

LEAVES FROM THE BRANCHES.

N. B. AND P. E. ISLAND BRANCH.

The Cor.-Sec'y Pleasant Vale Mission Band writes: The Snowdrop Mission Band has been organized for almost a year. It was chiefly through the efforts of our worthy president, Miss Eva Welling, that our Band came into existence. We have 26 members enrolled, with an average attendance of 12. During the last eleven months we have raised \$11 for mission work. On the 22nd of August the Band held their picnic, and as a result some \$5.79 was raised as collection. We trust that all feel that the time spent during the year in our Band, has not been unprofitably spent. May we all pray that God's richest blessing rest on all the Bands and on the editor of our loved paper, the PALM BRANCH.

The Cheerful Toilers Mission Band, of Carmarthen St. Methodist church, was organized in April 1893, with 13 members. New members have been coming in gradually, but a number of the old ones have dropped out. Some have moved away, some through lack of interest, and others because they were too *big*. Our actual membership now is only about 20. However, our meetings are held fortnightly with the faithful few, who are always present. Since our organization we have held two concerts, two sales, and a public meeting. Subscribe for 20 copies of PALM BRANCH; find it very helpful. The children take great interest in the puzzles; one member is appointed to put them on the black board, while the others guess.

MISSIONS AMONG FRENCH CANADIANS.

THE consideration of the condition of these next-door neighbors of ours, presents at once a most interesting and important study. When the French people, inhabiting what is now known as Canada, came under English rule, the free exercise of their religion, which was Catholicism, and the retention of their laws and customs, was guaranteed to the race. Later, the use of their own language, in Parliament and Courts of Justice, was also conceded. Time and usage have strengthened and confirmed the exercise of the privileges thus granted, and to-day we find that the French race, and their religion, have taken almost complete possession of their own especial province of Quebec, and are extending themselves in other directions so rapidly, that not only politically, but with reference to their religious interests as well, Protestant Canadians are being confronted with the problem as to what can be done with and for the French Roman Catholics of Quebec.

It is with the religious part of the question that we, as missionary workers, have most to do. We recognize many points of agreement between Romanists and Protestants, but see as well, so many points of difference in matters of most essential and vital im-

portance, that as Christians we feel, we shall be verily guilty concerning our brethren, if we do not endeavor with all earnestness, to give the open Bible, so long withheld by priestly hands, to those who sit in darkness as to its truths. Ought we not therefore to feel that this especial mission has most pressing claims upon us, appealing strongly to our thought, our prayers and also to our means. Have we given it the thought it demands? Do we realize that this great mass of spiritual darkness, right in our midst, needs enlightenment, and that a great responsibility is resting upon us in the matter? There are over ninety thousand French Canadians in Quebec, and as yet but little has been done towards their evangelization. We know that there are great difficulties in the way of this work. Priestly intolerance, the whole training of the Catholic church, and the thorough grounding in its doctrines and practices, that even the youngest and most illiterate of its members receive, are all hindrances to the introduction of the Bible and pure gospel teaching among them. But we are reminded that we are not left wholly to our own resources, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And so this work calls for prayer, earnest, faithful and importunate. The Romanists delight to call Peter the founder and head of their church. There is an instance in the history of the Apostle which may serve to illustrate the real condition of our Catholic brethren, as well as to emphasize and point out our duty in regard to them. We read that at one time Peter in prison was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the doors kept the prison; also that beyond the first and the second ward there was a great iron gate. But all these were removed, broken and unbarred by the faithful prayer that "the church made without ceasing unto God for Peter." Are not our Roman Catholic brethren similarly chained, bound and fettered by darkness, superstition and error; by the practices of confession and priestly absolution held in the grasp of the strongest and sternest jailors, and is not the intolerant priesthood, ruling and controlling their every movement, well represented by the great iron gate?

As missionary workers, let us learn our duty in this matter, and pray more earnestly than ever before, that the way may be opened for the freedom and evangelization of these our brethren, and that by Divine illumination, we may be taught, how best to help forward the work. Let us give of our means toward it. Our French Methodist Institute in Montreal, our schools and our Bible women, all need to be sustained, in order that throughout the length and breadth of the darkened Province of Quebec the true light may shine, that by the help of Christian education Christ may be so lifted up, that "all may be drawn unto Him." The need of French Canadian Romanism is the need of the Papal world. "Put the Bible in the place of the Pope, and Jesus Christ in the place of the priest, and thus shed rays of heavenly light into this dense darkness, and leave to God to bring many souls out of its depths into His marvellous light."

C. J. S.