is something wrong, or at least lacking. Is it with them or in the paper?

The "Era" says, "If you do not like me, please tell the Editor why. If you do like me, tell somebody else that they may like me too."

The current month will tell whether or not our year's business has been satisfactory. Send in your subscriptions to Dr. Briggs, Publisher, Wesley Building, Toronto, and help our mailing sheets increase.

S. T. BARTLETT.

ligion in a warm hand shake and a cup of coffee, sipped with young men round your own fireside. To win the young men we must camp on their trail in the spirit of a young man.

We are closing up saloons and pool rooms and bowling alleys, and we are doing it to put danger out of the young man's way. But in towns and villages, what are we substituting in their places? Young men will herd together. They must have some place to go. It is part of their education to mingle with men. Moreover, they need recreation. How much our Laymen could do if they would throw open their homes in winter track in snow and perhaps scratch mahogany furniture. But furniture has no soul, the man has. There are compensations in Methodist parsonages after all. Dining room floor covered with oil cloth, parlor covered with a faded wool carpet, and no mahogany furniture. Here at least can the "boys" come and welcome, and here they do come. Rev. Chas. Stei zel tells the following: "There is a Presbyterian Church in a certain city that accommodates 1,500 people. It is directly across from a large park. On any clear summer Sunday night there are 19,000 people in the park and about

tain. He preached that he might find and win men.

Now, Leaguers, wake up, and do something to win the boys. They will go where they can get something and do something. If there is nothing for them to get in your League put something there for them. They will go where when they can get it. There. Then if there is nothing for them to do put something for them to do and they will do it, for they enjoy doing things. Perhaps they can't give a talk on Komats, but they can an amateur photography or some bad of theirs. Make room for it; make room for them, our Master did. Whatever you do make the men's work bulk large in your plans. The League is not a girl's organization. It is for men, too, and our programme must appeal to them. If a good idea come to you give it to your president or better, work it out in League yourself. Make all your endeavor in social, literary, religious, or missionary, aim at the primal cause of the Epworth League, to look up and lift up for Christ and the Church. Look up to Christ, and soon you will look up a young companion to bring to Him. He may be down in sin, but thank God for the chance to lift him up to the Redeemer.

‘Boys are worth five hundred yards of carpet.’”