THE ORGANIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

Its Advantages in the Country Church.

BY REV. ADDISON F. BROWNE.

This is the day of organization. Concentration of forces underlies all great undertakings. The tendency thus manifested gains two mighty ends. It intensifies ability that is already in the field, and it utilizes strength that otherwise would remain dormant. When it is made to occupy its natural place, the effort of the weakest individual soldier is a factor in the power of the grandest army. The resources of skilful association are being discovered and developed in all departments of human activity. The vast combinations of capital and intellectual force which, under various names and circumstances, are now astonishing the commercial world, and the democratic tendency to expand all governments until every one of the intelligent governed is also, in a large sense, a governor, which may be said to affect every fibre of civilization; are simply declarations of a sentiment which crowns the age. It would be idle to contend that religion is unaffected by this all-pervading influence. In its essence the church of Christ never changes. The Rock of Ages stands solid and immovable. The true doctrine of 1800 years ago is the true doctrine of to-day, and will remain the true doctrine until the end of time. But, as the business of the church is to rescue men and women from the jeopardy of their natural condition, it follows that the church must go after them and meet them on their own ground. The church must speak to them in words that they can understand; and in other respects it must reach them through measures similar to those with which they are most familiar. These are constantly changing and presenting new aspects. As methods for commanding collective strength are now rising to the dignity of an exact science, which in secular business must be acquired before a pronounced success can be looked for, it is clear that church work, to be in touch with the present, must enjoy the advantage of good organization. Christianity is "a building of God, a house not made with hands," and it is adapted to all times and circumstances; because, by elevating mankind to the throne of God, and bringing God down to the dwelling-place of mankind, it gratifies the inmost desire of the human heart—the desire for true human consolation, fused with the divinity that sustains and immortalizes. Hence, while Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and His church, being an expression of Himself, is equally unchangeable, scriptural methods for presenting the glad message are constantly changing and adapting themselves to the peculiarities of situation and expediency, which, like the kaleidoscope, are ever revealing something new, but never exactly the same thing twice. The best way of fifty years ago is not the best way of to-day, and the best way of to-day will not be the best way of fifty years hence. Some of us who were recently opposed to the Young People's movement, and held back with hearty good-will, are now convinced of its high value, and are moving forward along its lines with all the go there is in us; because it has demonstrated that it is of God, and perfectly calculated to meet the particular requirements of to-day. It is a keen weapon, which, in the strong, certain hands of the holy church, will be so employed that it will cause millions to become acquainted with saving grace.

All who have studied its workings agree that the young people's organization is a material addition to the church in city or town. But many contend that it cannot be successfully carried on where the people are widely scattered, and where the number of young communicants is likely to be comparatively small. But it is in just such a church that young people are likely to have the fewest opportunities for developing the divinity that is within them; and that the possibilities of this sacred element may be attained to a more ample extent is the prime reason why the Young People's Unions sprang into existence.

In town churches young people have always enjoyed opportunities not afforded to the same class in rural districts. The enthusiasm of numbers creates and sustains activity, while the incentives of competitive effort inspire them to fully develop their finest abilities. If a young people's union, connected by the living rope of true organization to a thousand other unions, can increase the effectiveness of a church thus situated—and it certainly has in many cases—what should not be expected when such a factory of co-operation is erected, where the beginners in Christian experience have been taught by custom if not by precept that they are entitled to no particular part in church work until added years have given them that wisdom which was once held to be the exclusive possession of the middle aged and the aged? And we should not have to search far to find churches whose leading members are still trying not to let go of this antiquated idea.

A young people's organization in the country church, although its members may be few indeed, by means of the excellent organs which the movement has created, may speedily come into pleasant association with a vast company of young Christians. In a local union which has only succeeded in booking a dozen names, every member may take part in the course of study which his paper presents from week to week, and thus enjoy regular contact with the brightest minds in his denomination; and constantly receive impressions from those whose spirituality has been carried to the loftiest elevation.

The good things that result cannot be numbered. One thing in particular: A few months of such training is sure to destroy all taste for the cheap story paper, which is correctly described as the great time waster of the age. It is a special bane of young Christians who live in out-of-the-way localities. The Sunday-school is irregular and unsatisfactory, and sermons are so far apart that one is usually quite forgotten before another is heard. He must read something! The most ordinary mind demands, and will have, a certain amount of exercise. But he has not been led far enough into the Bible to realize its marvellous application to practical life; and so, of course, he cannot get interested in religious literature. Therefore, when the special ecstasy attending his conversion wears off, he only reads the sacred volume as a matter of duty. Anything done simply as a matter of duty cannot feed the heart! And so the miserable periodical, filled with absurd but exciting stories, becomes such a constant companion and consumes so much time, that the devil begins to seriously hope that the building of this young Christian will never amount to anything beyond wood, hay and stubble. But after a while a Young People's Union is organized in his church. With no special interest in the affair he puts his name down and pays his eighty cents for the paper. It may be that both steps are taken to please somebody whose eyes are bright, whose voice is sweet, and the touch of whose hand is—well, imagination and memory will tell you the rest! How thoroughly the good Lord understands us! In this way the young man quickly finds himself breathing a new and better atmosphere. He is moving in the right direction, and every step presents a view wider and more interesting. Presently his whole heart and mind become enlisted in the effort to grow and learn in grace. He discovers that he has power never dreamed of before, and obedient to resistless force, he strides rapidly forward. Every day's achievement is the guide board to something still more valuable. Ever long he realizes the call to the most exalted of all professions. In a few years, when he has completed his preparation, and has been ordained as pastor of an important church, he will look back along the rose-bordered avenue of joyful recollection to the humble beginning of real progress in Christian life, and thank God for the day when he consented to join the Young People's Union in a small country church.

As this illustration indicates, three valuable products of the Young People's movement are likely to appear in its work among country churches. In the first place it should prove a preventative and a cure for backsliding. All are liable to catch this disease, but the young people most of all. The union gives them good work; and good work and plenty of it, is the best possible defence against temptations, both the ordinary and the extraordinary. The fundamental aim of these societies is to find work for everyone, for those who have received one talent no less than for those who have received ten talents. Every Young People's Union, among other things, should be a well furnished religious employment office. If this department is well managed, the most backward young church member will soon discover that there is something which he or she can do. This Christian who has insisted on standing at the foot of the class, finds that the work which has come to her hand is so peculiarly adapted to her modest ability that she can do it better than anybody else. In her eyes the something may seem very small. It may be nothing beyond speaking a word to her sister in the flesh who is not a Christian. This young lady, although of clear intellect and remarkably practical, is, in common parlance, rather close minded. But Clara knows how to reach Lizzie on other subjects, and as an active member of the union, feeling that she must do something, she goes to work along this line, because she cannot think of anything else that she dares attempt. No one is surprised to hear that Lizzie is touched by the personal appeal as she would not be by many sermons. Faithful sermons have done the sowing; Clara's tender urging does the reaping. She is asked to give her heart to Christ by one who knows her well; and she knows that the urgent request is inspired by love. The plea is the voice of the Spirit and the means of regeneration. Lizzie's talent is consecrated to the service of the Lord. Another is added to the many modern illustrations of Andrew and Peter. Such an incident is not the usual thing in the ordinary church work. Hard facts show that the only way to thoroughly utilize our young people is to give them employment which is not especially shared by their elders. Such is just what these organizations are able to do; especially in the courses of Bible study, which are calculated to maintain interest in the vital truth entirely independent of simple feeling, which of itself is as unreliable as the summer breeze.

In the second place, these societies should be a grand highway for growth in grace. While Clara or anybody else is leading a soul into the light without realizing it, the young Christian herself has been steadily pushing ahead, and presently discovers an ability to say something in meeting beyond the mere testimony, and say it in a way that commands attention and creates real interest. Along this easy path of rational education thousands are already climbing toward the Andes of knowledge and sanctification, that surmount the entire land of Christian experience—the majestic mountains whose valley is above our natural sky, and whose massive battlements are forever illuminated by the glory of stainless wisdom; while many thousands more whose priceless abilities are still hidden and latent, await the union's mineral rod to indicate their presence, so that we may dig with the assurance of finding golden ore.

In the third place, a young people's organization in the country church is the right means to bring out peculiar evangelistic strength; not only in usual ways, but also in ways that are usually little thought of. Where a wide-awake union exists the social element can be made a means of grace, as it cannot in any other way. Excepting in revival times, it is seldom that social intercourse reveals a religious flavor. Men talk business and politics and nonsense, and women talk household affairs and fashions and nonsense. Behind this thick screen of utter worldliness, the living light of Jesus is usually held in perfect concealment. This is an organic disease, and it is strong enough to laugh at our old-fashioned remedies. But now a medicine has been discovered which we believe, under God, will expel the poison. Our dear young people have got something which they look upon as their very own. As Baptists they understand that it is a part of the church work and completely controlled by the church. Still it is their task, and they feel responsible for its faithful performance. In their efforts to secure new members and stimulate one another, they are bound to have a great deal of religious conversation in the run of social intercourse. And because, through the movement's organ they are receiving an unvarying stream of inspiration, the shadow hunters in their respective churches at last are forced to admit that the dark times which are always expected to follow revivals seem to have got lost altogether. Thus a bright influence flames forth that favorably affects the entire community. Before some of us are awake to the situation, hundreds of cases, equivalent to that of Clara and Lizzie, will be carried to successful issue.

Such is the present! As we look up from our labors and gaze upon futurity, we see the eternal splendor of the coronation day filling all the sweet by-and-bye; and in that moment when all fulfilment of precious promise is focused to a point of lovely brilliancy, revealing the essence of the light supreme, when from the white hand of Mary's Son the innumerable company of the saints have received their crowns, it will appear that the record stars flashing in each diadem constituted a special grandeur in these symbols of final victory; and also that many of the pure flames were lighted by our Lord's work through young people's organizations connected with scattered country churches.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA.

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

Dear Girls and Boys,—This is a lovely cold Saturday morning. The red line in the thermometer has sunk to 71½°,—a little cooler than summer heat at home. The water in which I took my morning bath felt as cold as it used to at home when I had to break through the ice to get it. We have to wear warm woollen underclothing. Such is the change which less than a year of India's sun can make in the human system.

I remember a man—still living in Nictaux, N. S.—who used to try to frighten me by saying that he would put me into the beater of the threshing machine, and that I would come out at the other end of the machine "a new boy." If you see him, you might tell him that I have gone through it now. The first year in India is some such threshing machine. You go in at the beater, pass through a kind of furnace and come out in October a new boy from top to toe. And it seems almost to have been worth while to go through this fiery metamorphosis, for the sake of enjoying this paradise of lovely days, through which we are singing our happy way. If you have stood the fire all right; if you have still a few roses left in your cheek; and if you can manage to keep well and strong, you may never feel the heat so much again. But they do say, if you become weak, you feel the heat more by-and-bye.

This process of getting used to the climate, they call the process of acclimatization. The natives are born acclimatized. A Brahman said to us the other day that he feared we should have a very severe winter. We had a hearty laugh. I showed him two pictures of winter scenes at home, which we have hanging on the walls, and thought if he could only step his two bare feet into that snow, or dip his toes through a hole in the ice of one of those brooks, he would hop.

Our beans are up. The cucumbers, cauliflower, lettuce and sweet potatoes are up too. And we have green tomatoes. But the cabbage and the beets are not up yet, and the peas which we planted were no good. We try to plant a little of everything if we can, to make it seem like home. We had green corn in September. Miss Gray and Mrs. Morse have just been out giving the gardener some pumpkin and squash seeds, and showing him how they want some flower plants arranged. A week ago last night as the sun was sinking behind the western hills, the full moon arose from the sea as rosy as a boy's face when he comes home from school in the winter. When night came, the sky was illuminated with stars, and the great moon, like one of God's silver dollars, sent down its charming light, so that you could sit outdoors and read a book, if you were not afraid of hurting your eyes. About half-past seven o'clock, one of our preachers, Chittiah, came over and called us out to look at the moon. Look! A round shadow is beginning to creep over the bottom of it as if a big snake were commencing to swallow it. Or imagining the moon to be a silver dollar, it looks as if somebody were holding the edge of an old penny over the lower edge of the dollar. We find it more comfortable to put on our smoked glasses and watch, for the Indian moon is so bright that it hurts your eyes to gaze at it long.

As we are looking, the ugly penny keeps slipping its black face up farther and farther, as if the man who is holding it intends to keep pushing it up until he has entirely covered the shiny dollar with his old copper. And sure enough! At half-past nine o'clock, there is only a mere strip of silver on the top of the moon to be seen; the moonlight is gone and the night is dark. There is the moon still as round as ever but as dark as a ball of clay.

What is the matter with the moon? Why, the explanation is very easy. A big snake has swallowed it. That was not a large copper coin, but a serpent's horrid jaws. The moon is in distress.

See those brown men bathing in the sea! They are washing off pollution. The moon is a god. He is a good god, because he gives light in the night. And because affliction has come to this blessed god, pollution has come upon the people. Therefore they must all bathe and wash the filth away. The best place to take this bath is in the boundless sea. Moreover, no good Hindu eats while the moon is in this distress. He fasts until the awful serpent throws it up again. There are some other things that they do which I do not yet understand. Indeed, after I know more about these people, I may have to correct some of the things I have told you already.

But you boys and girls know better than all this. You know the serpent that did swallow the moon now lies beneath your feet. The big, round earth got in its light and made the poor moon dark. I suppose you would explain it something like this:—The moon alone could light up the world no more than a russet apple could light up an orchard. It is dead as a ball of mud. But after it is night where you live the sun is still shining on the moon. So it is daylight on the moon, and some of the daylight on the moon bounces back upon the earth. A boy in school sometimes puts water on his slate, lets the sun shine on it, and dances a patch of sunlight all around the room. He can tip his slate so as to make it shine on Fred's nose, Harry's chin, or the back of the teacher's head. If the moon were as bright as a wet slate it would shine much more brilliantly than it does now. If it were as burnished as a looking glass it would flash almost as gloriously as the sun himself. But as it is only a lump of earth, therefore by the time its daylight flickers down to us it gets very dim. Well, when the earth gets between the sun and the moon, the moon is dark just as it is dark on your book when your brother bobs his head between the lamp and your lesson. That is what was the matter last Friday night. The moon got around so that the earth was between it and the sun. There was the round shadow of the earth on the moon as plain as the shadow of a man's nose on the wall.

This is one of the many ways in which we learn that this earth is round. You could tell as well by the shape of that shadow on the moon that the earth was round, as you could tell by the profile shadow of a boy's face on the wall that his nose is not round.

So you see what a babyish thing the Hindu religion is. There are some good things in it no doubt; but it is like looking for a needle in a haystack to find them in their every day religion. There are some fine things in Hindu theology, which only the learned know; but even these few blossoms are entangled with rankest weeds that choke all their virtue out of them.

Hear that crowd going by and banging on old tin pans! Men, women and children! There they are now! They have crawled over a break in that man's wall and are looking for strawberries or May flowers I guess; but there are no strawberries or May flowers here. See their white and red garments through the branches! They are looking for snake holes. Now they have found one. That boy is pouring milk in it for the snake to drink. That woman is pouring in linseed oil. See, that man standing near the hole with hands clasped in prayer! Speaking to the snake, he says: "O god! Because we have fed thee with milk and oil, and are praising thee with all this music to-day, do not bite us this year. Do not come into our houses this year; and when our children play outdoors and our cattle feed in the fields, do not harm them, we beseech thee." Last year, they tell us, that while a woman was pouring oil or milk into a snake's hole, the snake came out and bit her, and she went home and died.

One day in every year they do this way to keep the snakes from biting them. This is what they call worship. They worship the snake so that it will not bite them. In India almost everything that is ugly is a god; and almost all the gods are ugly. The people do not love these gods, and these gods do not love the people. But the people are afraid of the gods and worship them and coax them not to hurt them, or try to hire them with soft words and gifts to send rain, or save the sick from death.

I think the name of Jesus never sounded so sweet to me before as it has since coming to this land. Even if all the stories that are told about the most popular heathen gods are true, they are nearly all great rascals and rowdies. Snakes are gods; devils are gods; gods are warriors and drunkards. There is nothing in all the Hindu religion that can satisfy a boy's heart, rest his soul or save him from his sin. It is all a nightmare. There is no love in it. There is more love in one clover blossom than in all the religious performances that I have seen in these heathen streets or heathen temples. It is a blessed thing that, even in India, a mother cannot help loving her child. This mother-love contradicts all their theology. A little child, born into a home, brings more true religion than all their million gods.

My heart beats to tell them plainly the story of Jesus. I spend afternoons now going out with the preachers to the surrounding villages. The mornings are spent in studying Telugu. We have seen and heard many things in these villages that I want to tell you, and I shall be glad when it comes time to write you again.

Yours truly,
Bimlipatam, Nov. 12. L. D. MORSE.

Trouble of Soul.

What a powerful picture of a soul without God is that drawn in the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes it as a "troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." This is the work of memory. Let the wrongdoer try to hide his sins as carefully or to bury them as deeply as he knows how, memory will throw them to the surface as troubled waters heave up what has been thrown into their depths. When a vessel had sunk in Lake Erie, an effort was made to raise the bodies of the drowned passengers by firing heavy cannons over the spot; and the jar brought them up. So the tremendous artillery of God's justice—manned by those two good gunners, Memory and Conscience—bring up to our eyes the hideous sins which we thought were buried forever. Conscience utters two great voices. One of them declares: "Great peace have they who love God's law; in keeping His commandments is great reward." The other voice is: "There is no peace to the wicked; they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest; the wages of sin is death." Just in proportion as we hear and heed these voices, conscience becomes our sweetest comforter, our most terrible tormentor.—*Selected.*

Letter from Alfred Grunfeld.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.)

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ALFRED GRUNFELD,
Imperial & Royal Austrian Court Pianist and Royal Prussian Court Pianist.
New York, April 1, 1892.

The Work in Maskinonge.

(Canadian Baptist.)

Joseph Richards, Esq., treasurer of the Grande Ligne Mission, has kindly sent us for publication a copy of the following letter received by him from Rev. Wm. Bullock. We are sure it will interest our readers. It shows, as Bro. Richards observes, that the Baptists are compelling the priests to preach the Gospel of Christ to their hearers:

MASKINONGE, P. Q., Nov. 28, '92.

Dear Bro. Richards,—With regard to our work, we are not making as much progress as we would like to, and yet, in one way, we are quietly gaining some ground, especially in some of the homes of our people. In some homes the opposition to the husbands and the Bible is as severe as ever it was, but in others there is a decided change for the better. In one of the homes a child was born a few days ago, and, of course, the father—one of our good members—did not want to have their little one taken to the Catholic church to be christened, but was disposed to let the mother have her own way in the matter. But, to his great joy, the mother of the child, in spite of a great deal of talk and storming from her and his parents, as well as from all the neighbors, declared that the child should *not* be taken to the Catholic church; that she had no faith in infant baptism, and that she believed her husband was right. As soon as the mother is able, the child is to be brought to the chapel to be consecrated to the Lord. This means a great deal for that mother, and may be the loosening of the cord which hitherto has held the women so closely bound together in opposing their husbands. As a church, we are praying for the conversion of the entire families of those who have already come out. We meet together, once a week, for that purpose. We take one family each week, and all unite in prayer for that one family during the whole week. The following week we agree on another family. Our Saviour said that if two were to agree on earth as touching anything it should be done for them (Matt. 18: 19), and we believe that if our little band agree to ask for the conversion of those dear ones, their desire shall be granted. I am also doing personal work with several men who do not attend the chapel. I am in hope that the seed sown in their hearts will bear fruit. The labors of the new priest, who has just come into the parish, seem to be proving a success in that he is reconciling the hostile portions of the parish. Nearly all who do not come to the chapel services go over to the Catholic church now.

About two weeks ago, the priest visited every house in the parish (except mine), Catholic and Protestant, and it would seem that he was impressed by two things, if we may judge by the nature of his preaching since the visits. First, he was impressed by the sincerity and firmness of all our people, for on the following Sunday he said from the pulpit that in his visits he had met some who entertained *different* and *very decided* opinions from their Catholic brethren, but as they were firm in their new belief, and very sincere, they were entitled to the respect of all in the parish, and he strongly urged his people to be on friendly terms with every Protestant. Secondly, he must have been impressed with the fact that the people wanted to hear the Gospel preached, and that the wisest course to follow would be to read portions of the Gospel to them, and preach to them something from the Bible, for the very next Sunday he took the whole parish by surprise by preaching a sermon, one hour long, on the Great Commission. It appears that he said in his sermon that the Gospel was speedily being carried into all the world, without distinguishing between Protestant or Catholic missionaries. The people were so surprised and taken up with his sermon, that they declared that they had never before *heard a priest preach such a sermon.* "*It was as good as those Protestant ministers preached,*" one lady who heard him, and who comes to the chapel occasionally, said. She wondered what the bishop would have said if he had heard that sermon, it sounded so Protestant. But I believe the bishop himself is at the bottom of it. They have taken this course of preaching certain parts of the Gospel, which they are careful will not reveal their errors, and, at the same time, will satisfy the people of Maskinonge, who want now to hear the Gospel. Yesterday the priest preached on the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican who went up to pray (Luke 28: 10–14). But although he preaches parts of the Gospel, he will not allow the people to possess it. He tried to have some Bibles burned during his visits. We know of two places where he did not succeed. Sincerely yours,

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