

little green balls about the size of a walnut were brought upon a platter. Dr. Holub did not understand what these balls were, and the interpreter called out, "Smell them, sir!" They were of the nature of soap. In the evening, Dr. Holub supped, in the palace, with Sepopo and the queen; boiled eland flesh was served upon plates, and knives and forks—introduced by traders from the West Coast—were supplied. Honey beer was distributed in tin mugs. The king is described as by no means honest. In the course of the night our travellers saw him rummaging among the goods, and his majesty walked off with a waggon-lantern that the English trader had refused to give him during the day. Sepopo now and then, it appears, treats his people with inhumanity; he has a delight in human sacrifices, and against the advice of his council, perpetrates superstitious barbarities.

And here we must close our notice of this work. Illness seized the traveller, and he was compelled to return to the Colony. He embarked on board the *German* in 1879, bringing with him a splendid collection. We have only to add that, in regard to the Zulu war, he is of opinion that Sir Bartle Frere acted with the wisdom of a statesman.

ART. IV.—UPPER CLASS SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

THE question is not unfrequently asked, What is the future of Evangelical religion? What will be the state of the Evangelical body fifty years hence? The answer is not difficult: the future will be, under God's good pleasure, what the present makes it. It rests with us of the present day to bring up the children of this generation so as to ensure the growth and stability of the great Evangelical body in the time to come. And how is this to be done?

Let us take a fair view of the religious education of the children of the middle and upper classes, and see where it is likely to lead them. First of all, is it an uncommon thing for the children of decidedly Evangelical parents to go out into the errors either of scepticism or of superstition? Have not many families been saddened by the utter division of the children on the most important of all matters? And is not this in many cases attributable to the very imperfect education which has been given in the distinctive teaching and the technical knowledge of the doctrines of grace? Many words rise to the lip, many well-worn phrases rise to the tongue; but too often there is no real knowledge at the root, no power of giving a reason for

the hope that is in them ; and therefore the intellectual leaven or the carefully-prepared scheme of superstitious dogma finds a ready entrance to the ill-kept, ill-arranged citadel.

Again, what vagueness of idea seems to hold in many minds as to the boundaries between our Church and Nonconformity ! Very many grown-up people of both sexes who take a prominent position as Christians, and who indulge without hesitation in religious controversy, are utterly ignorant both of the letter and the spirit of the Articles of our Church. Many well-educated persons believe that the point of difference is merely a matter of preferring extempore or liturgical prayer, and many excellent people mix up scraps from different schools of thought, in an utterly heterogeneous compound, and then wonder that they are perplexed and troubled again and again by religious difficulties. "Brethren, these things ought not so to be."

The present paper proposes to deal only with one remedy—that which may be called "Upper Class Sunday Schools," which may be defined as the gathering together the children of the upper classes on Sundays, under competent teachers, to receive systematic religious training similar to that given in a good Sunday school of the ordinary type.

"Certainly not," many of our readers will exclaim. "The home is the proper Sunday school. Nothing ought to interfere with the home teaching." Once for all, let us realize the fact that the parent is the person who is responsible to God for leading the little heart to the knowledge of Him ; to no other can be delegated that precious trust ; on no other can the responsibility devolve, but still there is ample room for our upper class Sunday school.

Let us remember that we are contending for systematic religious instruction and clear teaching on all the doctrines of the Gospel, and of that Church which is the pillar and ground of the truth. Now look at the teaching power in many homes—not as it ought to be, but as it is.

The father has possibly been engaged in professional duties all the week ; his mind wants a rest. He may have great power as a doctor, or as a lawyer, or as a financier, and yet be far from being either a successful or a taking teacher. His explanations may be very well meant, but very hazy ; the child may puzzle the father, and then it is no uncommon result that the mind, unsatisfied in its researches, becomes estranged from the parent in the very highest matters, instead of feeling that confidence and trust which is the closest bond on earth. The mother, too, with her numerous duties and cares, with perhaps younger children needing more of her time on a day when naturally every effort is made to spare servants, may be by no means the best teacher in the details of Christian doctrine. She

is of course the one who, with the father, is particularly bound to take her children to the Saviour, to show them the beauty of holiness, to make their Bible a loved book, and the times of prayer times of gladness. It is from her lips that the "sweetest name" is to sound, and sound the sweetest; but for all that, she may be by no means the one whose teaching will either be always available or always the best in the doctrines of the Gospel.

There is yet another point to be considered in favour of the "Upper Class Sunday School." Sunday is sometimes a very long and somewhat dull day to the children of Christian parents; the idea is more clear as to what they are not to do than as to what they are to do, and so sometimes children think of Sunday as a day on which they are losers rather than gainers; and anything is to be deprecated, and if possible avoided, which gives a child a gloomy view of that day which is "the Lord's" own day.

If, on the other hand, one hour or an hour and a half be spent at the Sunday school, involving, as it should do, some amount of previous preparation, in which parents are consulted and interested, there is at once something to look forward to, companions to meet, just a little touch of emulation, a kind of teaching that does not come in exactly any other way, and a measuring of the little individual against others, which goes far to keep down pride and self-sufficiency, whilst at the same time it teaches a child a great deal more about himself or herself than is otherwise likely to be known.

Many difficulties will occur to the mind as attaching to the plan here suggested; but although incompetent teachers, a somewhat mixed company, and the other difficulties attendant on all Sunday schools may occur, still, in the opinion of the writer of this Paper, who has himself tried the experiment for nearly four years, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

But of course there must be the greatest possible care taken on the part of those who have the management, to ensure the proper carrying on of such a school; first of all, it should be definitely attached to one particular church, and under the guidance of one particular clergyman. This is most important, as otherwise there is no real guarantee for what is taught, and changes in teachers or superintendents may involve a diversity even of doctrines taught, in that teaching, the systematic and accurate character of which is of such great importance. Whatever be the duties and relations between a clergyman and the teachers of an ordinary Sunday school, it is beyond all things necessary that if he undertake one of the sort which we are now advocating, he meet his teachers constantly, and furnish them in the rough with the materials for their lessons. And the lessons should aim very pointedly at instruction; of course this should

be the aim of all Sunday-school lessons ; but in the case before us we must remember that the need of systematic instruction is the very *raison d'être* of such schools, and therefore time must not be wasted in the mere technicalities of Sunday school, but something definite, and something carefully selected and well worked out, must be actually taught. It is not well to presuppose a great deal of knowledge—far better begin at the beginning, and secure the actual giving of that real knowledge ; children have very little idea of their ignorance, or of the indefiniteness of their knowledge, until they come to measure themselves by others, and then great gentleness and encouragement is needed, lest the discovery of ignorance or inaccuracy before unsuspected become a damper and a hindrance to the little scholar.

A most important matter is the selection of teachers : these must be all of good social position, for it is essential that they shall be on equal terms with all whom they have to teach, and any mistake on this point is simply fatal. Then they must be well educated, and capable of dealing with and answering the questions which will come from the children as soon as they are sufficiently at home to express their difficulties ; they must have their hearts in the work, for no one is quicker than a child to detect anything the least approaching to unreality, and they must be, as far as one can judge of another, decided Christians. Far better to have fewer teachers, and, even if it must be so, a smaller school, than run the risk of difficulties by admitting teachers of the wrong sort.

Next, as to discipline. This must be most firmly, but unobtrusively, maintained. Good conduct must be one of the principal conditions of admission, and a high tone of "honour" must pervade the whole. It should be set clearly before the children that "punishment" must be unheard of, for the simple reason that the conduct must be such as never to require it, and to this end it may be well for the superintendent to admit all children wishing to join, not at the school on Sunday, but at her own house—for it is taken for granted that the superintendent will be a lady—during the week previous.

Another point of importance is the learning of lessons for the Sunday class, either collect, hymn, passage of Scripture, or, in some cases the Articles of our Church, and also, when practicable, the writing answers to questions on the lesson which has been given. This plan not only helps the memory of the child and fixes the lessons upon its mind, but, as has been said before, it brings the parents into connection with the school work—it lets them know what kind of instruction is given, and gives them a share in carrying it out—it enables them to satisfy themselves what their child is taught, and to see how much it learns.

But after all, it may be said, does not public catechizing meet this want, or cannot it be supplied by home instruction given on a fixed plan, such as that devised and adopted with great success by Canon Richardson? The answer is, that in the judgment of the writer neither of these plans really meets the case. Systematic instruction may be *given* in catechizing, but there is not the same power of ensuring its reception and its being actually understood. A few children, either specially intelligent or specially forward, may get all the catechizing to themselves, and the more timid or more ignorant get no good out of it at all; and, further, the catechizing, from its very conditions, will take away much of the freedom and the pleasure of learning which is to be found in the Sunday school, while the plan of settled lessons to be taught at home, and questioned upon once a month in church, as suggested and carried out by Canon Richardson, though admirable and helpful, does not seem quite to hit the mark we are aiming at; for the instruction given three Sundays out of four will be very variable, and the catechizing on the fourth Sunday will embrace so wide a field that many will come very short of the elementary teaching that they want, whilst the advantage of learning in the midst of a small body of companions will be lost altogether.

One point remains to be alluded to on this important subject—that is, the bond of Christian fellowship that is thus established. Friendships are formed in the Upper Class Sunday School which will last through life. A union of Christian children is thus made, who, as they grow up together, will become a power, and a united power, for good in a place. Religion becomes the uniting link, and a link which will become stronger as years go on; and so there is the beginning of a real union for the work of the Lord, which we, as a body, seem sadly to lack at the present time. Of course, the plan has many difficulties—nothing that is good is without them—but it has succeeded. And doubtless wherever it is attempted in a prayerful spirit, humbly seeking and following the Master's guidance, it will succeed. At any rate, one thing is clear, we must, either by this or by some other means, give our children a clearer and more definite education in the saving truths and doctrines of our faith, if they are to be fitted to contend with the numerous enemies of that faith, who are to be found both within and without the borders of the Church to which we belong.

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