

must fail to grip and edify the young people. Some of them seek to cover too much in one evening. For instance, I have a nicely printed list on which I find, set for one evening's programme, the four great hymn writers: Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Isaac Watts, and Frances Ridley Havergal. Think of a League giving anything like serious thought to such a topic within the compass of one short hour. The study must necessarily be of the most superficial character in any such case. I am of the opinion that the word "superficial" applies to a whole lot of so-called topic studies, and the sooner our Leagues get down to some earnest, connected, and serious work, the sooner will they really help the young people whom they are supposed to train. Let me beg of you to make your topics stand for something worth while, and do not spoil them by selecting disconnected subjects at haphazard, and without either seriousness or system. The official topic list for the year just beginning, is in many respects the best we have ever had, and you have an idea that you will find it difficult to improve upon it. Adopt it, study it, work it, and have something really worth while every night in the month.

Old-Time Questions

I have received recently a number of questions that have reminded me of the old adage, "there is nothing new under the sun." I have been asked about getting the older people to attend the League, about interesting young men in its services, and what to do with inactive members. I said to myself, "Surely such questions have been asked before," and I turned up to the first "Question Drawer" conducted in these pages, in the second number of the paper ever issued, —February, 1899,—and lo, and behold, right there I found these questions in order,—"How can we get the older people to attend the League?" "What would you do with Committees which do not work?" and "How can we get young men interested in the League?"—So you see, the same problems that give us more or less worry to-day are not "new ones. Indeed, they have been right "to the front" from the inception of the Epworth League, and I expect it is a case of, "as it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be." I really smile sometimes when I hear some glum and pessimistic soul declaim against the decadence of present day work, and gloomily talk as if everything and everybody in the Church were on the down grade and headed towards ruin. Don't you believe it. There is more work being done through organized Church machinery to-day than ever before, and if sometimes the difficulties in the way seem to be more pronounced, it is largely because more people than ever are involved in the doing of the work, and consequently the more thoroughly expose the indifference of the few. We, who are leaders in present-day League work, are face to face with the same questions as confronted the leaders in the early days, and must solve them in largely the same way. And how the three questions quoted above were answered by my predecessor in office, you may find by referring to the "Round Table," pages of this issue, where may also be discovered a number of similarly old-time problems that bothered the pioneers as much as they do their successors to-day. Such questions will be in order just as long as our work goes on, and in some form or other it must continue until the Church's mission is fulfilled and Jesus Christ is crowned universal King.

Junior Leagues in Country Places

This article was written in answer to a question as to whether or not a Junior League can be held successfully in a purely rural community.

The practicality of a Junior League success is dependent on Superintendent, Membership, Place of Meeting, Organization and Equipment. Having these, a successful league is possible anywhere, and none of these essentials are impossible even in a rural community.

The physical difficulties of conducting regular meetings in the country church are admitted to be greater than in town or city, or even in a small village, which is usually a centre. Before the Junior League was organized the editor held a church five miles away from any village. He was, of course, sexton and general overseer of everything—a superintendent in fact as well as name. But the meetings were held, though the church was five miles from the parsonage, and nearly a mile from the public school of that section. The meeting was practically a Junior League, though that name had never yet been heard of.

Having a zealous adult who does not deny or sacrifice, a Junior League is practicable in any section, for in every section there are children, some place of meeting (church, schoolhouse or home) may be secured; organization may be at least in measure effected; equipment may be provided and the work done with some degree of success.

Meetings for the Juniors should not ordinarily be held on the Sabbath. The preaching service, Sunday School, class or prayer-meeting,—all or part,—constitute a long enough programme for the Sabbath. "But," someone says, "we have no Sunday School." "Then have one, even before you think of a Junior League," would be my answer. The league is not intended to supplant the public preaching service, Sunday School, prayer or class meeting anywhere. A Methodist Church that cannot support a Sunday School cannot sustain a Junior League. I can conceive of a Sunday School without a Junior League; but not of a Junior League without a Sunday School. Yet even in a well-conducted Sunday School our girls and boys attending regularly every Sunday only receive twenty-six hours' Bible instruction in a whole year's time—less than is given in the public schools in one school term. So the combined efforts of a Sunday School and league are surely meagre enough. The league should give our Juniors study and work between Sundays, and prove a true and efficient aid to the Sunday School and church services. In rural churches this is as necessary as in villages, towns and cities. Indeed, there being less to engross the attention of the young or dissipate their energies in the country than in the town, I am persuaded that often even better work may be done in the former than in the larger centres. The insurmountable difficulties are not those of location, roads, time, etc., but rather those of indifference and culpable negligence on the part of Christian leaders. "Do you want a Junior League had enough to pay the price for one?" is the question. Do you say "Yes?" Then you may run it. There are children to be nurtured for the church and trained in Christian service, there is some place possible where someone may meet them; there is an hour somewhere waiting to be used in this way; some measure of organization can be surely effected, and with small expense, plus considerable ingenuity and labor, you can equip both yourself and

your members, and that is all, positively all, that you need.

Piety, pluck, perseverance and prayer mean prosperity every time and in every place.

In Place of a Deaconess

The importance and value of deaconess work in many churches where the order is represented cannot be overestimated. Every one who has occasion for becoming practically acquainted with the helpful ministry of the devoted young women composing the sisterhood, will freely admit the great good actually accomplished through their agency. Scores of pastors would bear cheerful and willing testimony to the assistance rendered them in their work by the consecrated service of the deaconesses who have been associated with them in the pastoral oversight of their churches. But not every church can afford to employ a deaconess, neither are there a sufficient number of deaconesses to supply all the churches, professionally, even where they might be profitably engaged. In such cases, why should not the Epworth League do much to supply the lack? There is deaconess work, to a greater or less extent, in every community, and such work should not be left undone, simply because no professional is employed to do it. The Social Committee of every League, where no deaconess is employed, should earnestly endeavor to take her place. Or if not the Social Committee, the First Vice-President should see well to it that the Visiting and Relief Comtee provide studies the need of the community from the viewpoint of a deaconess, and seeks to meet it as she would probably do, were she present to engage in the work. Such practical Christian ministry would do more to develop the characters of the young women of the average League, than a hundred sermons could do. Let the cheer be given to those whose want is most pressing, whether aged, sick, or poor; carry gladness into homes that are sad; scatter sunshine by kindly ministrations to such as can scarce see any silver lining to the clouds overhead; loving them, and by such personal social service outside the League and between League meetings, seek to help and bless those who stand in real need. Where a deaconess is impossible, let the League take her place and do her work.

Some Summer Schools

We cannot give a full list of the summer schools for the coming season, as arrangements are not completed for all of them. But it is expected that the following Methodist schools will be held in Ontario, in addition to the regular interdenominational gatherings. Number will also be held in both the Eastern and Western Conferences. The list, as far as we have it for Ontario, is:—

Bay of Quinte Conference, July 1-8, Miss L. Gould, Colborne, Secretary; Hamilton Conference, July 8-15, Rev. F. E. Daniels, Troy, Ont., Secretary; (Winona), Rev. W. G. Bull, St. David's, Ont., Secretary; London Conference, St. Thomas, July 15-21, Rev. A. E. Jones, Belmont, Ont., Secretary; Windsor District, Kingsville, July 15-21, Rev. F. E. Clydale, North Maiden, Ont., Secretary; Matilda District, Point Ingonois, July 29-Aug. 3, Rev. G. Stafford, Cardinal, Ont., Secretary; Sault Ste. Marie District, Kensington Point, first week in August, Dr. H. F. Goodfellow, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Secretary.

For particulars regarding any of these schools address the secretary named as in above list. Programmes and other printed matter will be cheerfully sent by each officer to all enquirers.