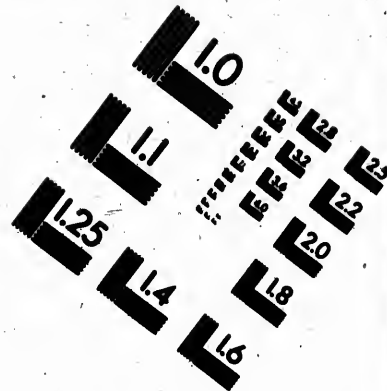
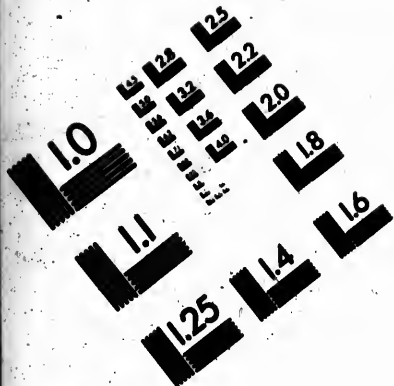




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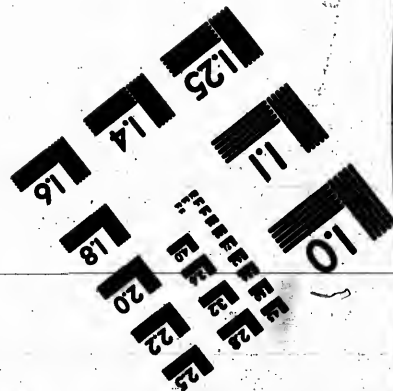
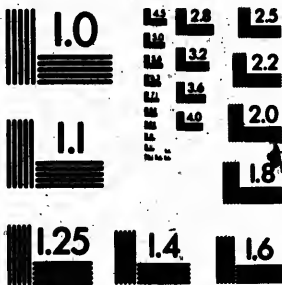
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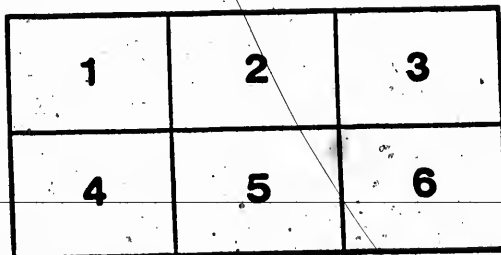
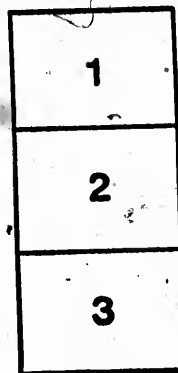
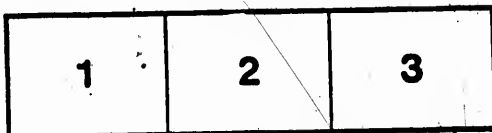
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A BREF

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

GRANDE-LIGNE MISSION

From its beginning in 1835 to 1900,

65 Years,

BY

REV. THEODORE LAFLEUR, LL.D.



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A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
**The Grande-Ligne Mission**

FROM ITS BEGINNING IN 1835 to 1900.

65 YEARS.

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Before the Rev. Henri Olivier and Mrs. Olivier came to Canada in 1834, with a view to do missionary work among the North American Indians, and decided to remain in Montreal to evangelize French Canadians, and before he asked Madame Feller to come to Quebec, there had been a few attempts at such work by two or three religious men of very different types. One French Evangelist, a Methodist, tried some evangelization in Quebec without any permanent results. Another, a descendant of Huguenots, but a Quaker, named Etienne or Stephen Grellet, about 1830, came to Lacadie, the parish of which Grande-Ligne formed a part and where quite a commotion was created, but a meeting with the Curé forced him to abandon his evangelistic attempts, though at first he was welcomed by the people. One of Mr. Olivier's associates, Mr. Dentan, also was for two months teaching a school in the northern end of Grande Ligne. It would seem as if the Spirit of God through some of his servants, like the dove from Noah's Ark, had fluttered over this spot without finding a place to set foot on, but a little later brought the proof that there was some dry soil where one could land and raise a harvest. After almost fruitless attempts in Montreal and in St. Johns, Mr. Roussy came to Grande-Ligne (a

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very poor settlement then) where a beginning was finally made by the conversion of Mrs. Lore, a widow woman, who had a large family.

Some have suggested that this was not a good strategical point. True there was nothing of military tactics about it, they found no footing, and yet, remembering the difficulties encountered, one cannot but believe that this line of road,—this great line, as I have expressed it elsewhere, was marked by the finger of God for the beginning of an immense work of reformation. People tell us, you are only disturbing a religious and Christian people; why don't you go and work among pagans? We answer that we have two very great examples to justify our kind of work. The Blessed Lord himself, who did not go to evangelize the pagans, but the house of Israel, in which he reproved pagan ideas and practices, and the repeating of meaningless prayers, and the work of the great Reformation of the 16th century which swept away so much paganism out of the debased and corrupted Christianity of the times.

When the Oliviers came to Montreal in 1834, it was a city of some 30,000 inhabitants, and the whole population of the two Canadas was less than a million people. The French Canadians almost all in Lower Canada and all Catholics, formed a little more than half that number. About one in ten of them could read and write, and their religion, was one of forms, but of very little moral or spiritual value. Mrs. Olivier, who was a very intelligent woman, has left a saddening letter on the loose morality of the French Canadians of Montreal at that time. Their religion of that and earlier days has been extremely overrated, and the Gospel was entirely ignored except by a few priests.

Not until 1836 did the Grande-Ligne Mission begin its successful work. But the infant Mission was scarcely able to walk when it was nearly crushed to death by the Insur-

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rection of 1837-38. The Missionaries and their converts, in order to avert destruction, passed over the boundary to spend the winter in the village of Champlain, in the State of New York. They returned in the spring of 1838, and God so overruled this misfortune as to give them kind and generous English friends, to enable them to repair their houses and cultivate their farms. Some generous friends foremost among them the Rev. John Gilmour, Pastor in Montreal, came to their help, in building a school house. It seemed as if this improvement had forthwith prompted the missionaries and their friends to attempt a much larger enterprise, even the building of a substantial stone house for the reception of pupils and for public worship. The Rev. Mr. Kirk, then pastor in Albany, N.Y., accompanied Mad. Feller to secure the largest portion of necessary funds. It was finished and dedicated in August, 1840, and soon became a great center of work, expansion and radiation, as well as of attraction. In point of important conversions, it was perhaps the most brilliant moment in the history of the Mission. At the outset was the conversion of Dr. Cote, a prominent political leader and orator of former days, and who was at the time in exile at Swanton, Vermont, where Mr. Roussy went to visit him. Then the conversion of a priest, Rev. Mr. Normandeau, formerly Professor in the Seminary of Quebec, who came to visit Grande-Ligne, and remained there as a convert and teacher. Two young men from the neighboring village of Napierville, Messrs. Narcisse Cyr and Theodore Lafleur, were also converted, and joined the Church at Grande-Ligne. Both studied for a time at the Grande-Ligne School, and then went to study in Geneva and returned to labor here. In the meantime, there had been remarkable openings at St. Pie, through a New Testament taken there by a visitor to Grande-Ligne and compared with an old Bible in the family Auger, who have left a name in the annals of the Mission. Some 12 miles from St. Pie, several families in the townships of Roxton and Milton were

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converted. A young canadian, T. Riendeau, converted in the United States, came to Grande-Ligne to study, remained as a teacher, then pastor, and finally as collector, well known to many christians in Ontario.

But before that successful decade was ended, the sky darkened, the clouds lowered and enveloped the mind and heart of the Missionaries; they had to face financial embarrassment incident on a change of some practices, not of principles, which closed the heart of a large number of old friends and helpers. The Mission having come into closer contact with the Baptist denomination, both in the States and here, the outlook began to improve about the year 1850. There was then renewed missionary activity, and progress in many ways. Mr. Cyr had returned to Canada in 1848, and began his labors in connection with the Mission at Grande-Ligne and at Napierville, his native place, where in 1849 he started the publication of the *Semeur Canadien*, which after a few years was transferred to Montreal. Mr. Cyr was well fitted for that kind of work, which he continued several years, meanwhile devoting part of his time to evangelistic work.

On his return from Geneva in 1850, Mr. Lafleur accompanied Mad. Feller on an extensive collecting tour in the United States, and at the end of which he was assigned to the field at St. Pie, and the outposts of Roxton and Berea, in the Township of Milton, a converted priest, Mr. Tetreau, helping him in evangelistic work.

#### ST. PIE SCHOOL.

Melle Jonte, who had been a great worker at the Grande-Ligne Mission house and school for several years, came to St. Pie to establish a girl's school at the mission house erected there in 1842, with some twenty pupils; these with outside attendants formed a congregation of more

than a hundred on Sundays. In 1852 Mrs. Lafleur came to take the leading part in the teaching of the school.

### LONGUEUIL SCHOOL.

When in 1854 the Mission house at St. Pie was destroyed by fire, the school was removed to Longueuil, to a much larger house—a substantial stone building. Mr. and Mrs. Lafleur took the direction of the Institute, and Miss Jonte was the valuable matron and indispensable helper. For many years this school, so near Montreal, made the general Mission much better known. It was visited by a great many friends, among the number being the Rev. Mr. Gilmour, who had baptized the Oliviers.

For many years it was a flourishing Institution, often favored with gracious revivals. Among the thrilling events was the rescuing of a young nun, an American girl, from the Convent of Longueuil.

In 1851 a most remarkable work of grace took place at Ste. Marie de Monnoir, in connection with the labors of Mr. Roussy and his helper, the young Evangelist Louis Auger. Several prominent families of the parish left the Church of Rome, accepting the Gospel, so that in the summer of 1852 a nice chapel was built very near the village. At the dedication it was remarkable that most of the speakers were Roman Catholic Converts. Dr. Cote, who had also labored there, had died after a very short illness in Swanton, Vt., in 1850, at the early age of 42.

This success in the parish of Ste. Marie appeared of such importance to the clergy that they sent their now famous Father Chiniquy, the champion of temperance, to oppose it, hence a public discussion took place between Mr. Roussy and Mr. Chiniquy. It caused a great uproar, both sides claimed a victory. This is the first time the renowned priest came into contact and in strong opposition to our work, but we shall have more to do with him later on.

We quote from Dr. Cramp and also from our former sketch: "At this stage of the history of the Mission we review the work of twenty years. It had begun this work with two laborers, it had now a dozen, after two years existence there were sixteen converts, now there are six hundred. It now owns two Institutes, one at Grande-Ligne the other at Longueuil. It has now organized churches at Grande-Ligne, Ste. Marie, St. Pie, Roxton, besides missionary stations in Montreal, Sherrington, Henryville, Milton Township, St. Gregoire, and several primary schools. It has the *Semeur Canadien* as organ of the press."

In that same year, 1854, four new parishes were opened to the Gospel. Two very remarkable colporteurs, converts from Rome, Eloi Roy and Zephirin Patenaude, entered the work and were the means of many conversions over a large part of the country, in particular of that distinguished gentleman, M. B. Belleville.

In the winter of 1854-5, Mad. Feller was so enfeebled in health that the physicians recommended a change of climate and complete rest. She spent that season in Florida. In 1855 the Grande-Ligne Mission was incorporated. After an absence of seven months Mad. Feller returned to her beloved work at Grande-Ligne, and on her way back stopped at Philadelphia and New York in order to meet the needs of the poor Grande-Ligne Treasury. She found there her beloved friends, Mr. and Mrs. Normandeau.

Before the end of this decade three important facts must be noted.

The first is, that as a colporteur in Quebec had been mobbed and badly beaten, on his recovery he manifested a great desire to preach, though quite illiterate. Through the generous suggestion of our late venerable friend, Rev. Mr. Marsh, the Baptist brethren lent him their chapel for evening services. For several Sundays people came to hear him in large numbers. Seeing this, Messrs. Lafleur and Norman-

deau were invited to go and preach there for several Sundays. The result was a small nucleus of converts, and Mr. Normandeau, a converted priest, became pastor of a little church of 12 members. He labored there for ten years with varying success.

It was but a short time after that, in 1858, that Mr. Lafleur's attention was drawn to a public letter of Father Chiniquy's in the French papers of Montreal, which led him to write to the noted priest still personally unknown to him. A secret correspondence of six or seven months ensued, after which Mr. Chiniquy invited Mr. Lafleur to visit him at St. Anne, de Kankakee, Illinois, which he did incognito in the summer of 1858. He returned there in the autumn of 1859, and was the first to preach in French in the still nominally Catholic Church to more than 500 people. Two or three months after, more than 200 persons made a public profession of their adhesion to the Gospel, and wonderful to say, they retained their church edifice. Mr. Lafleur was accompanied there by Mr. Louis Auger, who remained, and later on formed a small Baptist church. I have been asked oftentimes, how is it that you did not make a Baptist of Mr. Chiniquy? My making him would have had but poor results. I wanted God to make first a true Christian, and then a Baptist. Mr. Chiniquy remained some time undecided between the claims of diverse denominations, and finally cast his lot among the Presbyterians. I have wished sometimes that he had made public the part our Mission had in enlightening him and in furnishing him much needed material aid, but he did not do so. There is a slight allusion to his indebtedness to the Mission in his last work: "Forty years in the church of Christ." It is difficult to realize now the great sensation produced by his conversion to Protestantism.

In the fall of 1859, for reasons of health, Mrs. Lafleur was advised to visit Switzerland and Mad. Feller joined her.



Mr. Lafleur left them in beautiful Lausanne, so full of souvenirs and interest for both, but especially our dear old Missionary, while Mr. Lafleur went to Great Britain on a collecting tour on behalf of the Mission. Thus ended 25 years of labor.

At this time the Grande-Ligne Mission extended over 40 parishes or townships in Canada, and the northern part of Vermont and New York State, every one of which contained French Canadian converts, their number amounted to about 3,000, of whom 700 were in church fellowship. The Mission comprised 20 preaching stations, it employed some 20 laborers, eight of whom were ministers, six were the fruits of the Mission.

The following decade was filled with trials and sorrows through sickness and financial difficulties. The few missionaries had already too much else to do to attempt much collecting. But in our dire necessity the Lord had given us remarkable tokens that we were not forgotten. One day Mr. Lafleur received notice that some money had come by express for the Mission, it was \$5,000 from Mrs Caroline Street, of New Haven, and later on \$3,000 from Miss Jenny Bolles, of Hartford. When the first gift came the missionaries gathered at Grande-Ligne for a service of thanksgiving. Meanwhile and for years the Mission received kind and very substantial aid from the Baptist Home Mission Society of the United States, which in the eleven years amounted to nearly \$29,000. By thus paying the salaries of the ordained missionaries, it enabled the mission to maintain several struggling churches which became centres of evangelistic and religious influence.

In 1864 Mr. Lafleur left Longueuil for Montreal, where he was called for evangelistic and pastoral work. He continued to give religious instruction to the Longueuil Institute for several years, while Miss Jonte and Miss Cnendot had the charge of the school. In the following

sombre years of financial difficulties, and of Mad. Feller's failing health, a new field full of promise of future harvest, was opening for the Mission, at South Ely, in the Township of Leslie, by remarkable conversions. If there were shadows at the centre there were luminous points at the circumference. Some of the Grande-Ligne students had just entered the pastoral work, Mr. F. X. Smith at South Ely, our youthful brother Therrien at St. Pie, brother Riendeau at Ste. Marie, and Brother J. N. Williams at Granby and neighborhood.

The next division is from the time of Mad. Feller's death to Mr. Roussy's death, 1868 to 1881. It was a time of many changes on the mission field, of days of elation and of depression, we have only time to glance at this period so full of varied experiences. The hour of our great mourning was at hand, in the beginning of 1868 we were to lose the founder of the Mission, the one who from the first had been its daily inspiration, its wise counsellor, its most assiduous advocate before God and men. She was very ill only a few days, her mind being occupied all the time about the salvation of the pupils of the house. She fell asleep in the Lord on the 29th of March, 1868, at the age of 68 years. Dr. Cramp has related at some length and touchingly the last days of this remarkable servant of God, the services at her burial, and on the occasion of the erection of a monument to her memory by French Canadian converts, so we may be excused for only alluding to the sad but inspiring events. The work of the Mission though suffering in many ways by the loss of this wonderfully gifted instrument was not stopped, but in some respects it slackened for a few years.

During this very trying period the Mission was again crippled for want of means, and thus lost several of its laborers, Messrs. Cyr, Williams and Rossier going to the United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Normandeau were called to Grande-Ligne to assume the direction of the Institute, and so Quebec was abandoned for a time.

Mr. A. L. Therrien removed to St. Pie.

After a short stay at Grande-Ligne the Normandeaus were replaced first by Mr. and Mrs. Brouillette, and they in turn by Mr. and Mrs. Rossier.

Mr. and Mrs. Roux, who for a time had labored outside of the Mission, were called to the direction of the Longueuil school. During many years associated with Miss Jonte they saw a succession of fine classes of young girls of talent, many of whom were converted.

Meanwhile Mr. Lafleur carried on a very successful evangelistic work in Montreal, in hired rooms, where for years good congregations gathered and numbers were converted and baptized.

The four following years up to 1878 were marked by other changes, some of them quite painful. Mr. Therrien left St. Pie for Burlington, Vt., where he labored with success in the French work. Mr. Rossier went back to Montgomery, Vermont. The Grande-Ligne school was once more closed for one winter.

For some years past some of the Directors of the Mission had been in favor of selling the building of the Feller Institute at Longueuil with a view to concentrate the work of the teaching department at Grande-Ligne, thus making it a mixed school. Others were loath to do it from the fact that it had brought the work of the mission in closer contact with Montreal Christians, and that it had been the sanctuary of the conversion of very many souls. On the other hand, there had been but few conversions from the outside, in the village, although testimony had been borne there by the missionaries for many years.

As a good opportunity presented itself for the sale of the building it was availed of. In the autumn of 1880, Mr. and Mrs. Roux removed to Grande-Ligne in charge of the whole school, meanwhile the present girl's wing was being erected.

The missionaries never lost sight of their first duty, viz., to bring souls to Christ as soon as a spirit of enquiry appeared among the pupils. Mr. Therrien, then in Burlington, was invited to come to Grande-Ligne to hold meetings, in which Mr. Lafleur came to help. They witnessed a goodly number of conversions; in the course of the winter forty-three were baptized. Our old missionary, Mr. Roussy, now in feeble health, said he had never seen a revival of such intensity.

After a few years of successful work in Burlington, Rev. Mr. Therrien came back to work in Canada, and began by replacing Mr. Lafleur in Montreal, during the latter's absence in Europe in the interest of the Mission in 1879-80, and in the spring of 1880 he was called to the pastorate of the church at Grande-Ligne, when the amount of the sale of the Longueuil building was applied in building the large and somewhat imposing wing added to the old building. It was dedicated in 1881.

Mr. Roussy was still alive, but very feeble, and it was with a faltering step that he was helped to the presiding chair. From that moment the decline continued, and our devoted missionary died in the month of November, at the age of 68, the same age as that of our great missionary, to whom he was a devoted and zealous helper for many years. He preceded only a few months in the field of rest another devoted missionary, Mademoiselle Sophie Jonte, who had consecrated forty years of her very useful life to this work without any remuneration.

#### NEXT DECADE, 1881-1890.

A new and spacious house had now been built at Grande-Ligne for the accommodation of a large number of pupils. Still for the solid establishment of the work and its development, two more buildings were needed, a church edifice in Montreal and another at Grande-Ligne. The

church edifice came rather late for the success of the work in this important station. What long and weary years of waiting. Finally encouraged by a few generous English friends in Montreal and elsewhere, after a good many drawbacks, Mr. Lafleur saw the building erected and dedicated in February, 1883, and soon after entirely free from debt.

By that time several students of Grande-Ligne Institute, having in view the work of the ministry or of teaching, were following a complete course in McGill College. The first was Mr. Bracq, a convert from Romanism, now Professor at Vassar, afterwards Messrs. Parent, G. N. and A. E. Massé, and later on several others.

After a work of reorganization of the church at Grande Ligne, Mr. Therrien's second care and task was the urgent necessity of erecting a church building. One of the most cheering results was the large amount contributed by the church itself, and other French Canadian converts from Romanism. A pretty and commodious edifice was erected on a plot of ground given for that purpose by Mr. Roussy, who was not allowed to see this temple with the eyes of the flesh. On the day of the dedication of this house of worship, there were on the platform two converted priests, one, Mr. Normandeau, converted 45 years before, and the other, Mr. Gregoire, converted quite recently, and who was to be the first candidate to be baptized in the baptistry of the new church on the following Lord's day.

In the report of 1883, we said "slowly but surely the work of the Mission is drawing near the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, and it has been on the whole more than enough to encourage us to press on." It was a year of great commotion among Roman Catholics anent the Laval University, and of public discussions with priests and others. The aggregate number of baptisms that year was 39.

The year of 1885 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Mad. Feller and Mr. Roussy in Canada. Three

days were devoted to commemorate the gracious event. A great number of friends from Montreal and elsewhere gathered at Grande-Ligne to celebrate it with the missionaries.

In the historical sketch which I read on the occasion, I entered into details of persons and facts which I will not repeat here, but let me say, this same year was marked by a revival of great power, in which 40 persons were converted and 36 of them baptized. The year that followed our jubilee was marked by great activity, and several changes in the personnel of the pastorates and teachers at Grande-Ligne and elsewhere. In 1887 Mr. Therrien was called to Montreal, and Mr. and Mrs. Roux as principals resigned their positions in the Institute. The work was nevertheless actively pursued in most stations, particularly in Montreal, where the work of a frail and sickly woman was unprecedentedly successful in the sale and distribution of the holy Scriptures, and in many welcome visits to Roman Catholic families.

In the summer of 1888, there gathered on the banks of the beautiful Richelieu river, a convention of French protestants, which more than anything else, to casual observers, clearly indicated what progress had been made during these few years of missionary labor. The Grande-Ligne Mission being the acknowledged pioneer in this work, by schools, by preaching, by writings, by colportage. More than six hundred French Protestants were there, with converted priests among them, to testify to the blessed results of our labor. It need scarcely be said that those 600 were only a small portion of those who have left the Roman Church, they were chiefly those living at convenient distances from that central spot. The appearance of these people, the orations they listened to would have been commended by any community.

The year 1889 was in a great measure devoted to the raising of an Endowment and Building Fund, the business men of our Board, and the Missionaries sharing in it, the Rev. A. G. Upham, D.D., the President, bearing a large portion of the labor entailed.

The churches in connection with the Mission met in Association at Grande-Ligne, on the 26th and 27th June. Many of the laborers and former pupils exchanged greetings in the old rooms where they used to meet Mad. Feller and Mr. Roussy, little thinking that those rooms, the shrine of so many sacred memories, would a few months after be entirely destroyed. During the last term of the school some thirty young people accepted Christ as their Saviour and made profession by baptism.

Having fairly succeeded in the collections for the Endowment and Building Fund, the plans were already made, and tenders received for the enlarging and remodelling of the old building, when on the 31st January, 1890, it was entirely destroyed by fire. Painful as this was to us all, obliging us to close our school, by the loss of the old house, the library, the house furniture, etc., our Board of Directors lost no time in having other plans drawn for a larger building, better suited in its construction to our present needs. It was with a great deal of difficulty that the new wing of the Institute was saved. Even when that was secured, the painful sensation of our loss came over us, increased by the necessity staring us in the face, that in our crippled condition we must disband our pupils, most of whom had lost their all. All connected with the Mission set to work to repair the loss. Some deprived of their work of teaching went out collecting, or preaching, supplying fields that needed it. Early in the spring the plans were ready and materials on the ground. A whole summer of hard work and at times anxious thoughts elapsed, and at last a stately building, with a remodelled and enlarged wing, all

fitted up with modern improvements, with renewed out-buildings, were set apart with appropriate and most interesting services. On the 9th of October, 1890, a large number of friends of the cause, from Montreal especially, but also from many other places, came to take part in the dedication of a beautiful and much larger building, suited to our growing need.

In closing this decade, we have to mention the death of two noted missionaries, Rev. Mr. Normandeau, the converted priest, and Mrs. Normandeau, his distinguished American wife. For a good many years they had labored in intimate connection with Madame Feller and Mr. Roussy. She very unexpectedly preceded him a few months into the mysterious sphere of the larger church, on the other side of great shadow, into which she entered happily and peacefully in the faith of the dear Master. Their remains repose by the side of their great friends in Grande-Ligne cemetery. During these ten years we added from time to time, as many as 17 missionaries to our staff of laborers, ten of whom still remain with us. During that space of time, more than three hundred converts were added to our churches.

We enter with some diffidence on the ground of the last decade of this missionary work, as it is difficult to write history when it is being formed. The Grande-Ligne school was reopened with a large number of pupils. The Grande Ligne church had an accession of 20 members, that of Montreal of 18, with a great revival of interest at Ste. Marie. A strong missionary effort by several of our missionaries in the Ottawa Valley, so that the Secretary could write in all truthfulness, that the year 1891-92 was one of the most remarkable in the history of the Mission.

In 1892 the work in the parish of Maskinongé was opened for our missionaries in a way so remarkable, so unexpected that it is still in the minds of the friends of the



Mission as most extraordinary, and the news of it so wide-spread that others than missionary friends enquired about it, and Catholics, and especially the Catholic clergy, were for a long time very anxious as to the result of the affair. Many will remember that the difficulty arose anent a church building to be erected on one or the other side of the river dividing the village. A wooden chapel had been built pending the erection of a more substantial structure. As a discussion arose among Catholics as to its proper location, a Redemptorist Father preaching one day in the wooden chapel, cursed it on account of the opposition of the majority of the attendants to the recent decision of the Bishop about it. Being now a cursed building, it was abandoned as a place of worship by timorous catholics, while brave ones continued to meet there, without the services of the priest. Taking advantage of this state of things, some of our missionaries, and especially Brother Burwash, then in our employ, and colporteur Gendreau, visited these people, evangelized them, and the result was the adhesion of some fifty followers, twelve of whom were baptized on an eventful day. Later the cursed chapel where the baptisms had taken place, was abandoned, a nice chapel and parsonage built and a pastor settled there. Through the opposition of the clergy, the work was arrested for a time, as at Marieville, but after a while it will revive. In the meantime there was also a remarkable opening at Sorol. Brother Coté, then at Marlboro, Mass., was called to labor there and for a time met with good success, being also helped by Brother Gendreau, who was beaten and imprisoned, as all will remember, and finally released by the verdict of a Roman Catholia Judge, who severely reprimanded the men who had maltreated our brother. The cause seemed to justify the expense of building a place of worship which was duly built and dedicated in 1895, with very interesting services. After several years labor, Brother Coté saw his congregation diminish by emigration, especially on account of want of work for many of

the followers. Brother Côté has now resigned, and has returned to labor in the United States.

Now the time of the annual meeting and the presentation of the annual reports was changed from February to October, 1893. There had been regular preaching in all the established stations, evangelistic preaching and colportage in new places, Bible women's work in Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec. The immediate results in actual addition to our members by baptism had been 37. We had also used the press more extensively than usual. A field Secretary, Rev. E. Bosworth, was added to the forces of the Mission band. The Mission owes a good deal of its progress in financial ways and to the general forward movement of later years to this devoted hard working brother.

In October, 1895, we could write "during the past year we have had numerous tokens of God's presence and approval. All the Missionary Stations have been maintained, and new ones added. The churches have held their own with frequent additions."

In the following years, efforts have been made by the Salle Evangelique, in Montreal, repeatedly in the Ottawa Valley and elsewhere. And each year the Grande-Ligne School is filled to overflowing with pupils, under the care and able and devoted teaching of the Massé's and their associates and for nine years under the pastoral care and religious instruction of the able preacher, the man of few words but much work, the Rev. M. B. Parent. That Institution has been so often the sacred place of gracious and yearly revivals, that the missionaries would feel now very much disappointed if a scholastic year should pass without one.

Now at the close of this century after these 65 years of laborious service, you have a right to ask us for adequate results for all the money spent. If we take the aggregate results, comprising as it has a right, to all the converts

of the different missionary efforts from the beginning of the Grande-Ligne Mission, which has been the pioneer of them all, both in Canada and the United States, we may say that about forty thousand, about equally divided between these two countries, have passed from Romanism to Protestantism by the labors of missionary societies, and probably not less than ten thousand of those have received some secular and religious training in one or other of the missionary schools, such as Grande Ligne, Point aux Trembles, and others. There are now scores of French chapels or churches in French Canada, and in the New England States, and not less than six in Montreal alone. If they do not increase more in the United States, it is because the converts are more easily merged into English speaking congregations.

As for the money spent, I do not even know approximately how much it has amounted to, but I can affirm that these 65 years of intellectual, moral and spiritual warfare, have cost less than 65 hours of another kind of warfare, in South Africa for instance.

Of the 40,000 supposed to have been converted to Protestantism, and now distributed in different denominations and churches, we could only show you a small part, though some years ago under the Government of Mr. Mercier, it was ascertained that there were not less than 4000 French Protestant voters in the Province of Quebec. But how many churches, and how many members in them? We have repeatedly given these statistics in our reports, and always with some uneasiness, because in actual circumstances they are misleading, they belittle our labors and success, and for one I sincerely distrust them. Even in the Province of Québec, in the City of Montreal, where naturally the children of French Protestants go to English Protestant schools, colleges and McGill University, very many of them find their way, openly or otherwise, into English Protestant churches, and how much more so in the United States, and

especially in the New England States, where the Mission for French Evangelization have decided not to form French speaking churches, but merge the French converts into American congregations, where their very names are translated, travestied and altered in all sorts of ways. That is a natural thing enough, but then when you have swallowed us, it is enough for us to be told by Roman Catholics, that in becoming Protestants we become English, without requiring us to remain distinctly French *quand même*.

If the missionaries had not been labouring especially in view of the eternal realities of a more perfect world, they would often feel humiliated. But they had before the eye of the soul another home where they expect to meet a great many English saints. But it is not quite certain that it will be an English speaking community.

Meanwhile, where to-day in France the converts to Protestantism are many, and the conversion of noted priests amount to 130, (says one of them, Mr. Bourrier) in ten years, these converts remain in their country and form churches of their nationalities. Not only that, but great organs of the press, newspapers and reviews say and expect that Protestantism can alone save France politically and morally, that Catholicism is effete and hated by many. And prominent Catholics write large books to show that a small minority of less than a million in thirty eight millions, has so much influence as to be greatly feared, is a menace. We French Protestants have not come to this stage of influence as yet, in the Province of Quebec, but we have conquered respect, and the right to be heard in our cause, even with the Archbishop. We remember the time when we were often insulted in the pulpits, and the organs of the press could not find epithets strong enough to malign us. This has disappeared, owing in a great measure to the writings and criticisms of our French organ, the *Aurore*, which has many exchanges, and ought to be better sustained by English speaking Protestants.

The French Protestants in France were not always so powerful in their own country. Persecution forced them to become English in England, Dutch in Holland, Germans in Germany, Americans in America. Their nationality was lost, but their intelligence, their industry, their morality, their religion survived, they were still the light, the salt of the earth, as members of the true Church of Christ. So we pray that our French Christians may so develop in spite of their over-shadowing. They still form a part of a purer Christianity, which is bound to be the saving leaven for this whole continent.

Great changes have taken place in this country since the beginning of the Grande-Ligne Mission work, the population has increased from one million to five millions and a half. Education which was at its lowest ebb, has increased from year to year under the impulse and competition of English public schools, colleges and universities, and in this our missionary schools have had their share, so that to-day instead of one in ten being able to read and write, fully one-half of the French population of the Province of Quebec have attained to this, and here and there a good many more. The education given in convents is still very limited, sadly tinted with antiquated notions. We do not work with the expressed or even implied idea that there are no true or real Christians among Roman Catholics, and we do not, at least I do not, in this relation like the expression of aggressiveness. I cannot conceive that it would be the proper qualification for the way in which our blessed Lord himself labored and evangelized, but more in the manner of loving words of truth and light, letting our own light shine in good works, as in good words, being epistles read of all men. Knowing by the experience of Protestantism how difficult it is, even with an open Gospel, to form churches with a pure membership after personal profession of faith, it goes without saying, that a so-called Catholic church, where the

Gospel is very little known, where to become members of that church nothing more is required than a ceremony performed over a child in infancy, where traditions, incredible doctrines so encumber the Word of God, that it is virtually unknown and of no effect. We pursue among these people our work of enlightenment, of evangelization, of moralization, with a clear conscience, and we shall not be boasting when we say that in many places our labors and our teachings have had that result in the moralization of communities, where people are still Roman Catholics. The church in which they remain gives them light enough to understand us, to respect us, and instead of damning us, they often with an apologizing tone, ask the significant question, "Don't you think we may be saved in our religion?"

In closing, allow us to mention with gratitude to God, that we have had for years a strong and devoted board of managers, I mean the laymen and ministers, besides the missionaries, who are always supposed to be devoted if not strong. Without ignoring the worthy Presidents of other days, the Mission has had, of late years, especially as presidents, men of strong executive ability, of large views on the missionary work. Let me mention the Rev. Dr. Upham, Rev. W. N. Clarke, Mr. A. A. Ayer, and the dear brother and friend we all mourn, the late Rev. Dr. Dadson, our last President. Their readiness to help the missionaries with pen, voice and time; their unflinching kindness are duly appreciated by all the missionaries.

May we be allowed to say that the Grande-Ligne Mission has been also blessed in most of its laborers. They have generally combined some ability, devotedness and zeal with some knowledge, and a good measure of common sense, in dealing with the people we endeavor to evangelize and instruct. And this is very largely due, we think, to the fact that we prepare most of our laborers in our own Institute. To do that on a larger scale we need larger accommodation,

with larger means. Evangelization in a general way is very good, but for the great long battle of life, we need not only enlightened souls but trained minds. You cannot impart talent, still less genius, but you can show them they know very little, that they may never know much, and that may help to make them humble, but that if they are devoted, they may be fitted for higher ministries, while if they are wise in winning souls, they will some day shine for ever in the great Kingdom of their heavenly Father. The Grande-Ligné Mission, in spite of its imperfections and very limited means, has worked especially for that glorious result, to be seen on the other side of the church universal. While laboring for this country, for this continent, she often looks to her Master in heaven and to her friends on earth, for means to do a much larger work in the name of the Eternal Master.

THEODORE LAFLEUR.

MONTREAL, October, 1900.

