

and hear thousands upon thousands singing there; and amongst them there will be children from all lands.

Some from England, some from America, some from Canada, and even from the Indians of the North West, and the Africans, and the Chinese and Japanese, and from everywhere, all over the world, wherever the gospel has been preached. What a choir! I wonder how many Palm Branch readers will be in that choir! And I wonder how many will be there through the efforts of the Mission Bands!

Oh, what a time that will be when all these nations and peoples and tongues shall unite in singing:

"Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all."

Now we are going to celebrate another Christmas, and once more going to take a walk in imagination to a manger in Bethlem; for we want to stoop down and pour our treasures of love upon that sweet babe. We want to hear the angels singing again:

"Unto you is born this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

"For lo! the days are hastening on  
By prophet bards foretold,  
When with the ever circling years  
Comes round the age of gold."

When Peace shall over all the earth  
Its ancient splendour fling,  
And the whole world give back the song  
Which now the Angels sing."

I am glad, and I feel sure you are glad that the world is hearing this same beautiful story you love to hear.

Let us do all we can to send, or carry, the news of a Saviour to the whole world, that everywhere the inhabitants may know all we mean when we say to each other:

I WISH YOU A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

Yours, etc.,

W. J. KIRBY.

(We are all glad to welcome back to his home and to these pages our good Palm Branch Minister. We have missed him)..

#### To the Mission Band Corresponding Secretaries.

We do not yet know what changes have been made in your most responsible office. While we welcome the new, we are glad to see some of our old friends back again. For the benefit of those who are new we would tell you just what we hope and expect from you through the coming year. We want you, in the first place, to work hard in the interest of the Palm Branch. To introduce and recommend it on every possible occasion. That is as far, of course, as you conscientiously can! Then, when you receive monthly or quarterly reports from your Circles or Bands please cull out the most interesting items in each, whatever will help or stimulate other Circles or Bands, and send them to us in a condensed form. Any questions on this subject or any suggestions will be gladly received.

## STORY OF A STORK.

HOW THE GENTLE BIRD RETURNED TO ITS FRIENDS.

HERE is a story from Germany, says a writer in "Our Animal Friends," which is as quaint as it is true. Some children living in one of the northern provinces discovered that a stork had made its nest upon their roof. Being orthodox little Teutons, they hailed the newcomer with favor, as storks are supposed to bring luck to a house. All the summer they shared their tidbits with their long-legged-friend, which became very tame and companionable.

At the first sign of approaching cold weather the stork prepared to flit to warmer climes. The children were sad at the thought of losing their pet, but their parents consoled them with the assurance that the bird would surely return the next spring. The children, still uneasy at the idea of the stork not being cared for during the long winter, consulted together and evolved a brilliant idea, which they immediately proceeded to put into execution. They wrote a little note in their best German script, stating that the stork was very dear to them and begging the good people in whose country it might spend the winter to be kind to their pet and send it back to them in the spring.

They sealed the note, fastened it to a ribbon, tied it round the bird's neck and tucked it under its wing. The next day they sadly watched the stork wing its way toward milder skies. The snow and ice came; Christmas time brought the children gifts and fresh amusements, but their summer pet was not forgotten. When the spring came round again, their little feet used to climb to the roof day by day, looking and longing for the stork's return; and behold! one fine morning, there it was, tame and gentle as ever.

Great was the children's delight; but what was their surprise to discover round its neck and under its wing another bright band with a note attached, addressed to "The children who wrote the letter the stork brought." The ribbon was quickly untied and the missive opened. It was from a missionary in Africa, stating that he had read the children's note and had cared for the stork, and thought that children whose good hearts had prompted them to provide for the comfort of a bird through the winter would be willing to help clothe and feed the little destitute children of his mission. A full name and address followed. The children were full of sympathy, and the missionary's note won a golden answer from the family. Other letters came and went by post between them, until, by and by, the children learned to know the missionary and his little black waifs almost as well as they knew the beloved stork that had proved so trusty a messenger.