

The Sunday School.

A writer in the *Christian World* contributes the following account of a Russian Sunday school:—"My engagement to spend a few days in Father Kiril's village had been of long standing, and the good priest, thinking that I was trying to shirk it, wrote every fortnight or so to remind me that I had promised to stay with him and look at his new church and his new school-house, at his model farm, his school mistress from Moscow, his wonderful fowls, and all the others wonders which he had imported into Petrovskoye, as the village was called. Father Kiril was one of the new school of Russian priests, a young man with ideas which he had picked up in the academy in Moscow in the course of conversations with a priest who had been in Berlin. He spoke German also, and had a look sometimes at a German paper. He had a thorough contempt for the old order of parish priests who knew nothing but how to squeeze money from the people, and had no other qualification for their holy office than the possession of a bass voice, made still baser by constant application to the *vodka* bottle. But with all his modern light and notions, there was no more faithful son of the Orthodox Church than Father Kiril. If he hated anything it was dissent, and the only time I ever saw him get just a little bit crusty was when I said a good word on behalf of the Stundists. There were no Stundists in his parish, he was glad to tell me; but if there were, he added, he would take other means to show them the error of their ways than by sending them off in wretched gangs to the Caucasus or by kidnapping their innocent little children.

"It was on a beautiful autumn afternoon that I arrived at the nearest railway station to Petrovskoye, and Father Kiril awaited me in his long cart, well padded with hay cushions and drawn by three excellent little ponies. The good priest shone a welcome on me and away we drove across the steppe, the bells ringing merrily at the horses' heads, the driver talking constantly to the horses, the cart bumping and jolting over the road, and Father Kiril himself, his long golden hair floating out behind him, full of delight that he had at last got his English friend beside him bound for Petrovskoye. The village at last came in sight, crowning a long, sloping declivity that rose from a narrow, torpid stream of brown water—very good water, the priest said, when it was filtered and boiled.

"It was Saturday evening when we arrived, and Father Kiril had just time to see me comfortably installed in his cottage and rush off for the evening service. And very delightful quarters mine were, and if ever there was a kindly, pretty, thoroughly cleanly and able little housewife in the world, it was Anna Vasilevna—Anuta her husband called her, with a tenderness in his voice that Anuta loved to hear. My room was perfumed with lavender and late summer roses, and with another perfume as agreeable to my olfactory nerves as any other—the smell of perfectly pure linen.

"When Father Kiril returned home, he had much to tell me about his village work. He had been only two years in Petrovskoye, but I really believe he knew every man, woman and child in the village. He had a singing class for men and boys every Saturday night when they practised the music for the Sunday morning's service. I excused myself. Well, in the early morning he had some people coming to make arrangements about some sports for the afternoon; would I be present and give them my advice? Again I declined. I did not approve of sports on Sunday; at which announcement Father Kiril stared, and puzzled me by asking when I thought the sports should be held. Then he said he had a Sunday school at seven o'clock. That might interest me. 'Yes,' I replied 'I should like to see your Sunday school.'

"Punctually at seven o'clock Father Kiril and I, accompanied by Anna Vasilevna, arrived at the school house—a neat little building, built on very primitive lines, containing rough benches and desks, a master's rostrum, walls decorated with some maps and those terrible ethnographical prints, without which no school in any country seems to be adequately furnished. The room was full of boys and girls, two or three grown-up people as well, including the schoolmaster and the mistress from Moscow. Father Kiril went straight up to the rostrum, and the hum of conversation ceased. He then recited two exquisite prayers from the liturgy of the Greek Church, one praying for the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, the other for the Tsar and the Imperial family. Then, opening a New Testament, which I was glad to see he took from his pocket, he read the exquisite chapter containing the parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Prodigal Son. It was evidently his custom to say a few words in explanation of whatever passage he might read, and his audience settled down in their places. A few children who had just come in sat down on the floor near the door.

"Why did the Saviour give us these parables? He tells you Himself. It was to show you that even if you stray from the fold of the Church He will seek you until He finds you, and bring you

back again with as much love as though nothing had happened. And if the parable teaches another lesson, it is that any sinner among us who has, by reason of his sins, strayed away from the love of Christ, will be sought by the Saviour and forgiven if he only repents.'

"Father Kiril also said simple things, full of the Gospel, about the parable of the Piece of Silver and the Prodigal Son. Some boys cried when he spoke of the love of that father who let by-gones be bygones, and took the erring son back to his bosom. The priest's share in these exercises over, those present resolved themselves into classes. The bigger boys clustered round Father Kiril, and the bigger girls round Anna Vasilevna. In the same way the younger children divided themselves between the schoolmaster and mistress. This was by far the least satisfactory part of the proceedings. I fastened myself first to the schoolmaster, and heard him tell his boys a wonderful tale about how the Virgin Mary appeared to a bishop called Job at a place called Potchaeff, and that from the spot of earth where her feet rested a spring of water now gushes forth. He went on to explain that this was no ordinary water, but possessed properties far more powerful than any known drug, and that the halt, the maimed, and the blind came to Potchaeff in hundreds and went away cured of their diseases. Anna Vasilevna's class was next visited, and here I heard how best to make a certain cross-stitch much in request in Russian embroidery. The good woman had brought a piece of canvas with her and was showing her friends the right and the wrong way of making the stitch. I did not expect this in a Sunday school, but it was quite as edifying as the story about Bishop Job and the Virgin. And so back I went to Father Kiril. He was telling his pupils about the Tartar hordes of the middle ages, how they invaded Holy Russia, butchering the people, and devastating the whole country, and how their progress was stopped by the prayers of the devout clergy and the amazing fortitude of the people. Much of that, he said, was historically incorrect, but it had unquestioned value in awakening patriotic sentiments of a very high order in the minds of that gathering of peasant youths.

"The class instruction did not last more than twenty minutes. The boys of the church choir who were present chanted the beautiful psalm beginning, 'Lord, Thou has been our dwelling place in all generations,' Father Kiril said another prayer for the blessing of God to descend on the church, and we all trooped out into the bright sunshine and up the village past the low *izbas* of the peasants to the priest's cottage. Father Kiril was quite impatient until he heard my opinion about his Sunday school, and when I reflected what Petrovskoye might have been in other hands, and what Father Kiril had made it, I could not but praise unreservedly this noble attempt of his to make these Sunday mornings a blessing on his benighted people."

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW.

OBJECT—The sole object of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew is the spread of Christ's Kingdom amongst young men.

RULES—1. of Prayer, to pray daily for the spread of Christ's Kingdom among young men and for God's blessing upon the labors of the Brotherhood. 2. of Service, To make an earnest effort each week to bring at least one young man within hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the services of the Church and in young men's Bible classes.

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Brotherhood at Provincial Synod.

The Brotherhood of Montreal are to be congratulated upon the two meetings held under their auspices during the meeting of the Provincial Synod in their city. The eye of the passer by was arrested by large and attractive posters bearing the red cross of the order and the word *men* in very conspicuous type. Investigation proved that this was the announcement of a meeting for men only, to be held on Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock in the Y.M.C.A. hall, which by-the-by was kindly placed at their service by the resident secretary.

At an early hour the hall was comfortably filled by a very attentive and interested audience composed of men of all ages and stations in life. After the singing of a few Brotherhood hymns, the chairman, Rev. Dr. Mookridge, introduced the first speaker, Rev. Canon du Moulin, who in his usual forcible style had a plain and earnest talk on personal points, which was listened to with very deep interest. He was followed by his Lordship, the Bishop of Huron, who urged upon his hearers the necessity of living close to Christ—it was one thing to make a good resolution, but too often one found himself like the man lost in the wood, returning at night-fall to the smouldering embers of last night's campfire. So with our good resolutions; New Years' day found us making the same promise that we had made before and spiritually back by the old camp fire.

After the singing of another hymn, the meeting was brought to a close with prayer, attention being called to the meeting in St.