

and succeeded in inducing them to give a two or four cents a week, but you who have been collectors know, that among those contributing many and many a one gives the amount asked of her because it is asked, and she can not well refuse; at the same time exhibiting not the slightest interest in the cause of missions. The cases are too frequent where they do not even really understand to what they are giving, and I fear we must say do not care. They give simply to get rid of the collector, not even extending to her a sympathizing word as she goes to her arduous duties. This may seem a dark picture, and doubtless there are some—indeed many—who do not feel this indifference. But we all know this description to apply to by far too many of our church members. Nor are we now speaking of the poor—those who can give but small sums; for the amounts contributed by many of them become magnificent when brought into comparison with gifts of those of much larger means.

We are apt to forget that in this work there is blessing to be secured on two sides: 1st, to those whom we hope to aid to a better, higher life, by sharing with them our abundance. 2nd, but not less, to the giver, for is it not said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver;" "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." It is to be feared much of the blessing in the latter case is frequently lost by the loveless spirit in which the giving is done. Until we have secured a more general personal interest, which leads to effort, and even sacrifice, can it be said that we have achieved a result corresponding in any degree to the amount of time and labor expended by some of our number?

It might be suggested that if this is the true state of the case, a reform is needed in our churches. But we can scarcely expect to become reformers with any hope of reforming those in our church, who have already grown hard in the belief that what they have belongs to themselves; in whose eyes each little act of giving becomes a very meritorious deed, and whose ears have become dead to the command of scripture, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase." This reforming old material is next to a hopeless task.

While throwing out a few suggestions as to a remedy for the lack of interest now manifested, I beg to be allowed to quote from Dr. Holland a few paragraphs relating to the matter of influencing others. He says, "So long as it is easier to scold than to teach, and pleasanter to declaim and contend in public than to work in private, the reformer will be likely to live; but it history teaches us anything it teaches that the world is to be reformed by other methods than he pursues. And now do you ask me to show you a more excellent way? I will try, though I claim no discovery. I am moved to try because I am entirely convinced that the means of true progress are in our own hands and are little used." Now this is just what we want to be shown, "a more excellent way," in order to accomplish greater ends, and that we may make surer progress in our work, let us listen to Dr. Holland's answer. "A mountain rivulet goes never back, but by way of the sky. From its fountain all down its passage to the plain and widening at last into a river, its path is a path of progress. It meets no barriers which it does not overleap, and surely finds its way to the waiting sea. Formation, and not reformation, holds the secret of the world's progress. It is cheaper and better to build a new house than to remodel an old one, for no old house can be made new. If you would have pleasant shade round you after twenty years, cut down your forest

and plant your young trees. It is an easier task to choose and plant, and train and wait, than to prune and heal the scars of pruning. It would be better to let the world of adult life which seems bent on going to the bad, go to the bad, if in our efforts to save it our minds are diverted from the Christian education of our children. The race can be formed but it can not be reformed so as to make it strong enough to stand alone. A boy well instructed in the dangers of intemperate drinking and the evils of excess, and trained in temperance as a principle of life, is a boy not likely to become a drunkard."

A girl instructed in the dangers of selfishness, and the evils of a life of pleasure, and trained in habits of liberality as a principle of life, is not likely to become one from whom you have to coax a reluctant four cents a week for mission work, when she becomes a member of the church. If the boy is father of the man, how much more is the girl the mother of the woman. To quote once again: "Mind, like matter, can only be shaped when it is plastic. Human character, like the tree, can only be bent when it is young. New life can be grafted into an old tree, it is true, but it takes fifty scions to do it, when fifty years earlier it would have taken but one."

So we can succeed in securing by constant and untiring labor, a few hundred dollars a year from our comparatively old trees; but if the right influence had been brought to bear on these same trees while they were young, what harvests of fruit would they now be voluntarily yielding for our treasury, instead of making a monthly shaking necessary. We have neglected the children, we are now neglecting them daily, we mothers, who are so absorbed by cares at home and abroad; and this neglect more than counterbalances any good we may have fancied we achieved in our efforts for missions among the elders. We urge the members of our churches and societies to contribute—to show an interest in the work—and at the same time how many of us are training our children to a true missionary spirit, that they may be better than ourselves in the future?

There never was a time when we needed more than now the ministry of patient, loving, Christian mothers in the rearing and educating of the children. The future of our churches depends on it. Our entire mission work, foreign and home depends on it. I think we all agree that this is true, and if so, what surer way is there for us to secure that success in our mission cause which we all so much desire, than by devoting not less time to the mission work in which we have already embarked, but more time and attention to our children. Let us teach them about foreign countries, and let us be careful to associate in their minds, with their knowledge of distant lands, thoughts and ideas about our missions, and the work which is being done upon these fields. Let us also tell them about the mission fields in our own country—those sections which are not so far removed in character from the towns and cities in which our children themselves live, those places where there are few to sustain the churches, where even the few are scattered over many miles of comparatively unsettled land; where even the richest have but little of this world's goods; and where consequently the struggling home missionary must practice self-denials and endure hardships almost, if not quite, equal to those of the missionaries to foreign lands. Let us, I say, tell these things to the young, let us awaken and cultivate their interest in the cause of missions, and we may confidently expect in due season a return commensurate with our toil and efforts.

What more cheering report could come to us next year than that each Circle now existing, had brought into ex-