

Flax Flowers.

BY ADLAIDE STOUT.

We had not dreamed that any poetry
Beneath our Friend's calm, seeming life could
be

But in a deep-cut heart,
As new growths in the ploughshare's furrow
spring,
So tender thoughts than ever there had been,
To sudden life did start.

We turned away for very tender shame,
As not to seem to note the one who came
With small exquisite flowers,—
Those of the flax, that are serenely blue,
As were the eyes, that moist with love's pure
dew,
So often looked in ours.

"Fallen on sleep" the wife and mother lay,
(The light of home went out that bitter day);
The husband softly pressed
To the still room, and after, all the place
Seemed to be touched with heart-born ten-
der grace,
By love made manifest.

These dainty flowers seem made of light and
dew,
Yet they're upheld by fibre—knitted thro'
With nerve-life, strong and white.
I look and think of the deep eyes, from where
The strong soul leaned, the soul whose sight
was clear
And keen to see the right.

The wear of toil was hard on this still life,
Each day brought pain, and sometimes bitter
strife,
Met with a strength sublime.
Thou hadst the nerve that doth endure—thy
heart
At thought of all thy tension tears will start;
We knew thy trial time.

I note the flowers that look in tender wise,
(Soft and serene as were those loving eyes),
In the hands labour-scamed;
But dainty fibre of no leaf is fine,
As were warm pulses of this friend of mine.
At best we only dream

Of the deep love of one shy tender soul;
Only a quiver of one fine nerve stole
Down to the finger tips.
They were love eloquent; electric wire,
Never ran and trembled with as subtle fire,
As those dear hands and lips.

The lily-like and perfect souls may grow
Beside God's river—Peace, and hear its flow.
I think of some still place
Within the very shadow of God's throne,
I think of thee as loved, and fully known,
Because of just one grace

Brought to perfection,—worn unconsciously,
As the flax wears its bloom; thou wert to me
That angel whom we name
Patience, on earth; I dream of thee as fair,
With crown as modest as these flax flowers
are,
With which love shyly came.

Children Mission Circles.

ONE of the most important requisites
in an organization is to secure a good
leader. Among her qualifications, we
should mention fertility, tact, perse-
verance, and, above all, a genuine love
for children and for missions.

If such a leader be secured we might
safely leave to her all methods in detail;
but, through the kindness of some of
our best workers, we have received
suggestions which may be of service,
and from which we deduct the follow-
ing: One of the best pieces of advice
received, comprehensive and concise,
was, "Do it. Make it a success."
This we endorse. A great many good
opportunities are lost by hesitation and
procrastination. Some of these hesitat-
ing ones remind us of the man in Japan
who made up his mind to become a Chris-
tian "next New-Year's Day," three
hundred and sixty-five days off. The
first important point that we would
mention is the securing and holding a
large membership in the circles. The
seed-thought that led to the presenta-
tion of this subject at this meeting was

the question: Are we utilizing all the
children as much as possible in our
work? Are the older ones drifting
away from us? Are we securing all
the recruits possible from the little
ones? We confess to a fear, the last
year or two, lest we were losing either
the one or the other. This apprehension
led to the movement, a year or two ago,
for the formation of young ladies'
societies—links between the mission
circles and auxiliaries; and now we
wish to make an equal vigorous effort
for the little ones. May we not plead
with you most earnestly, dear friends,
that none of them be lost to our work?
It is this that we wish to make the
specialty for the year before us: a
thorough canvass of our churches and
Sunday-schools, to gather the children
into one big family—into one commu-
nity of labour and interest.

Aside from this general suggestion
we make a few others a little more in
detail. Let the children feel the res-
ponsibility of the circle as much as
possible; let them hold all the offices,
with an unseen power behind the
throne to see that it does not come to
nought. Let them be taught the proper
way to carry on meetings. Do not be
afraid of parliamentary order in them;
the children will like it. Let them feel
that it is not all play or entertainment.
They may be a little restless under it
at first, but they will soon enjoy the
feeling that they are "really helping"
—that their efforts mean something.
Let there be something for them to do
at home, so that the subject may be in
mind as often as possible. Let their
contributions be their own, not the
mere passing of pennies from their
fathers' pockets into the contribution-
box—the money they have earned, or
received to use as they please. Let
them be trained to systematic giving,
using envelopes or mite-boxes. Make
much of the opening of the boxes.
Let the children know that the con-
tents are really given to the Saviour
in the person of his little ones. When,
as in some cases, these boxes are in the
form of jugs, and a jug smashing is
the order, we may be sure that boys
will not be wanting to do the deed.

For the meetings, the suggestions
are: make them short and interesting.
Let there be little reading by older
people; talking, with questions and
answers, is much better. Never put
off a meeting except for most serious
reasons, and never give up one because
there are few present. Let as many
as possible take part in the meetings.
Let the older children prepare articles,
so far as practicable, and let the
younger ones give a recitation or dia-
logue, and bring in short items. Let
at least one third of those present take
part. Have as many object-lessons as
possible. Let the children draw maps,
secure pictures and curiosities, but not
so many as to distract their attention.
Adapt the time and place of meeting
to the circumstances of the children.
One circle of little girls is mentioned,
who managed to keep up their organiz-
ation and raise quite a sum of money
by having meetings only in school
vacations. Let the social element be
brought in, to a certain extent. An
occasional tea or picnic and a few
games help to give variety. Even a
little candy passed around at the close
has its effect. Teas have been utilized
in one circle, by having the girls inter-
ested in cooking classes cook the supper,
charging five cents to those who ate,
and so bringing fifteen dollars into the

treasury. Sales and entertainments of
various kinds have their place, but
their methods are too well known to
need repetition. Let the children be
brought out, with the older people, now
and then, in a grand missionary meet-
ing. Let the branches exercise a
fostering care over the children's soci-
eties, giving them an opportunity to
report in a State or county meeting.
It will be twice blessed, and will bless
those who give and those who take.

Temperance in Sunday-Schools.

BY MRS. S. M. I. HENRY.

THERE is no question more vital to
the success of our work as Christian
teachers than that of total abstinence;
hence it is eminently appropriate that
we should give a little time and thought
to its careful consideration.

Why should total abstinence be
taught in the Sunday-school?

1. Because it has been demonstrated
that even the most moderate use of
alcoholic drinks may lead to intemper-
ance, and intemperance is sin.

2. We should make special effort
against the sin of intemperance, because
it consists in taking into the human
system an altogether foreign and des-
tructive element—a poison which inter-
feres with the functions of the body so
as to render it insensible to the influ-
ence of the Spirit who alone convicts of
sin.

3. Because alcohol is a mighty ag-
gressive force, antagonizing Christ at
every point in his effort to save the
world; denying his word; profaning
his name; desecrating his Sabbath;
defiling his house; defying his law;
scorning his love; breaking up the
home; hindering the church, by rob-
bing her of the men and money which
are hers by right; making her prayers
fruitless and the blood of Christ of no
effect in the salvation of the victims of
drink.

4. Because alcohol is no respecter of
persons. If it can but get the oppor-
tunity, it will as readily ruin the son
of the Christian home, the Sunday-
school boy or girl, as the child of the
vicious. It has no regard for consecrated
flesh.

5. Because it has already done a
terrible work of death among the
children of the Church. A minister
came to me one day, saying:

"What can I do for my Bible class.
I have been in charge of my church
but little over a year. When I came
I found a class of seventeen young men
in the Sunday-school, known as the
pastor's class, all sons of members of
my Church. It came into my hands;
I soon found that they all drank.
During the year two of this number
have died from the direct effect of
drink, and the fifteen others are in the
gutters of this city, and I cannot reach
them."

That pastor wept as he told me this
story, and his class is but one of many
which I might name that have been
dragged from the Sunday-school by the
insidious influence of the drink traffic.

6. Because God's grace is the only
preventative and the only cure; and
his word which gives a knowledge of
this grace should be faithfully taught
so that the grace may be received.

7. Total abstinence should be taught
in the Sunday-school because, as a
rule, drinking habits are begun in the
ignorance of boyhood, and, once
formed, are like bands of iron and
hooks of steel.

Some one may ask, "How shall this
be taught in the Sunday-school?"

1. I think lessons should be prepared
from God's word, and that scientific
illustrations of the text should be given
as well as those drawn from the lives
of men. The children should be taught
why they should not "Look upon the
wine when it is red," and all that is
involved in the expression "moveth
itself aright."

2. Temperance should be correctly
defined to signify the moderate use of
all things good and wholesome, and
total abstinence from all things that
can harm or defile.

3. The lessons should be made to
come in their chronological or topical
order in the regular course—not as a
separate thing but as a part of God's
great unit of truth. When this is done
carefully, faithfully, and constantly, we
shall see the power of the saloon over
the boys of the land broken, and the
great barrier to the progress of the
gospel removed. To this end let us all
be truly workers together with God.

Non-Sectarian Lesson Helps.

THE following which lately appeared
in the *Baptist Record*, touches a point
of great importance, we think. There
are, probably, but few of us who have
not been more or less bored by attempts
made by outside parties to supplant the
Sunday-school literature of the Church.
As Methodists we believe in Methodist
literature, and also the importance of
teaching its doctrines to our children. If
our doctrines and polity are thoroughly
inculcated in the minds of our youth
there is not much danger of their for-
saking the Church of their fathers. We
heartily indorse the view of the *Record*,
when it says:

"The season has arrived when the
publisher of the non-sectarian helps
starts on his annual tour through the
Sunday schools, seeking whom he may
induce to subscribe. Perish the thought
that he is moved by a less worthy mo-
tive than the advancement of righteous-
ness; but his notion of righteousness has
respect primarily to the prices charged
by denominational publishers; whereat
his benevolent soul is sorely vexed, and
he cannot forbear launching a cheap re-
volution into the placid stream of Sun-
day-school literature. A careful com-
parison of prices soon shows the boasted
claim of cheapness to be an artful
manipulation of figures for entrapping
the unwary.

"Other claims to patronage are
based on the employment of 'the best
writers,' and on containing 'nothing
partisan or sectarian.' The first of
these claims may be dismissed at once;
for the best religious writers are not
those who have no convictions on the
vital doctrines of Christianity.

"If the other claim is true all discus-
sion of leading Christian doctrines must
be suppressed. Christianity, severed
from its doctrines, is like a man with-
out a skeleton. Its strength is gone.
What vital doctrine is not controverted
by some denomination calling itself
Christian? Sift out the doctrines con-
cerning which there is no controversy,
and the residuum will be small indeed.
If undenominational Sunday-school
helps contain 'nothing partisan or sec-
tarian,' they must exclude all intelligent
consideration of many of the fund-
mental truths of Christianity. If any
conviction touching these be expressed
the claim to be non-sectarian disap-
pears."