

HOW TO MAINTAIN INTEREST IN BANDS.

ANY one who has ever so slight an experience of child culture, must have been struck with the eager alertness, the intense activity, the stretching out after light, so common to child nature.

In its normal condition a child is a veritable animated interrogation—How? why? when? what? are queries forever upon the lips of the smallest prattler. The rattle is broken to find how the noise is made, and the best doll sacrificed to see what made it shut its eyes.

Now it would seem that the man or woman who can best meet this demand in a child's nature, not so much by his or her superior knowledge and larger experience, but by a skilful drawing out of the knowledge of the child and leading up to the acquisition of further knowledge, without simply asking it to open its mouth and pour it in as with a funnel, is the person best fitted to help in the solution of the problem with which we started.

But, such a person the writer has no claim to be, and must content herself with a few simple suggestions gleaned from a not too wide experience of Mission Band work, and which have probably occurred, already, to others.

The first thing, then, which suggests itself in connection with our subject "How to Maintain an Interest in Band Work?" is: The necessity of a leader thoroughly and intensely interested herself. No merely "such a good woman," or "very lovely girl," will do for this superlatively important position. Perfect physical health, combined with genuine love of missions, and unlimited tact and patience in dealing with little people are all necessary qualifications, and no one need hope to succeed without.

But having secured a good leader, she should not do all the work, and while she must do much, she should appear to do least. Like the hidden spring which turns on the electric current which floods the whole building with light, she may, herself, be hidden, but her influence should be felt galvanizing into life and well directed effort the individual forces under her control.

Another requisite to the maintenance of interest is the selection of a suitable hour for meeting. Having decided upon such an hour, let nothing induce you to postpone your service—of course nothing within reasonable control, is understood. Begin promptly, even if no one but the leader is present. Such a course resolutely adhered to will insure promptness on the part of members. On the other hand nothing is more disheartening than to see little children, who were "on time," forced to wait ten, fifteen or even more minutes because others may be "along soon." Much of the disorderly and irreverent conduct of children in and about churches arises from the ennui of being called upon to wait for others.

Band officers should be chosen from among the children, and, as far as practicable, allowed to act without interference or suggestion from the leader, who should, of course, be present, seen but not heard, unless of necessity.

Again, these youthful officers should be frequently changed, and here, I am aware, I trespass upon disputed ground. It is argued that so few children are capable of taking office. Let them learn. Perfection is not expected, but the ideal is constantly before them. The work is not the end, but the means to an end.

N. S.

(To be continued.)

J. J.

Dear Circle and Band Workers:

Now that the annual meeting of Branch and Board have passed, and we have stepped over the threshold into a new year of missionary endeavor, would it not be well to try and put into practice some of the good resolutions made at the Branch gatherings? A spirit of hopefulness breathed through the reports, and in order that beneficial results follow, we need to lose no time in planning as far as possible the year's work. What fields will your society study this year?

What missionaries will you especially pray for? and how much of self-sacrifice and faithful effort are you willing to use that means may be available to place educational, evangelistic and industrial opportunities before the boys and girls in our various mission stations? Begin early to look up material for public meetings. There is so much in connection with our work that would be interesting to those outside of the W. M. S.; watch for the ones who could help actively in carrying out a programme. An earnest plea has been made for more hearty co-operation by Auxiliary members in this department of the work, and I am sure that if every one does their part, we may confidently expect our Heavenly Father's blessing.

The hearts of all true Canadians have been stirred over the departure of the Canadian contingent for South Africa, and we are following with hopes and prayers the brave men who have gone to the help of the mother land at this crisis. The thought has come to me—During these coming months could we not surround our out-going missionaries, those who are in training for their work, and whom the Lord has raised up, we believe, in answer to earnest supplication, with a girdle of prayer? This period of preparation is not likely to be free from discouragements and self-sacrifice, and there will be the necessity for putting on the "whole armor," even before they go into active service. Would they not feel strengthened by knowing we were remembering them at the throne of grace? And then, in this spirit, can we not go forth to work, as well as to pray, seeking to learn what we can of the countries in which our representatives are laboring, and thus acquiring that interest which is impossible without the knowledge. Let me urge upon you to be loyal to the work. Each one is needed to help "carry the light," that into other lands may shine the glorious Gospel, which has done so much for us.

I. CHIPMAN.