

HOW TO MANAGE A



"FOR my part," said Edith, "I never could understand what you found to do at Band of Hope meetings. I have been asked to help to form one in my own parish, but I have no idea how to set about it. You cannot go on saying 'don't drink' night after night; besides, children do not drink, and to put them under a pledge may either make little prigs of them, or give them a curiosity to taste the stuff as soon as they are grown up."

Barbara laughed. Kate took her friend's remarks more seriously.

"I am really surprised to hear a sensible girl talk in that way," she said. "However, you have come to the right person to cure your ignorance. Barbara can tell you all about the work; only let me just say that statistics unfortunately show that child-drunkenness, horrible as it is, not only does exist, but is increasing. And the very best safeguard against any sort of danger, surely lies in principles thoroughly learned in youth."

"You see," added Barbara, "it is not as though we really did say nothing but 'don't drink.' We try to teach the children why drink is hurtful, what it is made of and what is its effect upon the health and brain, and what it costs the nation, not only in the millions of money spent on intoxicants, but in lost work and wages and happiness. Many of them have object lessons very near home, poor little things. And at any rate they grow up without the habit of drink, and are able to consider the matter for themselves when they arrive at 'years of discretion.'"

"Well, I suppose there is something in it," Edith admitted, "and I am quite willing to learn. You, Kate, had an easy task in starting and managing your band, for your father being the rector you knew everyone in the place, and the children were sure to do anything you told them. Still, you can tell me what you do at your meetings. Do you make speeches?"

"I give them an address sometimes, and now and again we get a clergyman or other temperance worker—lady or gentleman—to come and say a few words; but in the country we have to do without much help from outside and to depend upon ourselves. I teach them

songs and recitations, and we have also musical drill. Flag and bell and fan drill are always popular with the children, and delight the parents when they come to see it at the entertainments. If you are ingenious you can make the fans and flags out of slips of wood and coloured paper, or can get them, and the bells also, from Messrs. Curwen & Sons."

"What is there 'temperance' about all that?"

"Nothing directly. Neither are our songs and dialogues always about temperance, although I endeavour to have a good proportion which impart temperance facts and principles. It is not very easy to find a constant supply of really good ones, but I have parcels down from the Band of Hope Union, the C. E. T. S., and the National Temperance League, and select those I think best; and there are very often pretty songs in the children's magazines. You must remember we want, first of all, the children to come and to like coming, so we make the meetings as bright and pleasant as possible, which is more effectual and better in every way than coaxing and begging for regular attendance as some people do."

"And you smuggle temperance in, like the powder in the jam?"

"If you like to put it in that way. But the powder is distinctly popular, for the children—especially the boys—are always eager for temperance pieces. Anything in the way of an action song or dialogue is sure to be liked, but it needs a good deal of patience to drill them in the action. Some are so comically stiff and shy about even holding out their hands, or pointing, or waving a flag."

"Ah! but it is worth the trouble, for what a pretty effect united action has!" put in Barbara. "I should dearly like to have those delightful drills, but our girls learn them at school, and our room would be hardly large enough. However, we are more ambitious in some other ways than Kate is. If we cannot manage flags and sashes all alike, we have half-a-dozen or so of the girls dressed up in caps and aprons as housemaids with brooms in their hands, or with rolling-pins and flour-dredgers as cooks, and introduce a little talk

about housekeeping or cookery, sometimes with practical expositions. They get many a useful hint as to home management—so important a part of temperance work—in that way; but I always ask my mother to look through the pieces, for they often need revision."

"That would suit me nicely," said Edith. "I love cookery, and I often say I should like to go in for the diploma and lecture upon it."

"You might do worse; anyhow, your knowledge can be introduced very usefully in Band of Hope meetings. Besides our dialogues, we manage services of song; they learn the tonic-sol-fa at school, so I had to learn it also, and we sing from that notation. Occasionally we have a little play or charade. Children are so fond of dressing up and pretending, and it is very easy and cheap to provide the simple get-up for fairies or gleaners, or grown-up folk, or whatever may be wanted."

"My father does not approve of performances that border so closely upon acting," Kate remarked. "But I am afraid you will consider we have too much jam and too little powder, Edith. The children learn bits of 'Alice' or 'Fauntleroy' by way of variety, or anything suitable I find in the children's magazines. One of the most successful efforts we have carried out was a kinderspiel called 'The Alphabet.' They did dress up in that to the extent of white pinafores, and big letters slung round their necks; and the lively words and tunes took their fancy greatly. There are other good kinderspiels and, of course, cantatas, but they are generally too difficult for our village children's intellects and musical powers."

"Kate has to depend upon teaching by ear," said Barbara, "but she has the choir-boys as a nucleus. I have only girls, so that restricts us in our choice of pieces."

"I suppose you would have too many if you had boys and girls together? Kate takes both, I know; the boys sit on one side the room, girls the other."

"Kate knows her children, and they are used to being taught together in school. In our town it is different; boys and girls have

Mary Gardner

separate schools, and I found them too much of a handful and too noisy when I tried her plan. One can do nothing with children unless there is some amount of discipline first of all, and though one does not want to be too severe, I am ashamed to say I have had to expel two of my girls; it grieved me dreadfully! How do you keep order, Kate?"

"I don't always find it easy," Kate admitted. "But as you say, I know the children and their parents, and that is a great advantage. I remember you wrote to me at the time about your girls, and said they only 'sauced' you when reprimanded, and were infecting the rest. I think you were right to send them away, as they seemed hopeless, for one must consider the effect on the rest, who would certainly take advantage if your authority was once lost—and also the reputation of the Band. If Band of Hope children incur the imputation of being ill-mannered and noisy, there are plenty of people ready to lay the blame on the meetings. I believe, too, in making the children regard the meetings as a treat which only good behaviour will obtain, and not in bribing them with teas and prizes as though their attendance were a favour to yourself."

"Then don't you give any prizes?"

"Yes. I set them temperance questions to answer, and papers to write. I used to have all that to do 'out of my own head,' and gave the subjects at one meeting and the answers the next; but last year we had a regular text-book, prescribed by the C. E. T. S., *First Teachings in Alcohol*, from which we had lectures all through the winter months, dealing with the composition of alcoholic drinks and their physical effect on the body. In the spring there was a regular examination, and prizes for the best papers. In fact, I gave a book to everyone who competed, in order to encourage them. Barbara, no doubt, had the same thing, as it was recommended generally by the society. Besides these prizes, we have medals for membership. The first medal—you get them from the Band of Hope Union—is for one year, and a bar is added to the ribbon every year until the fifth, when a larger and handsomer medal is substituted. The winners are very proud of their medals, I assure you, and several boys and girls have found them no small recommendation when going into situations; and when master or mistress sees the badge, it induces him or her, I feel sure, not to put temptation in the way, and even to take a little extra interest in the holder, and perhaps in the work also."

"That is part of the business in which I am perpetually envying you," said Barbara, with a heavy sigh. "I tried the medals; it seemed a lovely idea; but my girls are a terribly shifting lot, and those who stayed were continually losing their medals and crying out for fresh ones; I gave it up in despair. However, I adopted another plan for keeping order which has been very successful. Kate dismisses her Band row by row like a school, but that would not answer for me, so I make twelve of the oldest and best-behaved girls 'lieutenants,' decorate them with blue rosettes, and put them in charge of a couple of rows of the younger ones, their duties being not only to see that their charges leave in some sort of order, but to get out the music-books and put

them away, and be generally responsible for the behaviour in their part of the room. As the same girls are not there every time, I keep a list of two dozen or so to select from, and call up twelve at the beginning of each meeting, after the roll-call has been read, to fasten on their rosettes, which are looked upon as a badge of honour and authority."

"The roll-call? Do you mean to say you read over the list of members every time?"

"Certainly. Kate does it just before dismissing her class, but I begin with it in order to encourage punctuality. Besides, I am not so rigorous as Kate; I do give prizes for regular attendance, when it is combined with good conduct, and full marks are allowed only to those present at the roll-call. We start with a hymn; then the doors are shut and the roll is read, each girl there calling out 'present.' They used to reply in all manner of ways—'Yes, miss,' 'Here I am,' 'Yes, teacher,' 'That's me,' and so on; and one would reply for another—'There she is, teacher,' 'That's her with the red hair,' 'No, she ain't here, she's got to stay at home and mind the baby.' It was a regular gabble, and I could hardly hear my own voice. So we made the rule that each must speak for herself only, and simply say 'present.'"

"My members merely hold up their hands," said Kate, "but that plan is not safe unless the children are in good order and you know them well. I could fill up the list without going through the ceremony, but it is well for them to know that the record is kept, and helps to create a feeling of order and method. We begin with a hymn too, and then have prayer, and always close with another hymn and the Evening Collect."

"And I," said Barbara, "begin, as I said, with a hymn, then we have the lecture, followed by singing and the recitations and songs they are learning, and at the close the prayer on the membership card and the Doxology."

"And how many of you are there to manage your Band, Barbara?"

"Five; but we are not all there every time. I am secretary, keep the register and the cards, and give out all papers and notices, besides being general superintendent. A musical friend conducts the singing, which I could never undertake alone, especially as we have no piano. Three others sit among the girls, to keep an eye on their conduct, and one of them gives a short address or a reading once in a way. In this work there is plenty of room for people with different qualifications. If they are musical, that is a tremendous help; if they are methodical and have sufficient time to undertake it, there is the register, which ought to include looking up children who are irregular, or who need a word or two putting in at their homes. A little tact is wanted there, but I usually find the parents very willing to let them attend; several of my girls come from public-houses, one of whom won an attendance prize last year. Then the lectures call for another kind of cleverness; and anybody with new ideas who has energy and is fond of children is sure to have a welcome."

"I suspect patience is the first requisite of all," said Edith. "Don't you find month after month of it rather monotonous?"

"That is just what you must not let it

become; I don't say the new ideas come so often as they should, but that is because we do not have so many workers as we want. One of my helpers hit on the happy plan of exchange meetings among the different Bands in the town. When any Band has got up sufficient songs and recitations, or a service of song or cantata, the managers hire the Temperance Hall and invite the other Bands to come and hear the performance, or, if it is a smaller affair, they take a detachment of the children to provide an evening's programme in another schoolroom. And once a year, at least, we have a united meeting of all the Bands, church and chapel, in the hall, with special speakers to address them, and a procession through the town with banners and perhaps a band."

"Now it is my turn to be envious," said Kate. "We have no such grand doings in Maybury, and have to be content with calling in the fathers and mothers to admire us. Some of the children come to me at the Rectory to be taught special pieces; it is a tedious business to teach a new tune when none of them has an idea of it to begin with, and all have to learn by ear, and difficult too to teach a good recitation in the presence of a hundred impatient listeners. It is a rather popular plan for a dozen or half-a-dozen to say a piece together, but I do not like it; the children get to depend upon one another, and cannot recite with the same intelligence as when drilled individually."

"One thing I am sure of," struck in Barbara. "There is a want of bright and lively services of song, they are nearly all dismal and 'preachy'; and also of sensible natural dialogues. Perhaps you could do something in that line as well as the cookery, Edith?"

"There is no knowing what I may not do if I once begin," said Edith. "And I really feel half inclined to start a Band of my own. But, you know, it is *le premier pas qui coûte*. How did you first set about it, Bab?"

"Had tea and a talk with the friends I thought likely to help; then we asked the Vicar if he would be president and let us have the schoolroom, and the school teachers to give out notice of the meeting. Be sure to enlist the interest, if not the active help of the teachers, if you possibly can. We also begged a good Band of Hope speaker from another town to come and give an opening speech, and went round to as many people as we knew, to ask if they would let their children join. It is a rule not to admit children without the parents' consent. Thirty were admitted at the end of that first meeting; I always like one of the clergy to formally admit new members and sign their cards, and the children think more of it. But we had very hard work until we were used to the business, and it was not at all easy to secure helpers, for you see Band of Hope work does not make much show. But I love my class now, and get so much interested in my girls and so fond of many of them, that I should be very sorry indeed to drop it. Do start a Band, Edith! Kate will come and give you the opening address, and I will lend you some music!"

"You will have to fulfil that promise," was Edith's answer.

LINDA GARDINER.

