

The Hochelaga Protestant School Disaster.

Lady Principal and Sixteen Pupils Victims

One of the worst disasters that has ever befallen Montreal was the destruction by fire of the Hochelaga Protestant School on Tuesday afternoon, by which sixteen children and the Principal, Miss Sarah Maxwell, who, after most heroic efforts at rescue, were burned to death.

In the building were a hundred and fifty young children under the charge of four lady teachers. Suddenly they were confronted with the dangers of an outbreak of fire. Not one of the teachers flinched in the face of peril, but all undertook to get the children out of the building with as little alarm as possible. Not a word was said of danger, but in each class room the order was given to the children to put on their clothes and hasten home.

But the fire spread with such rapidity that almost half the children, and the youngest ones, were shut off in the upper story. There were no fire escapes; the smoke prevented their going downstairs, and no other method of escape was possible.

Although within a few minutes of the outbreak neighboring workmen had a ladder at one of the upper windows and rescued fully a score, and a few minutes later the firemen had arrived and saved some forty more, sixteen of the little ones, eight boys and eight girls, were suffocated, and their principal fell a victim with them, while Miss Keyes was only taken out of the building with her clothes on fire, and in a fainting condition. It would have been easy for Miss Maxwell, the principal, to have saved herself, but with the flames fast closing in she refused the call of the firemen, and once more braved the burning room to search for the others she knew were in peril. She did not find them, but died in the attempt.

Chief Benoit and the other officers of the fire brigade, who were on the scene, are emphatic that had there been proper fire escapes not a life need have been lost.

The firemen first applied themselves to saving life, without regard for the building, and their work was rewarded by the carrying to safety of close upon half a hundred children. A living chain of firemen lined a ladder, and with Capt. Carson at the top, and the teachers inside, the little ones were one by one handed out and passed down to safety. Towards the end the flames crept so close, and the smoke so surrounded the men on the upper rungs that streams of water had to be played on them that they might stay there and as fast as the water fell it froze on their clothes in the bitter cold while the streams from below soaked them through.

The fire broke out about 1.45, in the basement, having evidently originated from an overheated furnace. The building was heated by hot air, and the big pipes served as flues to carry the smoke and flames all over the building, so that within five minutes of the first alarm it was completely enveloped. It was the smoke that proved so fatal. Few of the children were burned, and subsequent examination showed that even these few had died from suffocation before the flames reached them.

Many scenes of deep pathos were witnessed both at the fire and at the morgue, as parents recognized the blackened remains of their children. In one case a father, Mr. Andrew Spragg, lost two daughters, one of whom was in the kindergarten, while the younger had gone for the first time to visit her sister. It was in the kindergarten that the most dreadful fatality occurred, almost all of the dead ranging from three to eight years old.

Great Things from Little Causes Grow.—It takes very little to derange the stomach. The cause may be a slight cold, something eaten or drunk, anxiety, worry, or some other simple cause. But if precautions be not taken, this simple cause may have most serious consequences. Many a chronically debilitated constitution to-day owes its destruction to simple causes not dealt with in time. Keep the digestive apparatus in healthy condition and all will be well. Parnelle's Vegetable Pills are better than any other for the purpose.

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Before a box alarm was sent in a telephone call was received at No. 18 fire station, which is located about five hundred yards from the school. Capt. Carson at once organized his men to set up an extension ladder to the second story window, where Miss Maxwell and Miss Keyes were signalling for help. The ladder was promptly run up, and every man who could crowd upon it got in position to make a living chain to rescue the little ones. Capt. Carson headed the ladder, inside the window was Miss Maxwell, surrounded by a swarm of children, all excited and terrified.

As soon as the firemen had formed their living chain to safety Miss Maxwell handed her little pupils one by one to Capt. Carson, and they were swiftly passed down the ladder from hand to hand to the ground. Thus the work went on until probably forty of the children had been saved, and it seemed that none were left. Then Capt. Carson called to Miss Maxwell to save herself. "No, there are others inside, and we must save them," she replied, and ran back to look for the other little ones, whom she knew must be on the upper floor. That was the last seen of her.

"Miss Maxwell ran back, and we called her to come out, as the room was full of smoke and flames," said Capt. Carson. "Then she disappeared in the smoke, and we could not locate her again. It was all we could do, and an hour later on her body was carried through the window, along with those of the children she had tried so hard to save."

This is the whole story of the fire. It was utter confusion at a time when confusion meant death to those who were unable to understand why they met it. From those older authorities, who should have supplied the necessary means of escape, there was no help. The building was an old-fashioned one, crooked stairways, narrow passages—not a single fire escape! What a pity! Had there been a fire escape the firemen are positive that there need not have been one life lost.

PRECAUTIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED BY CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD.

Fire precautions, and the necessity for providing ample means of egress from buildings in case of fire had been discussed by the Board of Catholic School Commissioners, and a report was to have been presented by a special committee which had been appointed to investigate the matter.

Father William O'Meara, pastor of St. Gabriel's parish, and a member of the Board of Catholic School Commissioners, was asked if the matter of fire precautions had been taken up by the body in charge of the Catholic schools, and he answered as quoted in the foregoing:

"The statement was made, Father O'Meara, that the Catholic schools are not as well equipped as those of the Protestant Commission."

"I hardly think that is so," replied Father O'Meara. "In fact, I think that all the schools are fairly well equipped. It is true that not all of them have fire escapes, but in many instances properly constructed stairways are better than ordinary fire escapes."

In conclusion, Father O'Meara said: "There is one thing I have always been opposed to and that is the practice of placing the smaller and younger children in the upper floors. That is shameful, and should not be permitted, because in time of accident these little ones are not able to look after themselves as the older children can."

Father Donnelly's Anniversary.

The forty-sixth anniversary of the Rev. J. E. Donnelly, St. Anthony's Church, was fittingly celebrated both by the younger and older members of the parish. Thursday afternoon the pupils of St. Agnes Academy held a reception in his honor. In the evening St. Anthony's Juvenile Total Abstinence and Benefit Society held a special entertainment. The juvenile members acquitted themselves admirably in solos, dialogues, choruses and recitations. At the end of the programme, Rev. Father Donnelly thanked the younger portion of his flock for their delightful

entertainment.

The ladies and gentlemen of the parish, on Friday evening, tendered him a reception. The hall was tastefully decorated, the electric display being also beautiful. About four hundred parishioners attended. Rev. Father M. L. Shea opened the proceedings with a few remarks, and a programme of music and song was rendered.

Mrs. J. D. Davis, on behalf of the married ladies of the parish, read the address to the Rev. Father Donnelly, and the reverend gentleman replied briefly but feelingly.

The evening's entertainment which followed was a very successful one, the selections given by the choir were well rendered, the solo of Mr. W. Kearney being very pleasing. The eucbre games were keenly contested. The prizes were very valuable ones, consisting of a Japanese fancy fan, fruit dish, silver spoon, prayer book, tobacco pouch, Japanese dish, box of cigars and tobacco jar.

Amongst those present were: Rev. M. L. Shea, Rev. T. F. Heffernan, Messrs. J. D. Davis, T. L. O'Neill, J. Mulcair, Thos. Kinsella, T. A. Laing, M. Dineen.

Death of a Distinguished Nun.

St. Ann's Convent, Lachine, has lost a worthy member in the person of Sister Mary Alexander, who died on Saturday, the 16th inst. The late Sister entered the Order of St. Ann at the age of seventeen, and for thirty-five years was untiring in her chosen field of labor. Her religious career began in Oswego, N. Y., and was continued in Cohoes, N. Y. In both places she was held in high esteem by sisters, pupils and people. Later foundress of the convent at Vancouver City, B.C., she occupied the post of Superior there as well as at St. Mary's (Mission City, B.C.). Everywhere she displayed the same spirit of noble self-sacrifice, zeal and devotedness. When ill health necessitated her return to the mother-house at Lachine a few years ago, although she had relinquished the duties of Superior, her time was incessantly employed in doing good to others. Countless are they who have been helped by her sweet sympathy, her constant efforts for the good of souls. Her only aim was to do His will Morning and night—her creed—His glory and praise. In His sweet name

She hallowed her humblest deed. Sister M. Alexander (Mary Hickey) was a native of Montreal. She leaves five sisters and one brother. The latter and two of her sisters reside in this city, Miss A. Hickey and Mrs. T. Moore, wife of our well known and much esteemed citizen, Mr. Thomas Moore, formerly of Ottawa street; Mrs. P. Gannon, Mrs. M. Gannon and Miss Amelia Hickey, of Minneapolis, Miss. The funeral service was held at Lachine on Monday, the 18th inst. It was largely attended by relatives and friends. To her bereaved family and sorrowing community we tender our heartfelt sympathy.

SOCIETY NEWS.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ORGANIZE LECTURE.

At Nazareth Hall, Mance street, on Tuesday evening, March 12th, under the auspices of the Knights of Columbus, the Rev. Gerald J. McShane will deliver an illustrated lecture, the subject being "Memories of the Seven Hills." It will be remembered that some two years ago at Windsor Hall, Father McShane lectured with much success on the beauties of Venice. The present entertainment will be conducted on similar lines. One hundred limelight views, specially collected by the lecturer, will be used to advantage, and Miss Mamie Babin, soloist, of Ottawa, will render appropriate vocal numbers. The sale of tickets opens on March 7th at Shaw's Music store where the plan of the hall may be seen.

ST. ANTHONY'S COURT, C.O.F.

The progressive eucbre among the members of the above Court is going on merrily, and so far the competition has been very interesting to the members. Bros. W. Graham and Walsh were the last two to qualify for a place in the finals.

The Court will give a May Day entertainment to their friends, and other little amusements will be booked in the near future, so that there is a lively time in store for the friends and members of old St. Anthony's.

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At St. Ann's Last Sunday

Father Hamel Delivered eloquent Sermon.

At St. Ann's Church last Sunday, Rev. Father Hamel delivered a very eloquent sermon on the sin of scandal. Father Hamel said:

"There is a crime committed in the world which is most mercilessly dealt with, the crime of murder. The murderer has an indelible character imprinted on him like Cain. Murder is a dreadful crime. Not only people, but nations, civilized and uncivilized, religion, reason, history, nature—all condemn murder. The murderer is punished by losing the great gift of life. He has to pay the penalty of his crime upon the gallows or in the electric chair. So much for the murderer who takes away the life of the body. But there is the spiritual murderer, who is a thousand times worse than the one who destroys the body. The soul of a being created by God is murdered by the steel of an assassin.

The assassin is the scandal-giver and scandal is his steel. Scandal is so great a crime in the sight of God that it calls to Heaven for vengeance. What is scandal? "Scandal," says St. Thomas, the eminent doctor of the Church, "is any word, action or omission of duty which leads another to sin."

There are many who go to confession regularly but never confess the awful sin of scandal. In the family immodest conversation goes on leading people to impurity. Missing Mass on Sundays, yielding to sinful actions, theft, and giving away to drunkenness, persons guilty of such sins before others are spiritual murderers. No crime in the world to-day is so great as scandal. The scandal giver instructs persons to commit sin, to lose their faith, and leads them to ruin. It is no wonder that Christ says: "Woe to the man by whom scandal cometh, better that a mill stone be hanged around his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea." The scandal giver exhorts and instructs others in the ways of vice and wickedness. Fathers and mothers give scandal when they say or do anything that is not right before their children. Young men who visit saloons and gambling dens, who use improper conversation at street corners, are guilty of scandal. In workshops people who carry on immodest conversations are guilty of scandal. Persons who dress immodestly, and those who give bad books to others to read are using the steel that penetrates the soul and their sin cries out for vengeance and the curse of God.

Fathers and mothers who allow their children out late at night, learning wickedness in the den of the devil, in the house of impurity, are great spiritual murderers. If the murderer of the body receives capital punishment, what will the murderer of the soul receive? The curse of God here and the awful punishments of hell hereafter.

The sins of the scandal-giver multiply and multiply. The work of the scandal-giver destroys the immense work of God. It took Christ thirty-three years of hard labor and bitter sufferings to save an immortal soul, it takes only a very short time for the scandal-giver to frustrate the Master's work. The scandal-giver was worse than the executioners of Christ. He plants in the soul of his victim the image of the devil and is even worse than Satan.

Referring to the punishments of the scandal-giver, he said he receives the curse of God in life and in death the scandal-giver loses his faith, there is no sacrament for him, no mass, he falls into some awful crime, and goes unprepared to meet the judgments of God. He is bound down to the pits of hell, he cannot make the mission, his sins are going up into the millions, swelling to the mountain height. He dies a reckless Catholic, the curse of his own wife, his father, his mother and his children.

The death-bed scene of the scandal-giver was then exposed. Very often when the priest visits such persons he has to give them conditional absolution, while at other times his heart bleeds as the dying sinner refuses to be reconciled with his God.

The scandal-giver meets all those whom he exhorted and instructed in wickedness in the pits of hell, but, alas! the scene is changed; they are no longer friends, but now bitter enemies, tearing and devouring one another like wild beasts.

In conclusion he exhorted those who were guilty of scandal to make reparation to the best of their ability. It was impossible to make full

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reparation, yet they could do their best and God would accept it. As there was no crime under the heavens so great as scandal, Our Lord pronounced the awful punishment against it. The life of a good Christian, attentive to the duties of his religion, attentive in prayer, would merit the sentence of welcome from the lips of the Just Judge at the moment the soul enters into eternity.

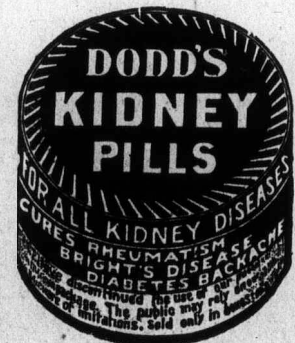
WOMEN'S MISSION BEGINS.

The unmarried women's mission at St. Ann's Church opened in the afternoon at three o'clock, and continues all week.

The married men's mission closed on Sunday evening. The closing scene was one of grandeur. An immense congregation filled the church. The sermon dealt with the means of perseverance in God. After the sermon each one holding a lighted taper in his hand, pronounced aloud the baptismal vows. The blessing of the church was then imparted, followed by the Papal Benediction. The decorations of the main altar were very pretty. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the proceedings.

AT ST. GABRIEL'S.

The married women's mission at St. Gabriel's Church closed last Sunday afternoon, and in the evening the married men's mission opened. At the high Mass, Rev. Father Doyle, S.J., preached, and in the afternoon, Rev. Father Malone, S. J. Rev. Father Doyle opened the men's mission in the evening.



A Dignified Protest.

Catholic Societies Complain of Lack of Representation, St. Patrick's Day Arrangements.

The annual convention of the Irish Catholic societies was held last Tuesday evening. Arrangements were made for the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, and strong resolutions were passed taking to task the Dominion Government for its failure to recognize the Irish Catholics in the formation of the new Harbor Board, and insisting on the right of an Irish Catholic to succeed to the place made vacant by the death of Sir William Hingston.

As regards the programme for Monday, March 18, it was decided to hold the annual procession, to be preceded by celebration of High Mass at 9.30 o'clock in the morning. The route of the procession will be by Victoria square, along Craig street to Papineau Avenue, and by St. Catherine and St. Alexander streets to St. Patrick's Hall. Ald. O'Connell was re-elected marshal-in-chief. After a resolution of condolence on

the death of Sir William Hingston had been passed the following were adopted unanimously:

"That, whereas we, the presidents and representatives of the Irish Catholic societies and parishes of Montreal, the Metropolis of Canada, and centre of Irish Catholic thought and expression in the province of Quebec, in convention assembled this 26th day of February, 1907, to make arrangements for the due celebration of the national festival of the Irish race, and deeming ourselves competent and called upon to take cognizance of passing events that affect Irish Catholic interests, while in no way whatsoever wishing to, nor insinuating ourselves into politics, and

"Whereas it has been made clear to us that Irish Catholic representation, which had been recognized for over 30 years, has lately been overlooked by the Dominion Government at Ottawa, in the formation of the present Harbor Board of Montreal, an evil which we expect will be removed at the earliest possible moment.

"And whereas it has also been made clear to us, from the tone of certain of the public press of this city, that the right of succession of an Irish Catholic to the seat in the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, now vacant through the death of the late lamented Sir William H. Hingston, has been questioned;

"Be it, therefore, resolved, that we, the presidents and representatives of the Irish Catholic societies and parishes of Montreal, in convention assembled, desire to place on record our demand for adequate representation, and our just claim to the seat in the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, left vacant through the death of the late lamented Sir William H. Hingston, and of our insistence, that an Irish Catholic be called.

"Be it further resolved, that a committee, with power to add to their number, be appointed to lay these resolutions before the proper authorities, and that copies be sent to the press."

The Rev. M. Callaghan, P.P., St. Patrick's parish, presided at the meeting. There were present the following delegates:

St. Patrick's Society—Mr. F. J. Curran and Mr. Thomas Tansey. St. Patrick's T. A. & B. Society—Mr. M. J. O'Donnell and Mr. J. Easton.

Young Irishmen's L. & B. Association—Mr. J. M. McMahon and Mr. W. J. Ryan. Ancient Order of Hibernians—Mr. P. Keane and Mr. Patrick Flanagan.

St. Ann's T. A. & B. Society—Mr. Jas. Shanahan and Mr. Thos. Rodgers.

St. Ann's Young Men's Society—Mr. D. J. O'Neill and Mr. O. J. McShane.

St. Ann's Juvenile Temperance Society—Mr. John Baxter and Mr. E. A. Shanahan. St. Mary's Young Men's Society—Mr. J. A. Heffernan and Mr. Michael Kenny, jr.

St. Gabriel's T. A. & B. Society—Mr. Patrick Polan.

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