

PAINFUL FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE SOCIETY.

(Translation.)

Pointe aux Trembles, June 13, 1848.

Sir, and Dear Brother in Jesus Christ,—As the Committee is to meet to-night, I think that it will be important to consider the pecuniary state of the society, in order to know what we should do respecting the pupils, who are expected back next week, (the termination of the vacation.)

We have no more meat; and we have to buy everything else except milk. We have too few cows; and need potatoes and oats to sow, as well as for the horses. I have to pay the men who make the fence, and one who takes out stones. I have borrowed some pounds, and we owe a considerable sum to Mrs. A. (a grocer), besides some other little debts. Our position is therefore such, that we must either diminish the causes of expense or receive more help.

I salute you heartily in Jesus Christ.

(Signed) J. E. TANNER.

To Mr. John Dougall, Sec. French Canadian Miss. Society.

As will be seen from the foregoing letter, addressed by the Rev. Mr. Tanner, Director of the Pointe aux Trembles Educational Institutes, to the committee, at its last meeting, the affairs of the French Canadian Missionary Society have come to such a crisis that these establishments are actually without the necessaries of life, and this, too, during the vacation, when the number of mouths to feed is reduced to the minimum.

The letter was accompanied by a requisition for the amount necessary to meet the pressing engagements which it sets forth; but there was no means of complying with this requisition. The treasury is overdrawn upwards of £200, and nothing has been received, from any quarter, since the beginning of this month, except £1, and that was from a lady after she heard of the present destitution. We cannot call upon the friends in Montreal, who have already done much, and who are now suffering under an unexampled depression. And, to add to our distress, we have reason to fear that Canada is forgotten by many warm friends in Britain and the United States, in the midst of the much louder and more exciting calls for missionary aid from France, Italy, and Ireland.

This concurrence of circumstances strongly impressed the committee with the necessity for circumspection; for if it be the duty of the Lord's people to go forward when the Pillar of cloud and fire sets forward, it must be equally their duty to stand still when it rests. The committee therefore had no choice but to resolve, that pupils should only be received back at the Institutes—male and female—in proportion to the means that came in. In accordance with this principle, only half the number that had left are to be received back at the termination of the vacation; pains being taken, however, to explain, that it is not want of will, but want of food, that hinders their reception now, and that hopes are entertained of receiving them back shortly.

But however unavoidable, this is a very hard and painful step to take. In the first place, it is a step backward, and the first in that direction, if we remember right, that this society has made. In the second place, the pupils are exceedingly anxious to come, and they manifest pleasing alacrity not only in learning but in labouring. In the third place, there are in addition to the scholars formerly admitted, (viz., about 60 French-Canadian boys, and 25 French Canadian girls, in the two schools), applications from at least 20 additional French Canadian youths, some of them from parishes which have never before sent any scholars, and from 10 or 12 additional girls. It will thus be seen that, owing to pecuniary distress, we are not able to receive more than the third part of the French Canadians who are seeking for instruction, and willing to receive the Gospel, and who, in addition, are willing to work for their living on the farm, so far as they are required.

Will this state of things not prove a call to the Christian friends who have hitherto aided this society, to redouble their exertions and induce many others to lend their aid? The Committee feel themselves precisely in the position of agents, who can decide nothing of themselves respecting the extent of the Society's operations. The Christian public must decide this matter for them. One thing is certain, there is an open door set before this evangelical enterprise in Lower Canada—a door long prayed for and laboured for, but scarcely expected—a door which all the power of popery cannot shut; and the only question for Christians to decide, is whether they will enter in or neglect this their day of opportunity and privilege.

The committee are also under the painful necessity of intimating, that the loan upon the Pointe aux Trembles Institution of £1612, must be repaid in about six months. For making up this sum, as well as the current expenses of the establishment, they have no resource but to cast themselves upon the Lord and his people.

PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST ANNUAL REPORT.

A deputation from the Committee made a visit to the greater part of the Stations in the month of February, a brief report of which will be found in another column.

A conference meeting of the Ministers, Colporteurs, and Committee of the Society was held in Montreal on the 1st March, at which various matters of great importance to the efficiency of the mission, were carefully discussed, and resolutions adopted, which, it is hoped, will tell largely upon the spiritual interests of the French Canadian people. All parties engaged in this meeting, it is believed, felt their zeal and strength augmented, and it was thought best to hold such a meeting at least annually. All the Missionaries were present except Mr. Wolff, who was absent in New Orleans, and Mr. Solandt, who was in the District of Quebec. A public meeting was held in the evening, and on the following evening a public religious service in the French language.

At this convocation it was resolved only to distribute Martin's translation of the Scriptures, in order that families and congregations may not be distracted by a variety of translations. It was also resolved to write to the Committee of Geneva to send a minister for the Industry Circuit, an additional teacher for the Pointe aux Tremble Institute, and two additional colporteurs—one for the city of Montreal.

In accordance with these resolutions, the British and Foreign Bible Society was addressed for a large supply of Bibles and Testaments; and the Committee at Geneva for the four missionaries above described. From the former we have a favorable answer, but have not heard from the latter.

In the month of March last, Madame Doudiet, with the consent and approbation of the Committee, opened a School at Belle Riviere, for young Canadian Girls, of whom she received seven at first as boarders, and is ready to receive as many day scholars of the same age and sex from the surrounding population, as may be willing to attend. Beds, bedding, some clothing, &c., were provided by the Ladies' Committee of Montreal, aided by the ladies of St. Andrew's and vicinity. This school, under the able and zealous superintendence of Madam Doudiet, promises to be very useful, not only to the scholars, but in giving Madame Doudiet opportunities of conversing with visitors, although none of the villagers have yet seen meet to send their daughters as day scholars.

In the month of March, an important meeting was held in Quebec for the advancement of the missionary work among the French Canadians, when a series of resolutions was passed, which will be found in another column, and a handsome collection taken up. The publication of these resolutions excited much animosity on the part of the priests, who in several cases read them from the pulpit or altar, and warned their people against the colporteurs and their Bibles. A paper published in Quebec, the Spectator, in speaking of the promoters of this effort says: "Should they carry their impertinence so far as to trouble the peace of our habitants with their colporteurs and tract-mongers, we hope Les Canadiennes will give them a specimen of their skill in broom exercise." An Irish writer in the same paper says:—

"I do not pretend to be a formidable theologian, nevertheless, I would suggest a method of reasoning which I have seen employed in other places with wonderful effect: I mean broomstick argument. This is a weapon which every housewife has at her ready disposal; and if some charitable journalist would condescend to instruct Les Canadiennes in the management of this formidable polemic, I'll be bound my countrywomen will do their duty without the aid of a tutor."

We thus see what are the arguments of Romanism, and perhaps the best it has.

In April last, the Ladies' Committee resolved to undertake the erection of a suitable building for the Girls' School, and would have proceeded with it immediately but for the scarcity of money. Their appeal for aid to Christians in general, and especially to ladies who feel an interest in the Scriptural education of French Canadian Females, will be found in this sheet.

THE FARM.

Owing to the arrival of a farmer from Scotland this spring, and the purchase of two first-rate Canadian horses with carts, &c., together with the hard work of the teachers and pupils, the farm is now generally under cultivation, and the fencing is going forward rapidly. If the crops prove good this year, the produce of this fine farm will be great, and thus the ability of the Institute to receive pupils will be much increased.

The Institute at Pointe aux Trembles will be in a better position for receiving English boys this summer than it has been heretofore, and the system adopted of requiring them to labour in the same manner as the French Canadians, works well. From two or three cases that have come under the observation of the writer of this notice, he would judge, that English scholars, while learning French, make as good progress in the general branches of education, as they do in good English Schools.

REVIVING SUPERSTITION OF ROMANISTS.

When the typhus fever raged in this country last year, the Bishop of Montreal, who nearly fell a victim to that scourge, vowed a gilt image to the Virgin, together with a picture of "Our Lady of Bonsecours" (one of the Virgin's titles) chasing away the typhus from Montreal. And this spring he has remembered his vow to fulfill it. The image has been prepared, and was installed last month with extraordinary pomp and ceremony; indeed, the procession bearing it filled up some of our chief thoroughfares, and as it took place on the forenoon of the Lord's day, hindered part of the Protestant population from passing to and from their places of worship.

The Bonsecours Church, an old building which was formerly a pilgrim shrine, was decorated with flags and devices for the occasion, and is in future to be a sort of Canadian Loreto. The Bishop has issued a Mandement or pastoral letter stating, that Canada has never enjoyed tranquility or prosperity since an image of the Virgin, which formerly stood in that church, was stolen a number of years ago—that there has been an unbroken series of calamities ever since that sacrilegious event, such as cholera, failure of crops, rebellion, and typhus; and that if the Canadians would escape a continuance of such woes they must return to the adoration of the Virgin with increased earnestness and vigor, as the special protectress of this city and people. He even suggests a return to the use of the ancient name of this city, viz. Ville-Marie, instead of Montreal. In accordance with these sentiments he invites and commands all the faithful, not only of Montreal and the neighbourhood, but of all parts of Canada, when they visit this city to make a pilgrimage to the church of Bonsecours with its gilt image and picture, and there to invoke and praise the Virgin, in doing which, they will, he avers, secure great blessings. Thus the remedy pointed out to a people perishing of idolatry and superstition, is not a return to the worship of the true God, but an increase of idolatry and superstition!

We understand that the better instructed Roman Catholics have pity and deplored the whole of this puerile exhibition, but the Bishop has prevailed in carrying it out, although like the exhibition of the Holy Coat of Treves, it may prove far from beneficial to Roman Catholic Unity.

AN AGED DISCIPLE.

Madame Rondeau, of St. Elizabeth, died on the 24th April, in the peace of the Gospel, at the age of 83 years. She had been converted, not only from Romanism, but to Christ, by means of this mission, at the age of about 78, and has maintained a walk and conversation becoming a follower of Christ since. Although blind, she manifested much intelligence, and was useful to her family and others, by means of her pious conversation, and her end was so tranquil, that she might almost, literally, be said to fall asleep in Jesus. Mr. Tanner writes us—"There was no Protestant Cemetery at the place. Mr. Rondeau, her son, also a convert, chose a suitable place on his farm, and with the help of the brethren present, enclosed it properly, in which the body of our aged sister was laid, to wait till it shall be raised up incorruptible and glorious. Of all this excellent woman's numerous descendants, there were only the family of her son, above mentioned, and one

of her daughters who ventured to attend her funeral. There were, however, some Canadian and English friends, who accompanied the body to the grave. Some Romanists gathered round a neighbouring house, and disturbed the solemnity by cries and insults; but, even in this painful predicament, our friends conducted themselves as persons possessed of a living faith, and I hope their deportment on that occasion will prove a sermon that will bring forth fruit."

PLAN FOR EVANGELIZING CANADA.

The annual cost for pupils at Pointe aux Trembles Institute is about £8 each, and the education they receive is not only calculated to fit them for usefulness in a worldly point of view, but on account of their careful moral and religious training to prepare them for the higher duties of colporteurs, teachers, and evangelists. To support this institution will, in all probability be the most economical as well as most effectual plan that can be adopted for the evangelization of Canada. Will not churches, Sabbath schools, and individuals come forward to support each one or more scholars at £8 a piece annually?

The Treasurer of this Society, Mr. James Court, being called in the providence of God to visit Britain this summer, is affectionately commended to the friends of the Redeemer in the Fatherland. He may be addressed to the care of Messrs. Dennistown, Bryce, & Co., Glasgow.

The Committee has not, for some time, stated the number of French Canadian converts in Church fellowship at the different Stations, because, though some new conversions have been taking place, they are counterbalanced by emigration to the United States or other parts of Canada. The reason for this emigration is obvious:—A convert has much to suffer in the way of opprobrium and petty persecution on the part of his relations and neighbours, and as he can get more employment and better wages by emigrating to the States at any rate, he sometimes escapes from his irksome position here, unless retained in it by some strong call of duty. But although lost to our Mission Stations, the emigrating converts are not lost to the cause of Christ, and we occasionally hear of their welfare, as well as of the beneficial influence they exert.

On account of the History of the Society contained in this sheet, and the frequent representations of friends at a distance that we circulate too few Records, there will be a large edition of the present number thrown off, so that any friend may have a supply for distribution on application to the publisher, Mr. John C. Becket.

VISIT OF THE REV. P. WOLFF TO NEW ORLEANS.
To the Secretary of the F. C. M. Society.

Montreal, 20th June, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,—After a long inland journey of 7000 to 8000 miles, I have finally returned to Montreal to resume my missionary duties in connection with the French Canadian Missionary Society. Happily, I can thank God that he has prospered me in the object of my visit to New Orleans, and granted success beyond my expectation to my efforts. I started in January last, at the urgent request of the Evangelical Society of New York, and of others, to visit New Orleans, and see what could be done for evangelizing the French population of Louisiana, the most numerous and important of that origin in the United States. As soon as I arrived, I commenced preaching in French regularly every Sabbath, and continued for a period of three months. I had but few hearers at the beginning, but those who once came generally returned, and many brought their friends with them. The congregation slowly but steadily increased. The attendance was soon 30 to 40, and at the last Sabbath of the second month it increased to about 50. I had selected my place of worship in the midst of the French population; but as there was no Protestant church built in that part of the city, I had to use two large rooms. This, I understood, was objectionable to many, who would not compromise themselves to attend worship in a private house, but might be induced to come to a public place, such as a church. In consequence, for the last month I removed to the Presbyterian Church of Lafayette Square (Dr. Scott's), the largest in the city; at the same time a member of the congregation had a notice of the meeting put in the principal French papers. By the providence of God the immediate results of that step were astonishing. The congregation was never since under 100 hearers, and even once considerably above. Every Sabbath was marked by considerable additions; and when, at the expiration of the three months, I closed the services, it was evident to all the friends of the cause, that by faith and perseverance a respectable French congregation might be gathered at no distant time, and that this important station should be occupied without delay. The congregation was a highly intelligent one, many of the members having received a classical education. Some of them were Catholics, some French Protestants, who had not been to church for 15 or 20 years. I had not to contend so much against bigotry and superstition as against intelligent infidelity, which is widely spread in New Orleans amongst the French. The priests did not interfere with my efforts: their influence is small, and a prohibition on their part would, I was assured, have immediately given me a crowded audience. At the request of many I administered the Lord's Supper, when 35 communicants partook of it—some of these were Roman Catholic converts who enjoyed that blessing for the first time; many abstained from it, not feeling sufficiently prepared. After the service, a Roman Catholic told me, "I felt my heart burning within me with a desire to commemorate with you the death of Jesus Christ, but I refrained, because I felt I wanted yet more light and faith." The day I left New Orleans, a letter was handed to me on the boat, written by the Presbyterian clergy, and signed by all the pastors, seven in number, expressing their approbation of my ministry amongst them, and their desire that I should come back to reside permanently as a settled pastor in New Orleans. The principal members of the French congregation I have gathered have given me a call to the same effect. The document, which is numerously signed, is not yet in my hands; but one thing which shows how much they are in earnest is, that they pledge themselves in that document to support their pastor from their contributions. I have not as yet accepted the call, and have delayed for some time an answer. If I do not see my duty to accept the call, I shall see it at all events to do my utmost to secure for that interesting little congregation a competent and evangelical clergyman.

PHILIPPE WOLFF.