

WHOM IT INCLUDES.

The Home Department is designed primarily for the benefit of those persons in the immediate community and elsewhere who cannot attend the regular sessions of the Sunday-school, but it may also properly include those who, for various reasons, are not disposed to attend. It has sometimes been tersely stated that there are two general classes of people who are eligible to membership in the Home Department,—namely, the “Cannots” and the “Will nots.”

Persons of the following classes or conditions have been brought into the membership of Home Departments now in existence: Children too young, and men and women too aged and feeble, to attend Sunday-school; invalids, or “shut-ins,” the deaf, blind, dumb, and crippled; sailors on the seas, soldiers in the regular army, absent members of the church, congregation, or family, living on the frontier, and deprived of the privileges of the church and Sunday-school; commercial travellers, doctors, nurses, policemen, milkmen, employees on steam, electric, cable, and horse railroads; mothers kept at home by the care of young children, by household duties or the opposition of ungodly husbands, and the children in such families; those living at a great distance, having no means of conveyance; foreigners unacquainted with our language and customs; the indifferent, worldly, ungodly; those who hold aloof because of poverty or pride, or because of prejudice against the church, Sunday-school, pastor, superintendent, or some other member; and others whom there is no need of enumerating, but who may be included in the great company of non-attendants constituting such a large proportion of the population.

ITS PLAN.

The Home Department is simple in its plan and essential features. It really needs, for its successful working, simply a leader or visitor, a member or scholar, and a lesson to study. Those who become members are invited, and give their promise, to study the Sunday-school lesson at home, or wherever they may be, at least one half-hour during the week, preferably on Sunday. Of course, the very young, the aged and feeble, the blind, and some others, may not be able to study for themselves, but they may be interested in the lessons, and identified with the work, through the loving ministry of those who read and explain

the lesson to them, or seek in some such way to aid them.

OTHER DETAILS OF THE PLAN.

A Home Department may be conducted in as simple or in as elaborate a way as those at its head think best. It is often the case that the superintendent of the Sunday-school, or a regularly appointed Home Department superintendent, will have the visitors make out reports, on cards or in books made for that purpose, of the study that is being done regularly by the members of the department. A voluntary contribution of money by the members may also be a part of the plan, such money to be included in the regular offerings of the school. Cards, books, money envelopes, and similar printed matter that is of assistance in the work, are prepared by many of the denominational or general Sunday-school publishing houses. The unit in Home Department study is the individual, but in many cases two or more individuals study together in the home, or a group of individuals in a locality associate for study as a neighbourhood class. The number thus associated is sometimes so large as to lead to the organization of a neighbourhood Sunday-school. Young children may be helped by sending regularly to them pretty picture-papers or cards as tokens of remembrance, with an occasional simple message. They enjoy the pictures and cards, and their parents or older brothers or sisters will read the stories to them.

GAIN OF VISITATION.

Before the people whom the Home Department is designed to help can be secured as members, and even after this result has been achieved, there must be more or less of personal visitation and effort. In many cases, nothing can be said or done in reference to the study of the lessons at the outstart. Acquaintance must be formed and cultivated, confidence inspired, and barriers removed. And in many cases also, after a beginning has been made, important opportunities will arise for the encouragement and assistance of the members, not only in their study, but also in the promotion of their temporal and spiritual interests. Therefore it is apparent that the Home Department is of great value, not only in the promotion of Bible study, but also on account of the visitation and ministry of loving,