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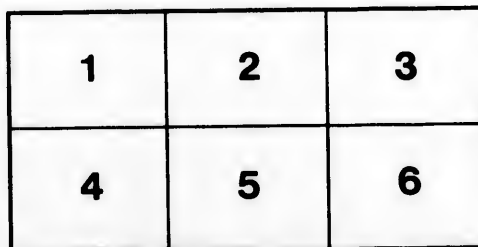
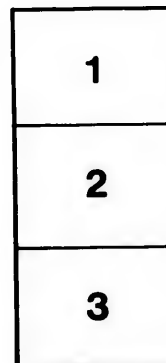
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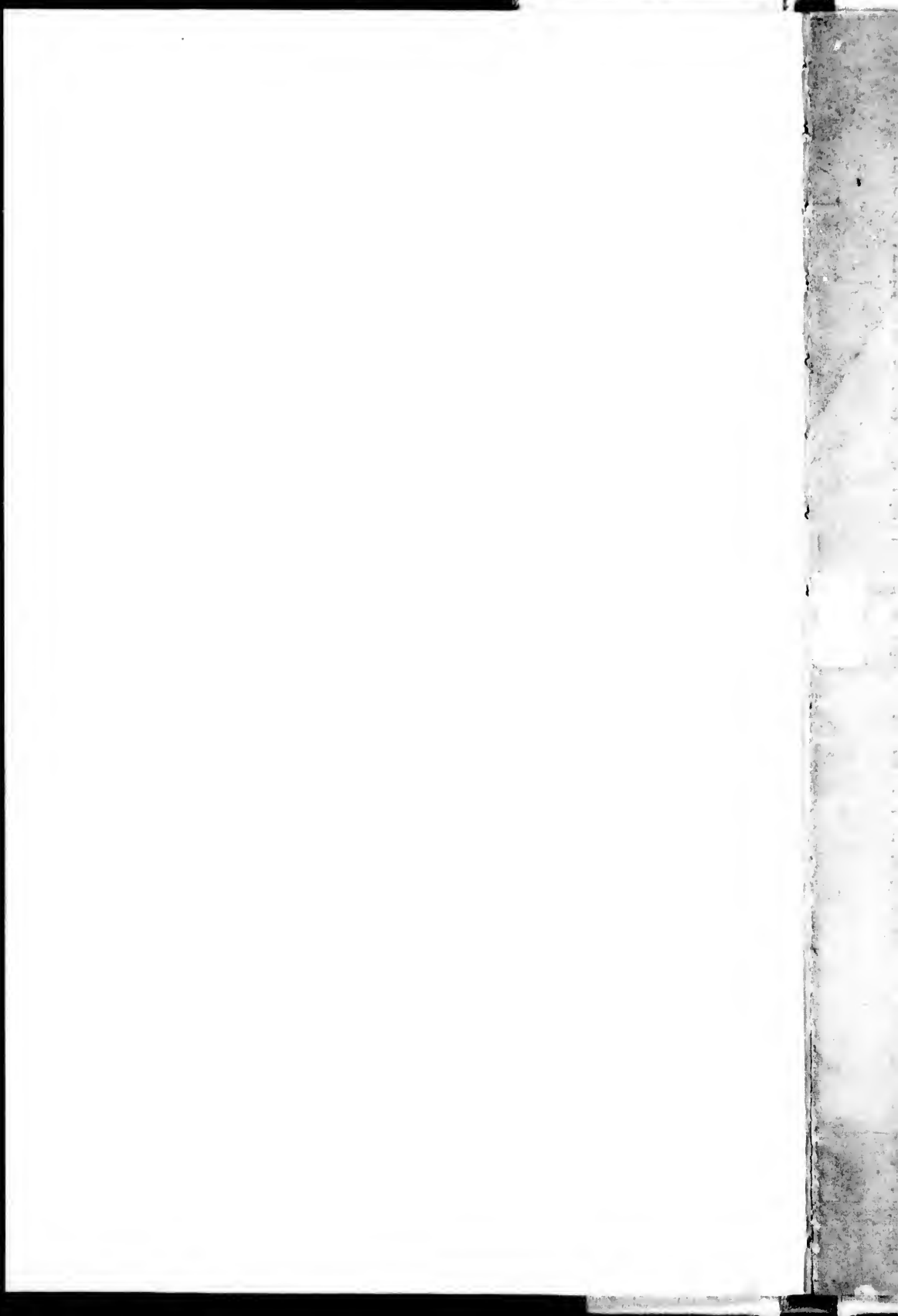
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THE
SWISS MISSIONS
OF
GRANDE LIGNE:

THEIR
Origin, History, and Present State.

In the year 1834 the Rev. H. Olivier, pastor of a Christian church at Lausanne, Switzerland, left his native country for Canada, intending to preach the gospel among the Roman Catholics. He settled at Montreal, and commenced his labours with promising indications of success. Three persons were converted, and many received the knowledge of the truth by means of conversation, preaching, and the perusal of the Scriptures and religious tracts. It pleased God, however, to prevent Mr. Olivier from realizing his wishes; the climate proved uncongenial with his constitution, and he was compelled to leave Canada in the spring of 1836.

Before his departure, two other labourers had entered into the field. Madame Feller, a member of the church over which Mr. Olivier presided, having lost her husband and her only child, had resolved to devote herself to the service of the Lord. After due consideration, and earnest prayer for guidance, she determined to follow her pastor to Canada. She was accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Roussy, a Christian minister, who had been also led to choose Canada as his sphere of labour. They sailed from Havre, September 20, 1835, landed at New York on the

23rd of the following month, and on the 31st reached Montreal. Ten days after, Mr. Roussy proceeded to Grande Ligne, in the district of L'Acadie, to take charge of a school. Madame Feller spent the winter at Montreal. In conjunction with Madame Olivier, she opened a school for the instruction of French Canadian children: much of her time was also spent in visiting the Roman Catholics in their houses, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures, and conversing with them on the truths of the gospel. By these means she obtained an accurate knowledge of the Canadian character, and was prepared for subsequent efforts.

In the latter end of May, 1836, Mr. Olivier left Canada. Madame Feller went to St. Johns, hoping to find an opportunity for usefulness there; but her endeavours failed of success through the opposition of the priest, and her attention was ultimately directed to Grande Ligne.

Mr. Roussy, it has been already stated, had undertaken the charge of a school in that district. His instructions were not confined to the communication of general knowledge, but embraced in addition the truths and duties of religion, and his spare time was employed in visiting the people, and making known to them, in a familiar manner, the way of salvation.

So much attention was excited, that he was requested to preach, with which request he complied. The priest, under whose direction the school was placed, having dismissed him from his office at the end of two months; in consequence of his evangelical zeal, he was fully at liberty to give himself to the propagation of the gospel. After preaching some time at St. Johns, he removed his residence in the fall of 1836 to St. André, from which place he regularly visited Grande Ligne.

Madame Feller became a resident at Grande Ligne in September, 1836. In the house of one of the persons who had received the truth under Mr. Roussy's ministry, she commenced those labours on which so great a blessing has since rested.

The garret was appropriated to her accommodation. In that room, twenty-four feet long by ten broad, and only six feet high, divided into two apartments, in one of which she lived and lodged, and in the other received her pupils, Madame Feller spent the winter. It was a season of arduous, yet delightful effort. At nine in the morning the

children assembled for instruction, which was continued till noon, resumed at two, P. M., and closed at five. An evening school commenced at six, which was chiefly attended by adults, with whom extended conversations were held, and whose numerous enquiries about religion often caused the meetings to be prolonged till midnight. On Lord's days the school was opened in the morning, and public worship was celebrated at noon and in the evening, when Mr. Roussy preached. The intervals were fully occupied in conferences with inquirers.

These engagements, together with visits to those in the neighbourhood who were willing to listen to the Gospel, and kind attention to the sick, severely tasked the energies of the missionaries during the winter. In the following June, the heat being insupportable in the garret, the exercises were conducted in a barn. About that time the Rev. J. Gilmour, then Pastor of the Baptist Church at Montreal, visited the Station, and being deeply affected by the inconveniences and privations endured by Madame Feller, undertook to provide some suitable accommodations. As a temporary measure a small house was erected, chiefly by means of contributions from Christian friends at Montreal, Champlain, and Plattsburgh, which was ready for occupation in the month of October. That building served for a dwelling, a school-house, and a place of worship, till the mission house was commenced in the Fall of 1838. The money required for the erection was liberally supplied by Christian friends of various denominations, especially in the United States. It was set apart to the cause of God, August 9, 1840, when the Rev. E. Kirk, of Boston, the late Rev. Caleb Strong, of Montreal, and other ministers, conducted worship, both in French and English.

During this period Mr. Roussy's labours had been extended to Champlain, Plattsburg, Henryville, and several other places.

In the accession of the Rev. L. Normandeau to the Mission in the autumn of 1840, the good Providence of God was strikingly manifested. Mr. Normandeau was a Priest of the Roman Catholic Church, and had been engaged as Professor in the Seminary at Quebec for five years. After a long season of doubt and anxiety on the subject of religion, being then in the neighbourhood of Grande Ligne, he sought the aid of the Missionaries, and by their instrumentality was led to receive the truth as it

is in Jesus. He engaged immediately in the good work, and was received as a fellow labourer with much joy and gratitude. Referring to this event Madame Feller observed, in a letter to a friend at New York :—" Our oldest pupils had reached a point beyond which they could proceed no further ; more advanced instruction had become necessary, and it gave me pain to see the impossibility of attending myself to their lessons, with the multitude of other duties to fill up my days. I was often obliged either to break off from a recitation already begun, or to keep persons waiting who had come from several leagues distant ; and this conflict was of every day's occurrence. Mr. Roussy, less occupied with details, could more easily appropriate a few hours to the scholars, but absence from home, journeys and preaching, made it impossible to observe regularity, and the prospect before us presented only confusion and disorder, while we never felt so much the need of system and order in our school. Often we spread before the Lord our solicitude, entreating him to send prompt relief, and in our little faith we thought He could only answer us by sending out some one from Switzerland : and behold our God, so full of goodness, in order to encourage our faith, has given us what we dared not even ask for, a priest, converted under our own roof, as a brother, friend, and fellow labourer."

The Gospel was introduced to St. Pie in the Spring of 1841. The gift of a New Testament to an inhabitant of that place who was on a visit to Grande Ligne, produced, by the blessing of God, most encouraging and remarkable results. During the summer of the above mentioned year a school was opened at St. Pie ; another was established in the year following at Berée. Meanwhile, these new Stations were visited as often as possible, numerous copies of the Scriptures were distributed ; and the Gospel was preached to large and attentive Congregations.

A Mission House was erected in 1842, which was devoted to the Service of God by appropriate exercises on Christmas Day of that year.

It became evident that St. Pie would become an important Station, and it was extremely desirable that it should be occupied by a suitable Agent ; here again the providence and grace of God were remarkably displayed. Dr. Cote, a gentleman of the medical profession, a native of Canada, and held in high esteem among his countrymen, having

been driven by Popery into Deism, had been convinced of the truth of Christianity in the year 1841, and led to yield himself in the cause of Christ. A residence of two years at Chazy had prepared him for more extensive engagements. He removed to St. Pie in October, 1843, and entered on a course of diligent and disinterested labour, which has been abundantly blessed. On the 30th August, 1844, he was ordained Pastor of the Church. The Rev. Dr. Baird, of New York, the Rev. Messrs. Wilkes and Tanner, of Montreal, and other ministers, engaged in the exercises of the day.

Salem, in the district of St. Pie, and Sherrington, in the Grande Ligne district, were added to the list of Stations in the year 1844.

It was not to be expected that efforts of this kind would be employed without exciting opposition. From the very first the endeavours of the missionaries were resisted, and fierce persecutions awaited those who received and obeyed the truth. They were seriously maltreated, in person and in property, held up to public scorn, and threatened with the loss of all things. On one occasion, during the insurrection of 1837, the missionaries at Grande Ligne, with the converts and their families, were compelled to leave their homes and retire for a time to the United States. At a later period, in the autumn of 1843, serious riots occurred at St. Pie. Infuriated mobs were gathered and provoked to deeds of violence and blood, by persons whose education and standing in society ought to have induced a different line of conduct. The house of one of the converts was burnt to the ground, and other outrages committed, the suppression of which was at length procured by an appeal to the protection of the law. Other measures have been adopted, such as the circulation of foul calumnies, threats of divine judgments, the burning of bibles, &c. &c. Nevertheless, amidst all, the grace of God has sustained his servants, and his cause has gloriously triumphed.

The policy of the missionaries has been exclusively evangelical;—they have aimed to do good from the beginning till now, (and they see no reason to change their course,) not by provoking controversy or employing means adapted to irritate or annoy, but by freely and affectionately proclaiming the love of God in Christ, and exhorting men to read and examine for themselves that blessed volume which contains the news of salvation. Extensive

usefulness has rewarded their endeavours. The church at Grande Ligne was formed in June, 1837, consisting then of only six members, the two missionaries, Madame Feller and Mr. Roussy, included. Reviewing the history of the first five years of the Mission, in a letter dated November 1, 1841, Mr. Roussy observed, "What a difference in our present position, in our prosperity, in our hopes : in fine, in every thing ! Then (1836) we were but two poor, feeble, weary beings ; our dwelling was a miserable cabin, where, with our first converts, we worshipped God. We held a school in a barn ; and the enemy, in order to destroy this feeble commencement at a blow, drove us all out together. But now, behold us in a good and commodious stone house, founded by faith, and built by the gold and silver of the children of the Lord ; in which are a beautiful chapel, two school rooms, an educational institution, where are instructed and supported eleven pupils, all converted and preparing for the work of God, and with the prospect of having a greater number soon ; sixty Canadians, who have given their hearts to Jesus, and a goodly number of others rescued from the papacy. Oh ! what favours ! what abundance of grace !"

The retrospect of the second five years is still more encouraging and delightful. During that period, between forty and fifty persons were brought to the knowledge of the Saviour under Dr. Cote's ministrations at Chazy. By the blessing of God on his labours at St. Pie, very many more were converted, so that upwards of one hundred persons, affording satisfactory proof of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, have been received into church-fellowship in that place ; and these numbers, added to the converts at Grande Ligne and its neighbourhood, present a total of about three hundred souls rescued from ignorance and sin, and introduced into that kingdom which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The present state of the Mission may now be briefly described :

The Mission Family at Grande Ligne consists of thirty-six persons, including Madame Feller, the Missionaries, and twenty-three pupils, most of whom, it is hoped, will be engaged in the work of God, as Colporteurs or School Teachers.

The Elementary Day School at Grande Ligne contains thirty children, whose parents reside in the immediate neighbourhood. They are instructed at present by Jacob Dalpé, a young man who has been several years under the care of the Missionaries and conducts the School to their satisfaction.

In addition to Biblical Researches and Theological Instruction, the pupils resident in the house are engaged in the study of Latin, Greek, History, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Physiology, according to their respective abilities, under the care of the Rev. L. Normandeau. The Elementary branches are taught by Toussaint Riendeau. A Public Examination, held in May last, afforded gratifying proof of their proficiency in the various branches of knowledge in which they had been trained, encouraging the belief that the pains and expense bestowed on them will be amply rewarded.

Several persons have lately abandoned Romanism and joined the church at Grande Ligne, and an interesting state of inquiry prevails in many parts of the district. Many refuse to submit to the tyranny and exactions of the priests; the visits of the missionaries are received with gratitude; and the word of God is eagerly read.

Theodore Lafleur, a young man who had been a student at Grande Ligne upwards of two years, and who appears to possess promising talents for the Christian Ministry, has proceeded to Geneva, at the expense of the Canada Baptist Missionary Society, to study Theology in the Institution over which the celebrated Dr. Merle D'Aubigné so ably presides. He has been very kindly received, and has commenced his studies with good prospects of a favourable issue.

At *Sherrington*, Mademoiselle Perusset perseveres in her exertions, in the spirit of true devotedness. Upwards of thirty children, most of whom belong to Roman Catholic families, attend her school, and evince warm attachment to their teacher. Mademoiselle Perusset embraces other opportunities of doing good, by visiting the neighbouring houses, and reading the Scriptures to their inmates. Her efforts are not unattended with personal danger; nevertheless, she continues to labour, and reaps as well as sows.

The brethren who reside at *Sherrington* have been recently encouraged by evidences of blessing: their meetings

are well attended, and they enjoy in an eminent degree the fellowship of saints.

Eloi Roi traverses a large district around *Henryville*, and performs the work of a Colporteur with indefatigable diligence. Some of the fruits of his labours are already found in the Church at Grande Ligne. New openings for usefulness are frequently presented. Miss Newton has been stationed at Henryville, as a teacher; in the school under her superintendence thirty-five children are receiving instruction.

Occasional visits are still paid to *Chazy*, as opportunity permits.

The District of *St. Pie* is as interesting as ever. Recent intelligence furnishes striking evidence that the Lord graciously blesses his word. During the year 1846 the Church at *St. Pie* was encouraged by the addition of thirteen members, all of whom, with one exception, were brought out of the errors and superstitions of Romanism. A protracted meeting, held in the fall of the year, appears to have been blessed to the members of the Church, as well as to others who met with them, awakening penitence, humbling the souls of men before God, and producing fruits of righteousness to his glory. Dr. Cote writes that several persons are in a hopeful state, whose conversion, there is reason to expect, will be ere long reported.

These successes have excited the rage of the enemies of the truth. The Jesuits, fearing the results of the spread of the gospel, held continuous meetings at *St. Hyacinthe* in the fall of last year, with a view to revive the zeal of the Romanists, and check, if possible, the advance of evangelical principles. They chanted masses—preached against Protestantism—and burned Bibles—but all in vain. Instead of accomplishing their purpose, they had the mortification to learn that some who had hitherto been steadfast in Romanism, had been led by these proceedings to inquire after truth, and ultimately to embrace it. Persecution was then resorted to, and not without effect. The lives of two persons were in danger, and they were compelled to leave *St. Hyacinthe* and take refuge in another place. This, too, it is not to be doubted, will be overruled for good: the Lord will “cause the wrath of man to praise him.”

The Colporteurs in the District of *St. Pie* discharge their duties with fidelity and zeal. François L'Amoureux, François Maurisette, Eusebe Menard, and Romuald Des-

roches, are constantly employed in the good work. They are favoured with ready access to the houses of the French Canadians, and quietly diffuse the truths of the gospel among a large population.

The schools at St. Pie and Berée are going on favourably. One of the schools near St. Pie was discontinued some time ago, but has been replaced by another under the care of Baptiste Auger, a member of the Church of St. Pie, who has been engaged for several months, in the Grande Ligne District, as a Colporteur. These Schools contain one hundred and thirty-two children.

There are two new Stations, one at Canaan, and the other at Thessalonica, which, if they can be efficiently occupied, promise a rich harvest, by the Divine blessing, on the means employed.

The number of labourers now employed as Missionaries, Colporteurs, or School Teachers, (not including their wives, unless they are actually engaged in the work) is twenty; the number of Stations and sub-stations, eleven. Upwards of 200 children are under instruction.

Madame Feller and Mr. Roussy came to Canada under the patronage of a Missionary Society in Switzerland, from which Society they continued to receive occasional aid. During the years 1837 and 1838 their operations were carried on under the auspices of the Canada Baptist Missionary Society; some assistance was also received from the United States and from Scotland. In the autumn of the last mentioned year their connexion with the Canada Baptist Missionary Society was dissolved, the Missionaries being then of opinion that they could labour more efficiently if they were independent of all religious parties. They continued to do so for nearly seven years, during which time they received numerous and valuable tokens of Christian regard from all denominations. The fostering care of the Foreign Evangelical Society rendered essential service to the cause. Pecuniary grants, varying from 550 to 1200 dollars, were received annually from that Society. Besides this, the patronage of the Society stimulated the zeal of Christians, and encouraged the formation of numerous Ladies' Associations, which raised considerable sums of money, and otherwise assisted the mission. Aid was also received from Switzerland, England, and Canada. The funds annually realized from all these sources gradu-

ally increased from 1,800 to 5,000 dollars, more than three-fourths of which were furnished by friends in the United States.

In the autumn of 1845, proposals were made to enter into a more definite and permanent arrangement with the Foreign Evangelical Society. That arrangement, however, was not found practicable. After much deliberation and prayer, the Missionaries came to the conclusion that their operations could no longer be conducted on the plan which had been pursued for several years past, and that a re-union with the English Baptists was desirable. A deputation from the Committee of the Canada Baptist Missionary Society visited Grande Ligne, in order to hold a conference with Madame Feller and the Missionaries. The blessing of the Lord evidently rested on that meeting, encouraging all present to believe that prayer was answered. Difficulties were removed; objections vanished away; and a plan of union and co-operation was formed.

The Swiss Missions of Grande Ligne are now re-united to the Canada Baptist Missionary Society, and placed under its superintendence. The management of their affairs is entrusted to a Committee, consisting of four members of the Committee of the Society, and four members of the missionary body connected with Grande Ligne. It is designated "The Swiss Mission Committee." A separate account is kept of the receipts and expenditure for this object, under the designation of "The Swiss Mission Fund."

The "Swiss Mission Committee" for 1847, is thus constituted :—

Grande Ligne.

Madame Feller,
Rev. L. Roussy,

Rev. L. Normandeau,
Rev. Dr. Cote.

Montreal.

Rev. J. M. Cramp, A. M.
Rev. J. Girdwood,

John Dunn, Esq.
Joseph Wenham, Esq.

Such is the Swiss Mission enterprise. It is arduous and honourable; involving solemn responsibilities; requiring great faith; often calling into exercise qualities seemingly incompatible—simplicity and prudence—affection and firmness—calm consideration and ardent zeal; and withal, so conducted and controlled, in the wisdom of God, as that, while extraordinary success has accompanied the

endeavours of his servants, for which they cannot be sufficiently grateful, they have been continually reminded of their absolute dependence on his providence and grace, and taught, not without painful experience, that it is God who "worketh all in all." Employment in such an undertaking is a high distinction, of which the best men might be lawfully ambitious.

The Canada Baptist Missionary Society engaged in this effort in full confidence that an undertaking so truly Christian and Protestant would continue to enjoy general support. Very liberal contributions have been received. Nevertheless, the excess of expenditure over receipts, for the year ending December 31st, last, amounted to £448 16s. 8d.;—the receipts having been £1323 6s., and the expenditure £1772 2s. 8d. In addition to this, the "Swiss Mission Fund" was indebted to the Society, for the preceding year, to a considerable amount. The debt is now about seven hundred pounds, and is still increasing. A very considerable sum will be required to sustain the Missions, according to the present scale of operations, to the end of the year. It is therefore of the highest importance to secure the engagement of a larger number of Christians in different parts of the world, and of all evangelical denominations, in this truly noble enterprise.

The Rev. George Silver, of Beamsville, Canada West, has undertaken an agency on behalf of the Mission, for a limited time, and is now engaged in the prosecution of that agency in the State of New York. Christian friends in that district, it is confidently hoped, will render generous assistance.

During the month of June last, the Rev. J. M. Cramp visited sundry places in Canada West, and presented the claims of the Mission to brethren of various denominations, with encouraging success. At London, at Hamilton, and at Toronto, public meetings were held, which were numerously attended, and excited considerable interest. It was manifest, throughout the whole journey, that the Swiss Missions of Grande Ligne are regarded by Christians of all denominations, with cordial affection, and that the undertaking, from its peculiarly Protestant character, is viewed as deserving the patronage of every one who desires the downfall of antichristian error, superstition, and imposture.

MONTREAL, *September, 1847.*

* * Contributions will be thankfully received by the Members of the Swiss Mission Committee. Also by Mr. James Hearle, Treasurer of the Canada Baptist Missionary Society, Montreal : by S. R. Kelly, Esq., 91, Wall Street, and T. S. Doremus, Esq., Warren Street, New York; Joseph Howes, Esq., Montpelier, Vermont; N. S. Demill, Esq., St. John, and Rev. S. Spurden, Fredericton, New Brunswick; J. W. Nutting, Esq., and Mr. S. Selden, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Rev. S. J. Rand, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. In Great Britain, by Rev. Joseph Angus, A. M., Baptist Mission House, Moorgate Street, London; Rev. Christopher Anderson, Edinburgh; and Rev. James Paterson, Glasgow.

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