A MISSIONARY ALBUM.

Many people possess a quantity of old missionary magazines, full of interesting pictures of foreign scenes and people, which can hardly be retained indefinitely as they are; yet it is a pity to throw them away. Odd numbers can be utilised in an excellent fashion by cutting out the pictures and binding them together to form a missionary album. This will be found of great use either to lend to invalids, to suggest subjects for conversation at working parties, or to aid in teaching classes of young people. I know of one instance in which the making of one missionary album started quite a fresh interest in mission work, and put new life into various classes, stirring up young folks to read and learn about the people and scenes which had attracted their attention in the book. The album can be made of any size that is preferred; twelve inches by nine is rather a convenient shape, which will take in the largest sized pictures usually found in magazines.

The only requisite is good strong gum, which should be lightly applied to the edges of the pictures (after they are neatly cut and trimmed); they should then be placed on the pages very evenly and pressed down.

Some thought should be given to the arrangement of the book so as to make it illustrative and educational. The first page may have its title neatly illuminated either in pen and ink or colour. Then if we be undertaking the Palestine Mission, all the pictures relating to the Holy Land may be inserted. Sketches of the country, and mission houses, portraits of the workers, a picture of a camel bearing a great burden, a bedouin, anything bearing upon modern life, will tend to enrich the book. Someone hearing of the work may have a water-colour sketch, or photographs which he will kindly bestow upon our album, and thus the pages be gradually filled. The book will become in time a valuable record of the work going on throughout the world, if we take each country in turn and devote so many pages to illustrating its special points, in the way that Peterborough and other very few pictures with beginning, there will be found, I think, all the more pleasure in waiting and watching for treasure-trove wherewith to adorn our book.

Teachers often sigh over the lack of interest their scholars show in missionary work. Now I do not think it is at all difficult to create this interest if we set about teaching our classes in the right way. The instruction given must be made interesting and pictorial, and this demands not only some imaginative power, but also considerable knowledge of the subject of the teacher; if possible some objects to show the children should also be forthcoming. Perhaps an example will illustrate my meaning.

We will suppose that the subject of the lesson is to be Uganda, in British East Africa. Either a large map of the country must be held up before the children, or the teacher should show some slides or pictures; geographical outlines required. The great Victoria Nyanza lake, and the Sese, and other islands in it, the smaller Albert Nyanza lake fed by the River Nile, Kongo on the extreme west, north so far from the great dark forest in which Stanley and his party wandered so many months persecuted by the strange dwarf anthropods with their little arms and arrows; Mengo the capital, and all the other chief places of interest should be roughly sketched, or pointed out on the map. A picture of a native may be shown whilst a description is given of the dress, ornaments, colour of the skin, native weapons, etc. The difference between the neat white clothing of the missionaries, and the wild-looking savages will mark the change from heathenism to Christianity. If the teacher has well studied her subject, she should be able to give names of any of the boys or girls of the Uganda churches at the Sunday morning service. As many as a thousand native Christians may be seen devoutly following the service in their own language, singing the hymns and responding with a heartiness that would put many an English congregation to shame. After listening to the sermon with rapt attention, many of the hearers rise and come forward to deposit in the central aisle a bunch of flowers as a token of their gratitude to the church. They are but very poor and have no money, so they show their love to God by giving of the things of their daily life. Baskets of shells, bark cloths, beautifully prepared from a kind of fig-tree (the bark being torn off, beaten with mallets and sewed together with plantain fibre), mats, bowls, ivory, bundles of plantains or sweet potatoes. The pith grows to a great size, and if cut it is deposited a prayer of dedication is offered; the benediction given, and the service is ended.

Teaching is sure to interest children and a wise teacher will not fail to find that a lesson in which there is a little sympathy and love into the young hearts that can henceforth picture in some degree the kind of life lived in far-away Africa. Each week some fresh place in the mission field may be chosen and illustrated in the same way, and if articles from foreign countries can be shown and explained there will be no difficulty in holding the attention of the children, for they love to see something real that they can handle and examine for themselves. The missionary album will often be in request, as its pictures will throw light upon various points under discussion.

If the class is in connection with a working party, part of the produce of the week’s work sold may be set apart for the maintenance of a little child in a foreign mission field. I have known this idea carried out with excellent effect, the child being keenly interested in their little India, giving letters reporting to any information about her daily life, and sometimes writing simple child-like letters to her. Child’s maintenance in South India costs about three pounds a year, and in other places it may be a little less or more. If it is possible to set apart ten pounds a year, then a cot in a comfortable home of one of the Uganda churches at the Sunday morning service. As many as a thousand native Christians may be seen devoutly following the service in their own language, singing the hymns and responding with a heartiness that would put many an English congregation to shame. After listening to the sermon with rapt attention, many of the hearers rise and come forward to deposit in the central aisle a bunch of flowers as a token of their gratitude to the church. They are but very poor and have no money, so they show their love to God by giving of the things of their daily life. Baskets of shells, bark cloths, beautifully prepared from a kind of fig-tree (the bark being torn off, beaten with mallets and sewed together with plantain fibre), mats, bowls, ivory, bundles of plantains or sweet potatoes. The pith grows to a great size, and if cut it is deposited a prayer of dedication is offered; the benediction given, and the service is ended.

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