

## Inspiration Row

By Emma B. Galloway,  
Toronto.

IT was Christian Endeavor night at the League. Ruth Hudson, the convener of the Lookout Committee, had been working late at the office, and decided to have dinner down-town and go direct to the church. This plan would save the long walk from home down to the church, and give her a little time for rest and thought before the meeting opened. Time to think—that was just what she wanted. She was thoroughly in earnest, and always on the "lookout" for new ways of promoting the highest interests of the League.

"Ruth Hudson is too terribly in earnest," complained one easygoing member to another; "it was always easy enough before, but now she must not only look-out and plan out work, but she actually insists on us working out all those plans. I don't believe in getting things down so fine in church work. She makes a regular business of it. You might think she was paid for it."

She was paid for it. The Master pays well for good work.

At seven-thirty Ruth walked into the lecture-room, and seated herself in one of the easy chairs on the platform. The room seemed so quiet and restful after the noise and rush of a busy day at the office. As she looked at the rows of chairs before her she thought, "How different it will look in a few minutes! The side seats and those toward the back will be well filled, but those front seats will still be unoccupied."

"You are early to-night, Miss Hudson," said the caretaker, when he came in to turn up the lights. He was a kindly old man, who had been at this church only a few weeks.

"Mr. Brown, do you know those front seats worry me," said Ruth. "They are always empty, and they seem to be a sort of barrier between the leader and the members of our League. Of course, they are as comfortable as any of the chairs, but I always think," she stopped abruptly, with a nervous little laugh. She was not in the habit of telling her thoughts to strangers. Perhaps he would think her very queer.

"May I hear what you think about it?" asked Mr. Brown, quietly.

"Well, I always think those chairs must be disappointed. If I were a chair I should consider it an honor to be at the front, to bring the people near to the leader, and the music," and then she added, softly, "and perhaps nearer to the Master, but the people don't seem to like front seats, and come very reluctantly when the leader asks them to fill up the front chairs."

"Let me tell you a story that may help solve your problem," said Mr. Brown. "We always had the same difficulty in my old home church until two years ago, when we got our Inspiration Row."

"An Inspiration Row? Oh, Mr. Brown, please tell me all about it," asked Ruth, eagerly.

Mr. Brown sat down on the edge of the platform, still holding the taper in his hand.

"One Monday night, as I was lighting up the lecture-room, I was surprised to see Mabel Burton rush in and count the front row of chairs—'Two, five, ten; I need two more,' I heard her say, as she was hurrying out. 'Two more of what?' I called after her. I was sure it wasn't two more chairs, for those front seats were never used. 'Two more inspirations,' Mr. Brown, I'll tell you after League! My curiosity was aroused. I had known Mabel all her life. She was

a tall, fair girl, with a very bright, lively disposition. There was always something doing where Mabel was. She was the leader of her crowd, but not a leader in League work. I often thought what a good leader she would make if she only used her talents for the Master. At five minutes to eight she re-entered with two other girls, and found four young men and three young ladies waiting for her. She had just returned from her vacation on Saturday, and was warmly welcomed by her friends. They were all so glad to see her, but she suddenly stopped them, and in a few words told them what she wanted. Two of the girls evidently knew all about it. The others had to wait for further explanation, as I did. Leaving me at the door with instructions to ask the members coming in to take seats near the front, she took her friends and filled up that front row all the way across.

"When the pastor came in and saw that row of bright, happy faces, he smiled, and kept on smiling. He knew the secret. The president looked rather bewildered at first. Then he leaned forward, and said, 'I thank you and have no idea how lonely it has been up here!'

"It was the Consecration meeting, led by the pastor. When the opportunity for testimony was given, Mabel arose at once and said, 'I have given my life to the Master, to be used by Him in any way or place where He wants me, and I do want you all to love and serve Him, too!' One after another on that front row quickly followed their leader, voices that we had not heard in League before. Such a thrill went through that whole meeting—I shall never forget it, nor how they sang the Doxology that night.

"At the close of the service the pastor requested the Executive to tarry for a few minutes with the members of the front row. When all were ready he turned to Mabel, and said, 'It is your story, and I want you to tell it yourself, please, just as you told it to me!'

"During my vacation, she said, 'I attended the great missionary convention in Philadelphia. As you all know, I didn't care anything about the convention. I simply took advantage of the convention rates to go and visit my old friend Bessie Curtis. She married the Rev. John Holmes and lives in Philadelphia. Dr. Holmes met me at the depot and welcomed me as 'our very own missionary delegate.'

"I am not a delegate. I just came to visit Bessie! I said. You all know I have always been a little afraid of ministers, and I didn't want my visit spoiled by being preached at, so I hastened to add before he had a chance to say anything, 'and, please, Dr. John, I don't want to be talked to on any serious subjects at all while I am here.'

He looked at me for a moment, and then said, 'Very well, I shall leave you in God's hands. If you change your mind and want to talk about them, I am at your service. I expect you will want to before the week is over.' I felt quite safe after securing his promise not to preach to me, so we talked of other things, and he was really very entertaining. They had a beautiful home, and I settled down to enjoy myself. It was so nice to be with Bessie once more. Of course, we attended the convention. Dr. Holmes almost lived there. Bessie and I went when her home duties would permit.

"The first speaker I heard was a re-

turned missionary from South America. I forgot his name, and remember but very little of what he said, but I didn't like him. He told of the condition of the people of South America, and seemed to be trying to convince me that it was my fault that they were heathen. If I was a Christian, why did I not go and tell them about Jesus? 'The idea of such a thing!' I said to myself; 'of course I am a Christian. I am sorry for the heathens, too. I wish they what I can conveniently to missions, and often wish it were more. It isn't my fault, I don't believe it.'

"At another meeting I heard him again. Had I known he would be there I should never have gone. I was very uncomfortable and very angry at him for talking so foolishly. The idea of it being my fault was so ridiculous! I did a lot of thinking that night. Of course, I didn't say anything to Dr. John or Bessie about it.

"I heard many other speakers, both home and foreign missionaries, some of whom I liked very much. As they told of the condition of women in other lands, and the privilege of helping them, I began to see how narrow and small my life was. I no longer wanted to live a life that was worth while. God was speaking to me on serious subjects, and I was listening. The climax came one evening when Bessie and I attended a woman's meeting and heard a lady missionary from China. It was a very quiet, solemn service. As we all bowed in prayer at the close of the service, the leader asked all those to stand who were willing to give themselves to the Saviour for service in any land where He might want to use them. I stood up; at that moment a deep, sweet peace filled my heart, and I knew that I was saved to serve. Of course, Bessie was delighted. I asked her not to tell Dr. John. I must tell him myself. She said he would see it in my face, and he did. When I entered the drawing-room I found him standing that hymn, 'I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord; I'll be what you want me to be.' He looked up, and smilingly asked, 'What is it, Mabel?' I said, 'Oh, Dr. John, isn't it wonderful, but I don't know what it is! I am sure, as I passed on to my room I heard him say, 'Thank God, I knew our prayers would be answered.'

"It was the best vacation I ever had. That is my story," said Mabel, as she sat down beside one of the girls.

"That is the best part of your story, but that is not all," said our pastor. "Tell them about the Inspiration Row, just as you told me yesterday. Don't leave any of it out, Mabel. It works well, and I want it continued."

"It was the last night of the Convention," said Mabel. We were all present, Dr. John, Bessie and I, and Bessie's brother, Mr. Walter, who lives with her while attending college. It was an inspiring meeting. The whole theme in song and address was, "Do something, and do it now!" On our return home I told Dr. John that I wanted to talk. Bessie brought our chairs out on the verandah. She gave me a small rocker that Walter always claimed as his "thinking" chair. He said it rested his body and left his mind free to think. We three were having a good, serious talk, when we heard Walter going from the sitting-room into the drawing-room, back through the sitting-room across the hall to the den, and Bessie said, "Walter is looking for his chair. He has something on his mind to-night." I was telling Dr. John how I longed to do something in our League, but I said, "You know I cannot sing, and I cannot speak, so what can I do?" Just as I stopped Walter bounded out onto the verandah, whistling one of the Con-

**"All may not live by preaching, but all may preach by living"**