

of sacerdotalism, illiberalism, antagonism to science, or any other of the terrible *isms* which have caused offence in the past. They will then, perhaps, be seen to deserve more credit for efficiency than that which is sometimes accorded to them. They will receive more sympathy in their uphill fight against evil, and in their dealing with problems far graver than any which confronted their fathers, in an age too ready hastily to condemn institutions without facing the alternative of supplanting them, too busy to look back or to look forward, and too prone at times to "judge according to appearance," in place of passing the true and "righteous judgment."



## Work among Children.

BY THE REV. R. F. DRURY, M.A.

**I**T is a mere truism to state that work in the interests of children and young people is of paramount importance in a parish. Our young people are the hope of the Church. They provide the clay in a plastic condition adaptable for any mould. They disclose the sources which control the issues. Theirs is the age of impression, of inquiry and assimilation; questions will be asked by the young inquiring minds, to which we are privileged to supply the answers. To them every path is a new path, they have not been this way heretofore. Every turn of the road adds zest to their search, since to them each day presents a new field for exploration.

The age of inquiry begins before the child can put a question in words: we cannot mistake the staring and questioning eyes of the babe of a few months old—eyes that are quick to detect the advent of a stranger, and that scan him from head to foot, and give their prompt verdict as to the desirability of cultivating his acquaintance.

Then, when developing intelligence is assisted by the ability to speak, the small child makes extensive use of the inter-

rogative, while both eyes and ears are employed in comprehending the explanations that are offered in reply.

Our diagnosis of the child subject which we desire to treat will at once assure us that we have a complex problem to deal with, owing to the varying combinations that constitute each individual. We will need to know and make allowances for the diversities in mind, heart, and will. It is obvious that the intelligent child will make the teacher's task more easy, though it is notorious that often the youth gifted with brains is lacking in ability to make full use of Nature's endowment, owing to having a disposition that rebels when steady application is essential to success.

The quick-witted boy is often and again the laziest of the lazy, while, on the other hand, there are numerous examples (of which we could all probably supply concrete instances) of the boy who is "as good as gold" and as regular as the sunrise, but who is as dull as a London fog.

Then, again, we meet similar problems, as in mental disposition, when we consider our subject on the emotional side. Some children are eager and responsive in the matter of personal affection towards those who are set over them; and if the teacher is not himself lacking in ability to make the exchange, progress may be reported as soon as this personal affinity is desried.

Much more difficult to meet are the young natures which shy at any approach in the name of authority, and whose submission is strictly temporary, while their allegiance is ever withheld. Experience teaches us that there is a way open to the heart of any child, if only its gate could be discovered, but in some stubborn cases it would seem as though the key had got buried, or, at least, were in the sole keeping of some favoured individual.

When we take into consideration the *wills* of our young people, we at once resort to the experience of the iron-founder, for here we encounter hard metal and shall require both furnace and tools. Mind and heart may have their extremes and

means, but the propensities of will are legion, from the will that insists on an independent lead to the will that is ever in the wake of other leadership. But herein lies the essence of individualism and here we have a force that processes and periods may mould and discipline.

Before leaving the general side of the personal problem to come to some particular considerations in relation to parish work, we must not omit to mention a giant factor which pairs with that of individuality. I refer to the important factor of parenthood. It may be that the ruling power in the home is the father, or it may be the mother; or if neither appear to hold the reins of government in their grip, we may safely prophesy that a ruling power will presently appear designated by the name "children," and this last-named alternative has spelt disorder and ultimately disaster in a thousand homes.

We will, however, focus attention upon the average instance where one or other of the parents holds the sceptre, and those of us who desire, in the name of the Church, to help to train up the child in the way it should go, will here, in a large measure, find either our hope or our despair. Experience, I suppose, hardly varies to any perceptible degree in any parish as regards the principle "Like parent like child," though, for weal or woe, exceptions in specific cases are frequent enough. How well we recall the disappointment when we discovered that all our pains and efforts over a stubborn child obtained no support from the parents, who have the power of saying the last word, as they have also the special right of resorting to chastisement or penalty. On the other hand, how gladly have we availed ourselves of the additional force for discipline in righteousness, when we have with confidence appealed to the parent, who fully appreciated the oneness of purpose in the discipline of Church and of home, and was only too pleased to strengthen the hands of those who, in the name of God, sought disinterestedly to assist in the bringing up of the child in the nurture and fear of the Lord.

Furthermore, the parents possess a power to neutralize or

confirm the efforts of the Church, arising from the fact that the formation of personal habits results at least as much from imitation as from instruction, and perhaps in most cases a great deal more from the former than from the latter; and when we compare the short time allowed for definite spiritual and moral instruction with the many hours of the day during which the young mind is open to other impressions, we are able to estimate the gigantic force of parental precept and example.

It is impossible to leave this part of the subject without just mentioning the obvious advantage of the atmosphere (so congenial to the formation of good character) created by our Church schools. The mere mention of this potent factor for truth and righteousness at such a time as the present should stir us to prayer and effort that a national calamity may be averted, whatever may be the final issue of the Bill at this time of political crisis.

For the particular treatment of my subject I propose a few subdivisions, which may assist the following and ultimate discussion of the subject, though these subdivisions cannot be kept very distinctly to their respective provinces owing to their interdependence.

I suggest these five divisions with regard to the work among parish children: (1) How to attract; (2) how to control; (3) how to teach; (4) how to test; (5) how to edify.

1. It is a matter of no small importance that the children whom we seek to educate and edify should take some personal interest, and, if possible, *pleasure*, in assembling themselves together to receive instruction. We have, in fact, to gather our audience before we commence our progressive operations. We may have perfect knowledge how to cook our bird, but we have first to catch it.

There are times when children will gladly attend a meeting in order to obtain shelter from cold or rain, since the game in the street has had to be abandoned, and the kitchen home shelter means good-bye to playmates, and being compelled to "sit still and keep quiet."

Then there are the ulterior motives that often contribute to the size of an audience, when it is known that there is a certain minimum of attendances necessary on the register in order to qualify for the annual treat.

There is, of course, in addition that most reliable guarantee of an attendance—namely, those children whose parents send them punctually and regularly to the meeting in question. These form the nucleus of the junior section of our parish organizations.

Let me suggest, then, in order to satisfy those who come to us under compulsion, and in order to attract others as voluntary attenders, that we do not hesitate to adapt ourselves to our living subjects. Let the method employed be child-like, but not childish. Let there be plenty of novelty, and occasionally something of mild sensation. This will require forethought. Many organizations in the interests of children have been killed or rendered ineffective for lack of fresh preparation on the part of the organizer and leader. Let there be something for volunteers to do, something to make, something to calculate, something to answer, someone to assist, or some commission to execute ; let small responsibilities be given and shared ; in fact, let it be their affair, not ours. Let us beware of old-time conventionality and humdrum routine which may effectually stifle interest and chill zeal. The time-honoured method of holding out prizes and rewards for punctual attendance, good conduct, and advanced work appears to keep as green as young life itself, and promises to be a method that will survive for all time. Occasional and incidental rewards have also a value in attracting an attendance and assisting to keep such attendance regular ; but, like most good methods in use, it needs to be safeguarded from abuse.

2. The problem how to control an assembly of young people is difficult to discuss, inasmuch as the prime factor is the individuality of the person in control. We are all familiar with the vehement tapping of the Sunday-school bell by an aggravated superintendent, who is already aware that the tinkle has lost something of its pristine cunning, and that some new recipe

for securing attention and maintaining order will have to be discovered or invented. We are also familiar with the fact that a silence that may be felt has often succeeded a babel and clamour of voices, which latter subsided with almost the suddenness of an explosion and coincident with the entry into the hall of the vicar or curate, or some respected lay authority.

Ability to secure and maintain discipline may possibly be acquired by experience; but it is seldom effectual if it is not a gift inborn. In the control of young people there must be something of the conventional order, so that the rules of discipline may be known by all concerned; but additional forethought and previous preparation must, nevertheless, be employed by all leaders who would hold sway and be ready for emergencies.

While I am well aware that the gradual reduction to submission of certain ill-disciplined and ungainly characters is one of the fine arts of the successful teacher, I strongly believe in the policy of ejection after fair trial, even though such subtraction play havoc with numerical statistics, being persuaded that the unruly are a persistent menace to the progress of our attentive children, whose efficiency is our most valuable asset.

3. In the method of teaching we again face the inevitable problem of "individuality," which is emphasized in the person of the teacher. The ruler can go so much further than the rules, or—shall I say?—the method is only second to the methodist.

We must guard against stooping down to the children or avoid building down to them from our pinnacle. We must go down to their level, and find out what they have made their own, and how far they have got; then, imbued with the indispensable gift of sympathy, we will touch their interest and soon absorb it, till we make a distinct advance, all thinking together, and all alike captivated with the aptness of the simple illustrations employed.

Then, the new truth once pinned may be hammered home, and a basement is prepared, solid and strong, for the layer that will be put down on the morrow: "Line upon line, precept

upon precept ; here a little and there a little." One might in passing just underline the "little"—recalling the occasions when a splendid impression has been ruined by the "afterthoughts" poured forth, or by the cramming of two mental meals into one meal-hour.

4. There are many methods of testing the knowledge which one has endeavoured to impart, but the familiar resort to question and answer is, after all, difficult to beat. This method is all very well if there is a "school" opportunity for examining *vivâ voce* or by written papers ; but a great field for exploration is open to the teacher who studies the unit members of his assembly, and knows them by name and befriends them. Much can be gathered concerning mental and moral progress by frequent personal intercourse with individual children, and as a rule such interest in the boys and girls opens a warm welcome at the home of the parents, who will often in their enthusiasm give valuable information as to the resultant conduct of their young people, due to their intelligent grasp of truths to which they were formerly strangers.

Further tests are involuntarily answered if we observe the pairing and grouping of the children in their friendships and cliques. Some boys are by nature "captains of industry," others are pre-eminently "opposition leaders" (not necessarily boys of Irish parentage), whilst a few are embryo Sunday-school superintendents.

5. In conclusion, we approach the solemn and significant problem, How to edify, and we hesitate before we suggest a solution. There is no short-cut to holy living, and we have already learned from experience that it is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. Purity and honesty are by no means inseparable twins with intelligence and industry, and how often have we lingered till late autumn in the hopes of garnering the fruits of increase after our patient seed-sowing, only to go home at eventide to report that the barns are ill-stocked, though the harvest is past and the summer is ended.

Yet let us hope, for the child-heart will ever respond to the

love of Him who took the children in His arms, and to the tender care of the Good Shepherd, who carried the lambs in His bosom, and who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not"; and, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." For, howsoever assiduous we pastors of souls may be, our discrimination at best lacks finality; whereas "God seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart"; and our Master has declared: "That many shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," and "there are first that shall be last, and last that shall be first."



## A New Hymnal.<sup>1</sup>

By E. H. BLAKENEY, M.A.

THE failure of the last (1904) edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" rendered it certain that a new hymn-book would, sooner or later, be issued, which should occupy the place that the compilers of the older collection had hoped for their own book. As a matter of fact, the present volume must have been in preparation for some years, for it is not possible that a work so thorough, so careful, and so full, should be the result of a hasty patching together.

Externally, "The English Hymnal" is very attractive—*simplex munditiis* would be no inadequate description. A comparison, too, between it and any other collection, on the ground of adequate editing, will at once decide criticism in its favour. Indeed, from the "mechanical" point of view, it would be difficult to improve upon the design of the present volume. The preface, occupying nearly thirty pages, lays down, from the outset, the principles upon which the compilers have worked; the table of contents is full enough for all practical purposes; the indices and "tables" at the end are pretty well exhaustive. Thus, for example, we have (1) a table of office hymns for Saints' days; (2) a list of hymns arranged for Sundays and Holy-days; (3) a list of simple hymns, suitable for Mission services; (4) a *metrical* index of tunes followed by an *alphabetical* index of the same; (5) index of composers; (6) index of authors; (7) an index of original first lines of translated hymns—Greek, Latin, Syriac, German, Welsh, Irish, Italian, Danish, Swahili; (8) a general index of first lines.

<sup>1</sup> "The English Hymnal": with Tunes. Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1906. Pp. xxviii, 968. Price 3s. net.