

The Missionary Conference held in Chicacole.

Our 14th Annual Conference was held in Chicacole Jan. 9th to 12th. The Missionary circle now on the field numbers nineteen, besides six children. As two of the latter (Miss Bessie Churchill and Miss Lottie Sanford) are grown to womanhood and active workers we really have twenty-one in our Conference. These two young ladies are not drawing any salary from the Board, but are doing faithful service as they have opportunity.

THE YEAR'S REINFORCEMENT.

It is marvelous what the furlough in Canada did for Mr. and Mrs. Archibald and we all rejoiced that such a measure of health had been obtained. The work at Chicacole will now feel the inspiration of their presence and we hope that large blessing will follow their earnest efforts. The Tekkall station had no small share in this year's reinforcement. The writer finds it difficult to express his gratitude to God for the joy of reunion with wife and child and that this reunion at last became possible without relinquishing the work here to which he felt called. Then we were glad indeed to welcome Miss Flora Clark as a new missionary and glad that she was to be as a member of our own household.

GOING ON FURLOUGH.

The only one to go on furlough this year is Miss Martha Clark. She came out with the Coreys in '94 and has completed seven years of noble service. She has earned a rest and needs it too. Much of the time since she came out she has suffered from chronic ill health but has persistently prosecuted her work nevertheless. At present she is suffering from a bad throat affliction, which will require an operation as soon as she reaches home. But we hope that the rest and change of climate will restore health so that we may soon welcome her back again to this work. She goes home at her own expense, thus relieving the Board of quite a burden. Let some may jump at the conclusion that the missionaries are so highly paid that they can afford to pay their own way home, let me say that Miss Clark is enabled to render this help to the Board because of a bequest received from her late sister. It is none the less a gift to the Board on Miss Clark's part and in view of the many ways in which one could spend money while on furlough if one only had it to spend, her act is generous indeed.

REINFORCEMENT FOR THE COMING YEAR.

It is our earnest hope and prayer that in the fall we may have the pleasure of welcoming Brother and Sister Morse, and at least one new family. The Conference passed the following resolution with regard to further enlargement of the Missionary Staff:

"Resolved, that we continue to urge upon our Board and the Denomination the importance of sending out just as soon as possible several more families to supply the following needs. (1) A second missionary for Vizianagram. (2) One for the Savara. (3) One for the North Eastern part of our Mission in the Sompett region. (4) One for the Rayagadda field.

MEDICAL WORK.

The Chicacole hospital is proving to be a great blessing. It opens homes and hearts to the gospel message on every hand, and is the means of relieving a deal of physical suffering. We feel that the time has come when we should have in our Mission at least one medical missionary. If we had a lady doctor at the head of the medical work in Chicacole she could extend her usefulness all over the Mission. The following resolution was passed by the Conference:

"Whereas there is a large sphere of usefulness in our Mission for a medical lady missionary. Resolved that we recommend our Board to send us such a lady as soon as a suitable person can be found."

THE SAVARA MISSION.

The readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR will all rejoice that our sister, Miss Eva D'Frazer continues to manifest such a deep interest in the Lord's work in general and in the Savara Mission in particular. She sent us recently her annual contribution of Rs 1000 (\$333.00) for the Savara work.

THE 20TH CENTURY FUND.

We rejoice in the effort that is now being made in the homeland to raise \$50,000 for Missions as a special offering. It seems to us that the raising of this amount is spread over an unnecessarily long period. Why could it not be all raised easily within two years? Your missionaries are also disposed to make another gentle protest. Why invest any of this 20th Century Fund? Doubtless some of those in charge of our work at home believe that this investing of Mission funds is a wise policy, but your missionaries do not see it that way.

We wish to have a part in this 20th Century effort and have undertaken to raise one-fiftieth of the whole amount. We hope to raise this \$1000 within two years, and expend it here on the field in some new work not now included in our regular estimates.

THE YEAR'S INGATHERING.

In some parts of our Mission the year's ingathering has been most encouraging.

The movement among the Madijas on the Vizianagram and Bobbili fields seems likely to develop extensively

and we hope it may spread over our whole Mission. Seventy-seven converts were baptized on the field during the year. This seems like a very small ingathering but it is fifteen more than the previous year. It is nearly ten converts to a church and an increase of nearly 20 per cent. We do not wish to make any odious comparisons or throw any stones; but will those who speak disparagingly of the results on our Foreign Mission field remember that the showing for 1907 is far better than the showing at home?

The Year Book seems to show that the gain by baptism throughout the whole denomination is less than 1/2 per cent. We on the foreign field feel keenly the meagre results in our work and long for greater ingathering. Surely the state of the denomination calls for very serious reflection and earnest enquiry as to the cause of the barrenness.

Is this not a call for humiliation before God and prolonged heart searching? Should we not plead with him that he pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplication, that we may claim a mighty awakening?

W. V. HIGGINS.

Tekkall, April 3, 1908.

P. S.—I hope to refer next week to the resolutions of our Conference concerning reinforcements. W. V. H.

When Spring Begins.

When Spring begins, mortals must be on the alert if they do not wish to miss anything. On a mild, melting afternoon in February, Lucy and I imagined we caught a whiff of it, and immediately started "up the railroad" to see if a favorite piece of woods had heard the news. The air was certainly blowing about some sort of a soft mystery, and caressing our faces with a "touch and go" movement that was half promise and half withdrawal of promise—if only one could tell which, the thing would be settled; for who knows the earth's business better than air? Who has a better chance of going about and gathering up the very latest?

Once over (over is merely figurative for a whole compound of baser prepositions)—once over the barb wire fence of the D. A. R., we found ourselves ankle deep in snow—deeper still when we tried our way among deceitful hollows and hummocks. Where was Spring? The pines and spruces stood around in their usual winter gloom and stolidness. The bare branches of alders and birches stirred slightly, but it was only an inward shiver. All was pale, cold, unresponsive. Even our wooing wind seemed to have stolen away, ashamed of having played us false.

As we stood gazing disappointedly, a loud cawing from a near tree-top broke the stillness. Now the voice of the crow is like that of a reformer in the land; it startles, it rasps, it grates, it croaks of what will happen if you are not careful; but it is also prophetic, foretelling pleasanter voices at hand, those of the feathered poets of Nature-land. Therefore it is, that the crow's hoarse caw, when heard at the time of melting snows and artful winds, has power to awaken the first strong thrill in the series to be expected. The moment you feel this thrill you may know that Spring is at least on the way. Thereafter, though Winter may rage again ever so roughly, be assured it is nothing but bluster.

After our momentary tingle, Lucy and I looked about us with new eyes. The snow was not true snow, but a wan, spiritless substance with fast-slipping hold upon the warm, vital earth. Under every tree was a dry carpet, under every bush a magical green circle. What we had taken for shivering among the saplings was really a quiver of anticipation. I know it, for I rubbed my finger along the stem of a young poplar, and he was literally covered with a green flush. The alders could not hide their shining excitement. The white stems of the birches twinkled with it, while the changeless pines and spruces seemed to sigh with the burden of being forever green. When Lucy found some Mayflower buds, even though we knew they had been there all winter, the prevailing emotion increased almost to the point of a sensation. There remained only to incorporate the full flavor of the place and hour, by actual tasting and eating of twigs and wintergreen leaves—and then to go home and wait. A whiff, a thrill, a sense of faith in the still unseen, a subtle foretaste of the coming exhilaration,—that was all, but very many have travelled farther and found less.

A MARCH BOUQUET.

Two weeks later we were at the same spot. The snow was gone, the sun poured down warm and full, and the air was a delightful mixture of softness and keenness known only to March. On such a day there could be no doubt of Spring being near, though the signs were still faint. Perhaps their very faintness was half their charm, and the cause of our attempt to put what we felt into the tangible shape of a bouquet.

It was not of flowers, but any one who walks abroad in all seasons and weathers knows that there is no month in the year when an attractive bunch of something or other cannot be gathered, in snow-covered field, or deserted wood, or even by the waste roadside. Ours was begun with evergreen,—four varieties of it in feathery

sprays, coral-like clusters, primly-set necklaces, and trailing lengths of graduated flounces in the very latest fashion. These, in as many shades of green, made an exquisite foil for the dry flowers of the sumach—still glowing with the heat of last summer and for a cluster of two of rich brown alder cones. A branch of dead hemlock, covered with the delicate gray tracery of lungwort, set off to perfection the scarlet hips of the prickly dogrose. Then, to give a touch of freshness to all this faded loveliness, a few shoots from the different trees and saplings were added. It is astonishing what variety of form and color may be found in such a handful of bare branches. Here was the sober alder, its shiny brown buds pointed as if with the dexterous twist of a glass-blower; the graceful-limbed birch, its straight, sharp lances erect, in marching order; the maple, ruddy with health, brooding a bunch of rose-tinted buds at every joint; the poplar, gray-green, ethereal, touched with the spirit of perpetual spring, its three-sided buds a lusty contrast of glistening brown; and last but not least the willow, the beloved "pussy-willow" of school children, already past the stage of mystery, with its satin-furred, silvery soft little pussies curling out of their papery pockets. Behold! was not this a fair rival for May or June?

The dainty secrets of unopened leaf-buds stimulate curiosity like the "I-know-something-you-don't" of childhood. That the secret cannot be kept is just as evident. "I'll tell you, if you'll never, never tell," seems to breathe from the tip of each one—only first there must be a certain amount of coaxing. If you cannot wait for sun and wind, there is a mean human way of forcing it. Accordingly, at the date of writing—March 24, while the wind is howling outside and driving flurries of snow against the window-pane—those same leaf-buds, beguiled and deceived by a jar of water and a warm corner, are pushing out as if they would rather tell than not. A chance sprig of alder, found in a particularly well-sheltered nook, held the greatest surprise. Its future flowers, two at every joint, resemble nothing so much as a pair of green-headed cherubs, standing on tip-toe to reach out of their sheaths, and throwing up their arms in a very life-like ecstasy of joy. Of the other findings, the birch's the shyest; the maple the most forward. The secrets of all have turned out to be variations of a common subject—lascels; but what an interesting subject when the treatment consists entirely of silent illustration! The maple shows a yellow-and-flame-colored glorification of the college-cap variety; the alder flaunts specimens of chenille furniture fringes, in mottled brown and yellow; the poplar, an almost grotesque collection of fuzzy little lambs' tails, each with its playful kink, reminding one irresistibly of the smile of the vanishing Cheshire cat in "Alice" — or else, to be more realistic, of the March lion now roaring and ramping through the frozen world. Why? No one must ask questions in March, because it is the month of all manner of madnesses, and there is no accounting for anything. B. B.

Spring Early.

Gently the early rains of Spring
Filter their way to the earth,
Calling her back from her death-like swoon,
Giving to life—new birth;

Rippling in rivulets round her form,
Melting the frost each day,
Till winter resolves himself into tears,
And rushes in torrents away;

Then the earth, dismantled of snow and ice,
Looks forth from her fresh shower bath,
Greeting the genial smile of the sun,
As he moves on his changeless path;

And her bosom is stirred by a million germs
Of life, though dormant so long;
A million leaflets are bursting forth,
To accompany the birds' new song;

And she offered incense to God above,
For the gift of her winter's rest,
Which arises in wreaths of blue-gray mist
Esch morn, from her grateful breast.

And men say, it is early for spring to come,
But the winter is really gone;
See! the mist arises o'er all the earth,
And hark! to the whip-poor-will song;

And they hasten away, forgetful of Him
Who giveth the Spring its time,
To prepare the soil for its earliest yield,
Which each says in his heart, shall be mine.

Marysville, N. B.

H. A. M. F.

Growing Old.

A little more grey in the lessening hair
Each day as the years go by;
A little more stooping of the form,
A little more dim the eye.
A little more faltering of the step
As we tread life's pathway o'er,
But a little nearer every day
To the ones who have gone before.

A little more halting of the gait
And a dullness of the ear;
A growing weariness of the frame
With each swift passing year.
A falling of hopes and ambitions too,
A faltering of life's quest;
But a little nearer every day
To a sweet and peaceful rest.

A little more loneliness in life
As the dear ones pass away;
A bigger claim on the heavenly land
With every passing day.
A little further from toil and care
A little less way to roam;
A drawing nearer to peaceful rest—
And a happy welcome home.