

ephemeral, some of them are only locally conspicuous, and most of them are so woven of mixed threads or so interlaced with other and more permanent elements, that it is not easy to isolate and judge them. To point out a few of them may serve to emphasize the reality and difficulty of the preacher's problem, even if little aid be lent toward its solution. Skillful diagnosis does not cure, but shows what is to be cured and is therefore first and essential.

One of the marked phenomena of the time is the rapidly growing prominence of the youthful element, and of deference to its tastes. Stately "Old Hundred" yields the road to the nimbler pace of the Moody and Sankey canzonet, in the prayer-meeting. The Sunday school looms larger and larger on the horizon, threatening, in spite of all precaution, to isolation from if not rivalry with the church. Its teachers as well as scholars are chiefly "young people"; the gap between the pinafore of the infant class and the teacher's cap and spectacles being at times almost ludicrously short. The "Young People's Prayer Meeting," and "Young People's Association," are of recent origin and have had rapid growth. Still later, and especially ambitious of attention, is the "Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor," with its half-million members and world-wide organization. With this advance of juvenility to a position in the front rank has come a correspondingly exalted estimate of its relative capacities and virtues. Paul once exhorted Timothy to "let no man despise" his "youth." The words would sound superfluous, if not satirical, in our day. Not the beardless but the graybeard is most in danger of contempt. Churches and colleges alike are intent upon the "coming man" and weary of the man, whatever his qualities, who has already come. Other considerations are not wholly forgotten, but the one indispensable credential of the ideal leader is that he shall be fresh from the shell with a slight additional presumption in his favor, if he has been steam hatched.

This love of precocity reappears in other and broader forms. There is a growing impatience with the quiet methods and orderly restraints of the church, and a determination to "take the kingdom of heaven by violence" through more massive and impetuous agencies. The "storm and stress" period of German literature is revived in religion. "Great Pan" is by no means "dead," as the ancients sang, but madly alive, and dictator of conventional law. The world, too deaf to hear the whisper of the local church, is to be roused by the shout of the national, and overawed by the roar of the international, assembly. The imagination and the emotional nature are mightily wrought upon. The individual, swung with the swaying multitude like the feather of spray upon the wave, is thrilled with the sensation and feels himself strong with the strength of the sea. It may be that he is accepting only a luxurious release from personal responsibility, and deluding