

The Secret of Success

By Esther Miller

It was a poorly equipped little Sunday School, held in the damp basement of a city mission building. There were very few facilities for carrying on the work effectively. The superintendent had not so much as a blackboard or a picture roll, and no one even thought of separate class rooms. The pupils were all from the poorest homes, and the teachers were a small handful of young men and women without special training.

Far from ideal conditions, the visitor from a prosperous uptown church thought, as she sat on a creaking bench beside the superintendent's desk and watched the crowded classes gathering noisily about their teachers. Yet she knew that the results of this Sunday School's efforts were out of all proportion to its apparent working power. They had heard many heart-moving reports of it up in her own gilded Sunday School,—reports of children's wretched lives brightened and turned into the way of righteousness, of reckless lads arrested on their downward course, of whole squalid families raised to a clean and happy life.

So the visitor had come, full of eager curiosity to learn the secret of this splendid success: and lo, here, apparently, was everything that made for failure. She was puzzled and disappointed. The teachers seemed earnest and painstaking enough, the pupils were attentive and orderly; but it was all merely ordinarily good,—nothing more.

School was dismissed, and she was rising to go, with the mystery still unsolved, when the superintendent said, "Our work is not over yet; will you wait a few minutes for our Teachers' Prayer Meeting?" The visitor joined the little circle already arranging itself about the superintendent's desk.

"Is there any one to be specially remembered to-day?" asked the leader, when they were all seated and silent. A bright-eyed teacher, himself merely a boy, nodded,—"I want you all to pray very hard for my Dick", he said, "he's in trouble again." "Poor Dick!" said the superintendent, "I'm afraid the drink habit has him already. Well, well, don't worry, the Master can cure even that! Now, is there another?"

Yes, there was a little girl very ill, one of the women teachers reported, a child whose mother was far on the downward path. Would they pray for poor Minnie and the wretched parent? Two or three other requests came, and then all knelt. Four or five of the teachers led in prayer. The petitions were brief and beautifully simple. The visitor was impressed by their wonderful directness and earnestness.

"Oh, dear Father", said one, "poor Frank has been arrested. Oh, Lord, make this trial the means of saving his soul. Amen."

The visitor arose from her knees, deeply moved. She was not wondering any more at the strange success of the poor little School, and she truly felt the force of the superintendent's parting words, "You have just been witnessing the heart beat of all our Sunday School work; everything depends upon this afternoon prayer meeting."

Orillia, Ont.

Recruiting

By Rev. F. W. Murray

A mother, going along a country road, over forty years ago, carrying her babe in her arms, was met by a minister. He stopped to talk with her, placed his hand on the child's head, and asked her to dedicate him to the ministry. Standing there in the road, he prayed earnestly and fervently that if it were God's will, the child might be a minister. The child grew up into a lively, rollicking and thoughtless boyhood. But the prayer of the minister and the dedication of the mother were fulfilled at last, in the boy's entering upon the sacred office, in which he is now engaged.

There are prospective ministers in all our Sunday Schools. And there are deaconesses, Y.M.C.A. workers and mission teachers there by the score. Many of them are yet in the Cradle Roll.

The teacher who can lead a member of his class to devote himself specially to the Lord's work, has a wonderful opportunity to promote the coming of the kingdom. A word spoken to a young heart may be a seed that will grow through all the years, until the desired fruitage is attained.