

his foster mother and an occasion for derision to his smarter brothers and sisters, turned out eventually to be a swan. And biography contains many instances of dull children who, as men and women, displayed unusual ability and achieved unusual success.

There is another hopeful element in the problem so far as this particular sort of dull child is concerned. It is this : children who are slow to comprehend frequently make up, in part at least, for that slowness by the tenaciousness with which they hold a bit of knowledge or skill when once it has been acquired.

Sometimes a particular child is reckoned dull because the work at which he is set,—the memorizing of Bible verses, for example, or the answering of questions on the lesson—does not appeal to his special interest or enlist his special form of ability. Psychology has shown us the distinction between "idea" thinkers, those who handle words and concepts readily, and "thing" thinkers, those whose minds work easily only in the presence of objects. From the first group are recruited as a rule our professional classes, and from the latter our artisans and men of business. The ordinary schoolroom has been called the paradise of the "idea" thinker ; it is certainly often the very reverse for the child whose mental processes are of the concrete type.

Now the world has use for both of these types and our Sunday School teaching should minister to the needs of both. In fact it may be argued with considerable reason, that the church of the present day is especially in need of the "thing" thinker, of the man who may have no gifts in the field of theoretical religion, but who can yet deal in an effective way with the small duties of life. So many of us are, unfortunately, very much like the brilliant university graduate of whom Mr. Ian Hay speaks in his account of the experiences of a battalion of recruits in Kitchener's army. "Cockerell," he remarks, "knew all the manuals by heart, but he never was quite at home in drilling his platoon."

What has been said has been mainly a plea for the understanding of the dull scholar. But he needs sympathy as well ; not a patronizing sympathy, but a tactful one that gives him quietly and as a matter of course a chance to "put his best foot foremost." He cannot shine in memorizing scripture or in explaining difficult texts ; but he can at least recite single verses, or he can draw, or sing, or whittle with his jack-knife, or look after the class finances and all these gifts are needed in life and all can be put to some sort of use by a sufficiently alert teacher. We are apt, in the distribution of our attention in class, to apply in a very literal and in a rather mistaken sense, the text, "Unto him that hath shall be given," forgetful of that other text,

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." For, after all, the best test of our teaching ability as well as of our religion is in what we do for the dull scholar.

Queen's University, Kingston, Ont.



## The Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests : An Experience

By Rev. W. R. McIntosh, B.D.

Three years ago the Men's Federation made a survey of our city under the direction of Mr. Walter A. Riddell, present Commissioner of Labor for the Ontario Government.

The survey revealed among other startling facts that the Sunday Schools of the city were not holding one half the teen-age boys. Our own General Assembly through its Sabbath School Board had made about the same time a similar survey for the whole Dominion with practically the same result.

Following these heart-searching disclosures, a new programme for boys made its appearance with the rather formidable title of Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests, but under the most trustworthy auspices, namely, the joint partnership of Y.M.C.A. and the religious denominations.

Some programme was clearly needed that would interest and develop boys from the church standpoint, and this one on the face of it looked promising. It did not call for a new organization but was merely a week-night expansion of the organized class. It was based upon the actual ascertained interests of boys. It was to be carried on not in any outside institution but in the church itself and by church folks. It was not a vaudeville of stunts and pastimes for boys but a real programme intended to develop the boy on all sides of his nature and to carry him forward through the perilous teen-age period right up to the threshold of man's estate, and to crown all it led straight to Jesus and the Jesus way of life, who is the only sufficient Saviour and ideal for boys, who in the days of his own boyhood grew up in a balanced way in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and with men.

We decided that under the circumstances it was up to us to give it a chance and put it to the proof. It has now had two years' trial and is no longer an experiment, and we are glad to say that notwithstanding the scarcity of leadership and other limitations peculiar to every new venture, it has proved in our case a real romance of religion.

There is an odd boy to whom it does not appeal and a few shut out by night classes, but practically all the boys connected with the church, from 13 to 19, are taking the full course of training either as members, group