

available in the C.E.M.S. a network of influence which would penetrate to the remotest parts of our complex modern social system, and through which could be transmitted the influence drawn from the great Head of the Church Himself, until the whole world was radiant with His presence.

Mr S. E. McCarthy, S.M., moved a hearty vote of thanks to the speakers, and in doing so said that the coming of the C.E.M.S. and the General Mission showed that there existed in the Church of England forces which had only to be let loose to sweep through the world like cleansing fire.

The Ven. Archdeacon Williams seconded the motion, expressing his gratitude to the speakers for what they had said, and urging the claims of the Laymen's Society.

The vote of thanks was carried with tremendous enthusiasm, after which the Bishop pronounced the Benediction.

St. Andrew's, Port Napier.

The St. Andrew's branch of the Church of England Men's Society officially began its existence on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 6th, when the Bishop, assisted by Canon Mayne, inducted twenty-two men into the Society. The material looked very promising—real, live men. The Vicar read prayers, Canon Mayne read the lessons, and the Bishop delivered a most earnest and affectionate address on the superiority of the service of love to the service of duty. The congregation was very large, reverent and attentive, whilst the singing was inspiring in its universal heartiness, "praising God by proxy" being looked upon with evident disfavour (may it long be so!), while the service was very impressive.

On the following Tuesday, the newly formed branch met in the Parish Hall, when the following persons became office-bearers:—President, the Vicar; Vice-Presidents, Captain Lake and Mr Hubert Speight; Committee: Messrs Edgeley, F. Smith, H. Prebble, Capt. Lake; Secretary, Mr R. H. Florance. The meeting was full of brightness and interest, and promises well for the future of the local branch.

Taradale.

Our branch met on Tuesday evening, November 8th, when there was a full attendance of members, except one who was away on a shearing tour inland. A very helpful evening was spent; papers were read, and matters

concerning the welfare of the parish discussed in general. Opportunity was taken to bid farewell to our dear brother, Rev. G. W. Davidson, who left next day for Tologa Bay. Although absent from our future meetings, he will have the heartfelt sympathy and prayers of the branch in his new work. Three new members (Messrs A. Burr, S. Harris, and J. H. Walker) were admitted by the Vicar at the evening service on Sunday, November 6th, and we have several more enquiries. The Branch lays stress upon the fact that if a man wishes to join he must come forward without any coaxing. Let us aim at quality, not quantity.

Rotorua.

The membership of the above is now twenty-five, Messrs F. H. Batten and T. L. Thompson being the latest to be admitted. The members are keen in various branches of Church work. A working bee, consisting of Messrs Carter, Cragg, Fannin, Halkett, Thompson, Hammond, and Bent have been busy on Saturday afternoons painting the church fence; Mr Chilton, one of our choir members, also kindly assisted. The C.E.M.S. men have also taken up the matter of the reduction of the church debt in a very systematic way. A list of the Church members and supporters has been drawn up, and circulars have been issued to them calling for their co-operation. The town has been divided into districts, and the following members of the C.E.M.S. will take up the work of collecting and interviewing, viz: Messrs Algie, Melville, Fannin, Hawkins, Carter, Wrathall, Bent, and Lyons. The men recognise the urgent necessity of reducing the Church debt so that further pressing works may be put in hand, particularly the extension of the Church building, which is being found on many occasions during the summer to be inadequate for the attendance. It is also very necessary that our Archdeacon should have the assistance of a curate. These things cannot be achieved until our debt is considerably reduced. In the meantime the C.E.M.S. men are putting their shoulders to the wheel, and nine of them have been admitted as lay readers, so that the work of the district will not suffer in the meantime. The gentlemen who offered their services as lay readers are:—Messrs Bent, Carter, Fannin, Hammond, Hawkins, Lyons, Thom, Webber, and Ransom. Mr Ransom is conducting the services at Mamaku while Mr Tisdall is away from there, and the

others are prepared to keep up the services at the Waipa and Waiotapu Prison Camps, and at Kaharoa, and in Rotorua during Mr Tisdall's absence. They are also assisting by reading the lessons on Sundays and at the week-night services. Mr Hunt, of the Gisborne branch of the C.E.M.S., has also been helping us in the services. During Mr Tisdall's absence at Synod the week-night services were conducted by the C.E.M.S. men. On the first Sunday of this month (November), Messrs Carter and Bent journeyed to the Waiotapu and Waipa Prison Camps, and conducted the services there. The prisoners appreciated the visit very much, and entered very heartily into the services, having felt the want of them since Mr Raikes had left us.

Messrs Thom and Hammond, who were our Synodsmen on the recent Synod at Napier, also represented our Branch at the C.E.M.S. Conference held in that city during Synod week.

Christmas with the Poets.

From early times poets have written about the birth-day of our Lord, and their songs invariably breathe a spirit of joy, of strength, of victory. There is something in the picture of the helpless babe in the manger cradle that tunes the faith of the Christian to concert pitch, and he believes with joy unspeakable, for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and he knows that this helpless babe is the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the great and mighty Lord, the Prince of Peace, Who will redeem all mankind.

So Christmas is the season when Christians forget their divisions in their joy over the birth of their common Lord, and the following verses have been chosen from sources many and various:—

Whittier has a touching little hymn sung by children on the first Christmas after they have been freed from slavery, and expressive of their gratitude:—

"The holy day that saw Thee born
Was never half so dear."

The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile,
O never shone a day so glad
On sweet St. Helen's Isle.

The "Star of Bethlehem" describes how a lonely stranger in an Eastern land was cheered and his faith and