

HOW THE UTOPIA MISSION BAND HOLDS ITS ANNUAL MEETING.

BY ANNIE E. MELLISH.

"Hurrah for the sea shore! Hurrah for the Mission Band! Hurrah for our annual meeting."

Such are the cries that arise from over fifty merry hearted children as they leave behind them the heat and dust of the city for the delightful sea breezes of the North Shore.

"Whose children are these, and to what place do they belong?" asks a curious stranger.

"Why, these are the members of the Utopia Mission Band off for their annual meeting and picnic."

"You do not mean—it is not possible that they hold their annual meeting in connection with a picnic? The ladies out west claim that this is the most important meeting of the year."

"So it is here, and the President of the Band realizing this fact and knowing that it is impossible to gather together her scattered flock so soon after the summer's frolic, uses this means of uniting business and pleasure. The effect is marvellous."

"No doubt," continues the still critical stranger "but is it not making light of the sacred cause of missions to hold a meeting amid the excitement of an hilarious group of children at a picnic?"

"So one would naturally suppose; but when children have been romping and playing for hours they are sufficiently tired to sit still and enjoy a good substantial supper. This meal over all march to a beautiful grove on the river's brink, singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers?'"

"And do they hold their meeting there?"

"Yes! The President takes her seat on a small bank of moss, and, surrounded by the children, conducts the meeting the same as if in the church parlor. It is surprising how well they behave, but of course they have been educated up to it and enter into the spirit of the meeting with much vigor and gusto. Reports bright and concise are heard and passed from every committee. The election of officers by nomination and ballot follows, and their work is assigned thus:

President—General manager and presiding officer over first meeting of each month.

1st, 2nd and 3rd vice-Presidents—Presiding officers over the meetings alternately.

Recording Secretary—Reads the minutes.

Assistant Secretary—Calls the roll.

Corresponding Secretary—Conducts the correspondence.

"Palm Branch" Secretary—Canvasses for "Palm Branch" and reports her success at the meeting.

Assistant "Palm Branch" Secretary—Assists in the distribution.

Programme Secretary—Records members' names alphabetically and appoints in turn four each week on the programme committee.

Treasurer—Keeps the funds and faithful record of same.

1st Assistant Treasurer—Takes up collection.

2nd Assistant Treasurer—Credits the amount given by each toward membership fee.

Mite-box Secretary—Her office is to see that every member has a mite-box, and to read an article on the subject at Band, once a month.

Auditor—Audits the accounts. This office is generally filled by the retiring President.

Lookout Committee—Three are appointed to look out for new members, call on absentees and report at each meeting.

Scrap Album Committee—A committee of four have charge of scrap albums and collect from members, and others, items on the different mission fields. Competition is keen in order to have the longest column at the end of the month.

Organist—Accompanies the singing with organ.

Musical Leader—Assigns to each member her place in the Band chorus according to their respective vocal powers. Is also held responsible for good singing.

Of course the constitutional three are added, making a grand executive of twenty-six members.

Suggestions on different plans of work are heard and held over for consideration until the next meeting.

The selection of the yearly "prayer motto" is both pathetic and interesting. A number of original verses are read, and all agree that the choice should be the one written by a little flaxen-haired girl of nine summers. It runs thus:—

We want to save the heathen
Who live far o'er the sea,
So loyal to our church and Band
Oh help us Lord to be!

The closing hour has come at last. All join hands and sing "From Greenland's Icy Mountains."

Look! my skeptical friend, Look!! What could be more sublime? The sun in all his majestic grandeur is gradually disappearing from view. The radiant sky, illuminated with the harmonious tints of purple, red and gold, casts its reflection on the rippling waters underneath. So, under the very smile of Heaven, looking far out over the waters and thinking of those beyond who bow down to wood and stone, this faithful Band of little workers sing with heart and soul:

"Waft, waft ye winds the story,
And you, ye waters roll,

The chorus rings forth loud and clear. Back in yon distant farm the busy farmer stops his work, reverently removes his hat and murmurs the dear familiar words. The blithe milkmaid slackens her quickened pace—listens—and snatches up the song. Still out o'er the briny deep the chorus swells. The heart of the lonely fisherman is touched. It is the hymn his mother used to sing. So with the foaming waters round him, with arms clasped and eyes uplifted to Heaven, he, too, joins in the grand old anthem.

"Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from Pole to Pole."

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

Ramabai is held over for another month.