

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES. ORGANIZATION WORK.

In pursuance of the instructions of the Assembly's Committee on Young People's Societies, an effort has been made to set in motion machinery for the organization where they do not now exist. A letter has been sent to each of the Presbyterian Conveners in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. They will understand that the line of action set forth therein is merely suggestive. Results are the primary consideration; methods only secondary; therefore local circumstances must largely determine the course to be pursued.

My object in this communication is to appeal to the friends of Young People's Societies for their co-operation in the organization of Societies, especially in missionary territory. Presbyterian conveners are expected, of course, to take the initiative in this work, but in those Presbyteries where there are many mission fields they will require much assistance. I trust, therefore, that all the officers of Presbyterian unions, all the unions of Presbyterian Committees as well as all other friends of this forward movement will rally to the work and volunteer to assist Presbyterian Conveners. The aim of the Assembly's Committee is to have a good, live society in every congregation and mission station in our church. It is this most desirable end is to be attained, the young people and their friends must be up and doing. By well-directed individual effort the number of Young People's Societies must be greatly augmented within the next few months.

Deseronto, Nov. 2nd, 1897. W. S. McTAVISH.

MISSIONARY METHODS OF THE PAPACY.

At present, when critics of a certain type are disposed to extol Roman Catholic missions at the expense of Protestantism, it is important that the characteristic methods of Rome should be understood. Broadly speaking, the tactics of her agents are the same in all parts of the world. When a Protestant mission shows signs of success, Rome immediately enters the same field, pours her workers into the district, and shows no hesitation in taking every advantage she possibly can. An English mission had been settled at Uganda for more than two years before the first of the French priests appeared there, and it would not be too much to say that their presence not only stirred up internal strife among the natives, but seriously retarded the progress of Christianity. In China the experience has been the same. The Church Missionary Society states that the successful work in the Hok-Chiang district attracted the attention of Rome, and that the priests sent there are seeking out the new converts, and attempting to win them over before they have made any effort to approach the heathen. What is going on in Africa and in China is being repeated in India. The Romish emissaries are tampering with the native Christians, and by relax standards of discipline, and by open and unblushing bribery, are endeavoring to draw them away from the first teachers and their earlier faith. Such methods are perfectly consistent with the system and the principles of Rome, but too many people, who, because they are more ignorant assume that they are more liberal than those around them, fail to understand this. A little more knowledge would do much to correct illusory impressions and false judgments.

The following is one of the authorized curses published in the Romish Pontifical to be pronounced on heretics by Romish priests:

"May God Almighty and all his saints curse them with the curse with which the devil and his angles are cursed. Let them be destroyed out of the land of the living. Let the vilest of deaths come upon them, and let them descend alive into the pit. Let their seed be destroyed from the earth; by hunger and thirst, and nakedness, and all distress. Let them perish. May they have all misery and pestilence, and torment. Let all they have be cursed. Always and everywhere let them be cursed. Speaking and silent let them be cursed. Within and without let them be cursed. By land and by sea let them be be cursed. From the crown of their head to the sole of their foot let them be cursed. Let their eyes become blind, let their ears become deaf, let their mouth become dumb, let their tongue cleave to their jaws, let not their hands handle, let not their feet walk. Let all the members of the body be cursed. Cursed let them be standing, lying, from this time forth forever; and thus let their candle be extinguished in the presence of God at the day of

judgment. Let their burial be with dogs and asses. Let hungry wolves devour their corpses. Let the devil and his angels be their companions forever. Amen, amen; so be it; so let it be."—*Missionary Review of the World*.

SHOOTING STARS.

Few things are more common than shooting stars. One who places himself, on a clear, moonless night, so as to command a wide expanse of sky, is reasonably sure to see one of these bright wanderers every few minutes. From a faint flash, like the gleam of a "lightning bug" up to a brilliancy equal to that of the bomb from a "roman candle," they exhibit every degree of brightness.

Yet, if we except the more conspicuous, most of the shooting stars are unseen by people who are not watching for them. And of those who watch, it is the practiced observers who see the most stars.

Finding shooting stars is a good deal like finding four-leafed clovers—practice gives facility and success.

Most people are aware, however, that at certain times of the year shooting stars are unusually numerous. Such times are the middle and latter part of November and the evenings about August 10th. At those dates the stars may be seen by scores and even, in favorable years, by hundreds.

What are they? In general they may be said to be small—very small—bits of matter, the weight of a single shooting star averaging, according to the most reliable estimate, not more than one grain. It is thought that about one ton, or fourteen million stars, fall upon the earth every twenty-four hours. Such statements as this last must, however, be regarded as the conjectures of men whose guessing is based upon careful thought and observation. It is not pretended that the figures given are more than rough approximations. But the fact that our earth draws to itself so many of these small objects helps us to form a new idea of at least that portion of space now being traversed by the solar system.

In place of great empty vastnesses, tenanted only by the stars and planets, we see how the enormous regions are occupied by the unthinkable myriads of motes, like the specks sometimes seen dancing in a sunbeam.

Further reflection leads us to conclude that all are obedient to the law of gravitation, each tiny particle moving in its orbit subject to the same forces which control the path of planet, of moon and comet.

Therefore it comes to pass that when the earth, following its preordained journey through space, comes near one of these little wanderers, the two collide.

When the shooting star encounters the earth's atmosphere it is almost instantly set on fire by the friction due to its enormous velocity, and is quickly consumed, so that only the products of combustion reach the earth's surface. Thus, when we see the shooting star, it is at most not to exceed fifty or sixty miles above the ground.

Meteor showers, or the occurrence of great numbers of shooting stars within a few hours, have been observed at intervals ever since there were observers. The records of the monasteries of early Christian times as well as the annals of more ancient historians make frequent and sometimes awed and terrified mention of such events.

Of later showers the most famous is that of Nov. 12th 1833. It lasted five or six hours and has been described as looking like a fiery snow storm. Many who will perhaps read this article will remember the remarkable shower in November, 1868.

To the genius of the late Professor Newton of Yale University the scientific world owes the demonstration of the fact that star showers are due, first, to a cluster or swarm of these minute objects, moving like a dust-cloud in an elliptical orbit around the sun; and, second, to the intersection of this orbit by that of the earth. Evidently when the earth and the meteor-cloud reach this point of intersection at nearly the same time the sky must rain shooting stars. And this is what happens at somewhat regular intervals.

Interesting, too, is the fact that these groups of meteors for the most part follow in the path of comets, as small boys follow a fire engine. Yet the analogy is