

## THE PALM BRANCH.

### Names and Addresses of Branch Corresponding Secretaries.

#### EASTERN BRANCH:

MISS E. BAILEY, - - - Iroquois, Ont.

#### TORONTO CONFERENCE BRANCH:

MRS. BASCOM, - 189 Dunn Ave., Toronto.

#### BAY OF QUINTE BRANCH.

MISS HAWLEY - - - Bath, Ont.

#### WESTERN BRANCH:

MRS. F. N. DALY, 536 Dufferin Av., London, Ont.

#### NOVA SCOTIA BRANCH:

MRS. WHISTON, 297 Brunswick St. Halifax, N. S.

#### N. B. AND P. E. I. BRANCH:

MRS. S. HOWARD, - - - Hampton, N. B.

### A Christmas in London.

In the story books, read long ago in our childhood's days, we were often impressed with the description of the enjoyment of a clear, cold English Christmas, invariably followed by the remark made by some jolly hero or heroine, "a regular English Christmas this"; so being in the land of our forbears, we resolved to see what a regular English Christmas was like and how some of the children enjoyed themselves.

During the busy days before the holidays, as we passed through the crowded streets and shops we were amazed at the ludicrously small size of the Christmas trees offered for sale. We, accustomed to the tall, broad, generous fir, whose top touched our parlor ceiling, laughed scornfully at the tiny trees planted in flower pots and priced 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 4s. and so on; and it took us some time to realize that these were the style and size of the trees which adorned "The stately homes of England" in England's largest city on the happiest holiday of the year.

On the other hand we gazed respectfully and deferentially at the huge boughs and branches of holly, suspended in lavish profusion about some of the shops, and wished that we could see the pulpit of our old church at home gleam out under the bright berries and shiny leaves of holly and mistletoe.

We would describe the weather, that Christmas morning, as dull, grey and cheerless looking, but we found out that Londoners were congratulating each other upon the bright day. So

as we came up from the underground station we fancied the sky had taken on a brighter tinge, and we made up our minds that this was the ideal Christmas weather we had read about.

The Foundling Hospital with its 500 children was our destination, and soon we turned in through the gates and were received by attendants, collection plates in hand, who ushered us into the chapel and gave us seats for the morning service. Seated in the choir were the boys and girls of the Institution, on whom we cast curious glances, for the boys, in extremely tight-fitting blue suits with brass buttons, and the quaint little maidens in low-necked, short-sleeved dresses, with snowy mob caps, neckerchiefs, aprons and mitts extending half way up the arm and demurely folded hands hidden under the aprons, made an old time living picture which was a sight to see. The carols of the children, led by trained voice, were the attractive feature of the service.

But did we really enjoy the meeting? Could we enjoy it when we could see our breath before us, and every minute were becoming colder and colder in the chilly atmosphere? Could we enjoy it when we knew those poor children must be fairly perishing? And they were; for when we passed into the main building to see them enjoy their dinner, the chattering teeth and blue hands excited our further pity.

There were fires here, oh yes, large fires burned in the grates, but the big doors opened on cold halls and we wondered how the children survived the exposure and draughts.

Laying our feelings aside,—the great halls with decorations of holly and mistletoe, the blazing fires and brisk smiling attendants carrying generous supplies of roast beef and plum pudding to the hungry children, were worth seeing and we were glad to form part of the number of interested on lookers. As we moved about we noticed the children playing Santa Claus to the wee motherless ones, as they distributed candies, and we smiled at the pleased faces, as a gentleman slipped pennies into the hands of those who knew no other home than this.

The rows and rows of tiny beds in the dormitories were a pathetic sight, but the toys displayed in the parlors showed that kind hearts thought of the foundling children and that the warm note of—"kindness to others" had been present with those around whose hearths families gathered for Christmas cheer.

Halifax.