

## Prize Essay.

THE FLOWER COMMITTEE.

By *Mary S. Lounsbury.*

The following essay won the prize offered by THE GOLDEN RULE for the best essay on "The Flower Committee". Among essays receiving honorable mention were those by Miss Alice R. Hodges, Appelton, Wis.; Mrs. Augusta Fenner Herton of Ovid, N. Y., and Rev. Edgar L. Warren, Clarendon, N. H. The judges were Mr. E. B. Clark, Miss G. S. Richards and Mr. Frank H. Hollister all of Denver, Col.

THE work of the flower committee is by no means an unimportant part of Christian Endeavor work. The mission of the committee is twofold, to beautify the temple of our God, and afterward to carry comfort to His children, "for Christ and the Church." It is a most beautiful and interesting work, its every detail a labor of love. Who does not know the pleasure of gathering flowers? Yet, the keen delight is for those who search for wild flowers; for when you have found them, you know that they are just where God planted them; add to this the thought of placing them on the altar of consecration, and to this the knowledge of some sick child who will receive them with joy. This is the privilege of the flower committee. We do not consider our committee the model committee, nor our plans the ideal plans. Still, we thought it might be more profitable to tell of experimental work than to give a theory that we had never tried.

Of all lessons we have learned, perhaps the most beneficial one is the appreciation of the

### VALUE OF METHOD.

*The Golden Rule* in a recent issue condenses it; "Method doubles capacity." So we found that to work satisfactorily, even among the sweet confusion of flowers, it must be along the straight lines of method. Have for each member of your committee a certain portion of work to do, have each feel the responsibility for a definite portion; then if for any reason one should fail, let the chairman do the work herself. Our committee consists of eight members, four young ladies, three boys from thirteen to fifteen years of age, and the chairman. We receive very frequent help from friends who are interested and whose names do not appear on the printed list.

Our work may be divided into three parts: gathering the flowers, arranging them, distributing them. First, as to getting them. Each week we have a basket from the greenhouse. Our society provides for these.

Whatever else we may or may not have, we are always sure of these, which is very comforting. Some of the members of our congregation who have gardens give bouquets, these our boys gather together on Saturday. We own a few plants in pots, we sometimes place these in church. Through the summer, indeed from the time when the first violets wake up to tell us that spring has really come, we are never without wild flowers and ferns, and when the autumn flowers put on their glory, we wish for nothing else. Since "fell the frost from the clear, cold heaven" we have been wholly dependent on our basket and plants in bloom lent by the congregation, sometimes a chrysanthemum, at another time some bright geraniums, or a beautiful lily, together with our own store, now cherished in the south windows of the schoolroom, and watered on the night of the Christian Endeavor meeting and on every mid-week prayer-meeting evening.

Second, as to arrangement. Three of us meet an hour before service time on Sunday morning, and as quickly and as nicely as we can, we place our flowers round about the altar, in festoons, or in a bank, or in vases, as the quantity and nature of our treasures suggest. Then as to

### THE DISTRIBUTION.

We meet in the lecture-room after the evening service, the chairman has a list of names prepared for the sick (or rather, of as many as we have been able to discover) for whom the flowers are intended. We count the names and count the bouquets; if there are more names than bouquets, we divide the flowers, taking care to send the largest bunch and sweetest flowers to the one who is least likely to have any at home. To each bouquet we attach a card, on one side of which is printed, "An expression of sympathy from the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor of First Methodist Church. To—" (place for name). On the other side a verse is written, we do not have the verses printed, because we like to choose appropriate verses for special cases. All that now remains to be done is to send the bouquets to their destination; and just here the boys have been invaluable; they deliver most of the flowers. They go in company, of course, for who ever heard of a boy's going anywhere alone? If any one has a friend to whom he wishes to carry a bouquet, or if a teacher wishes to take a bouquet to one of his class, they are always welcome to do so. And "now the day is over," we leave our work in the hands of the Master. We are sometimes cheered by