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ASSESSMENT SYSTEM.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING.

The near approach of the greatest and the grandest of all the Christian festivals, with its divine message of peace to men of good will, and its sacred associations of earthly ties and heavenly love, naturally suggests the joyous and familiar greetings which flow spontaneously to all lips during the holiday season. It would therefore ill become me if I did not gladly seize this most suitable of all occasions and this best of all channels to conform to a time-honored custom, and, while reiterating my thanks for the honor done me by my brethren of the C. M. B. A. in electing me their Grand President, to heartily wish them, far and wide throughout the Dominion, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." The coming anniversary of the Nativity is the first upon which it has been given to me to preside over the destinies of our great Association, and the thoughts which crowd my mind at such a time, naturally come so thick and fast that I find it difficult to express them all, even if I had the audacity to so far trespass on your valuable time. However, let me briefly say that the familiar Christmas greeting, which in too many cases sounds so hollow and conventional, conveys a deeper and holier meaning when exchanged between the members of the brotherhood of the C. M. B. A. We should and can never forget that "the good tidings of great joy," which were flashed from heaven over the bleak hills of Judea nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and which heralded the coming of the Christ Child and His wondrous mission of human redemption, with its glorious message of "peace on earth, good will to men," were the precursors of that spirit of brotherly and neighborly love, of God-like charity, which have revolutionized this world of ours and which it is the great object of our Order, after the example of its Divine Model, to inculcate and extend. We may, perhaps, in our day never hope

to witness the universal brotherhood of man, but we can at least do our feeble mortal share by our example and teachings, by the cultivation of fraternity and, above all, by the exercise of love and charity towards our neighbors as towards ourselves, to help on the great doctrine of moral and material regeneration involved in the mystery of the Incarnation. And with the blessing of God and of His Holy Church, which He came on earth as a feeble and lowly Infant to found, we shall continue to do this, confident in the success of our heavenly mission and seeking by all the means in our power to extend to our fellow-Catholics the benefits of our organization. Unlike the Messiah, we may not be able to altogether heal the broken-hearted or to comfort the mourning widow, as He comforted the Widow of Nain, but we can at least help to pour balm upon their sorrow, to bring glad tidings of great joy to their bruised and bleeding spirits, and to rejoice the hearts of the fatherless and helpless. And, above all, let us try to remember that the golden feast of Christmas is the little children's festival *par excellence*—that the great Master of all good came upon this sorrowful and sin-laden earth in the form of a poor little humble Child to manifest His divine love for the little ones and that it is our duty, therefore, at such seasons, to set to our own youthful offspring the example of that thoughtful affection, that brotherly love and that charity towards our neighbors which will inspire them to take up and continue the good work of the C. M. B. A. when we are gone. As such a happy, joyous time as the Christmas season, with all its loving and pleasant memories, with all its traditions of good cheer and hospitality, no brother, of the C. M. B. A. especially, should be suffered to want, nor his little ones to imagine that the dark cloud, which lowers over their homes, possesses no silver lining for them. Let the gladness which irradiated, and still irradiates the whole world at the coming of the Saviour, find them cut also, and brighten their cheerless existence.

Let them have a recollection of their childhood's days. Happy children make virtuous, devoted, parent-loving youths, and good members of our Order in the future. So do not forget that the coming Christmas must be a merry one for the children. But still of greater importance even than they are the poor—God's poor—whether they belong to the brotherhood of the C. M. B. A. or the greater brotherhood of mankind in general. We have these over with us, and there is always scope, especially at this blessed season, for that God-like virtue which, we are told, covereth a multitude of sins. While the rich and comfortable are feasting, the poor should not be forgotten. Moreover, charity knows neither creed nor clime. Its snowy wings are spread over all in need and all are welcome to their shelter. Thus God's work is done and the bruised heart is comforted. And most certainly the sweet recompense of doing good to others exceeds all the pleasure that can be derived from selfish enjoyment. Let each member of the C. M. B. A. resolve, therefore, that this will really be a glad Christmas for all—the young and old—the rich and poor. Let the Christmas greeting be not a mere expression from the lips. Let it be accompanied by some tangible evidence that it has a real and a holy meaning, in keeping with the principles of our great Order. And let us pray that when another Christmas comes it will find our Order even still happier, stronger and more numerous and prosperous than we are this year, with the blessing of the Divine Child, the anniversary of whose lowly but glorious birth we shall celebrate on the 25th of December. At least such is the sincere wish, the hope, and prayer, with Christmas greetings of

Yours fraternally,

M. F. HACKETT,

Grand President.

BONDS OF OFFICERS.

The committee appointed by the Grand President and Board of Trustees to select a company for the furnishing

of bonds for C. M. B. A. officers required to give such, has decided to accept the tender of The Employers' Liability Association Corporation, Limited.

Messrs Schmidt and McKim, General Agents, Montreal, Que., are the persons with whom our Branch officers will kindly communicate regarding this matter.

The officers of branches required by our constitution to give bonds are Financial Secretaries and Treasurers. The officers of the Grand Council are the Grand President, Grand Trustees, Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary.

NOTES.

On the 17th November, Branch 71, Toronto, Ont., afforded a Requiem Mass for the repose of the souls of departed brothers.

Recording Secretaries are requested to forward their Annual Reports for the year 1896 as early as possible. See Sections 171 and 171 of Constitution.

The Financial Statements of Branches must be forwarded to the Chairman of the Grand Council Finance Committee not later than the 17th January, 1897. Financial Secretaries will please read Section 171 and 171 of Constitution.

Branch Reports for the Annual Reports and the Financial Statements will be sent by the Grand Council to the Recording Secretary of each Branch, on or about the 1st of December.

Recording Secretaries will please send us, with or delay, the list of Branch officers for the ensuing term, in order that we be enabled to publish in our January issue the directory in full. Do not neglect this.

A Fraternal Association is a promoter of thrift.

An encourager of economy.

A builder, of healthy, financial sentiment

A prevention of poverty

A discourager of vice and crime