

office made by their minister, and already efforts are being put forth to secure a new church and Sabbath school building. In these efforts they will have the cordial co-operation of many friends in the other city churches.

The Rev. Principal MacVicar went west on Friday to preach in Guelph on Sabbath. He is expected to return next week. Lectures in the college here will be resumed on Wednesday, January 4. Many of the students have left to visit friends or to engage in mission work during the Christ mas vacation.

The social entertainment given on Thursday evening by the Ladies' Aid Society of Erskine Church to the students of the college and other friends was well attended. After tea had been served in the Bible class and managers' rooms, a pleasant social evening was spent in the lecture hall.

Mr. W. M. Morse, of Toronto, has forwarded to the Board of French Evangelization a handsome donation in the form of 200 French New Testaments to be distributed by the colporteurs of the Board among the French-Canadians in and around Montreal.

Mr. Henry Morton, of this city, has generously and without solicitation presented a large box of stationery for the use of the pupils at the Pointe-aux-Trembles Schools. This is not the first time that Mr. Morton has given practical manifestation of his warm interest in the prosperity of these schools.

The customary New Year's gathering of all the Presbyterian Sabbath schools of the city is to be held in Erskine Church, on Monday, January 2, at ten o'clock in the morning, when addresses are to be delivered by Mr. J. Murray Smith, President of the Presbyterian Sabbath School Association of the city, Rev. James Fleck, Dr. Kelly and Mr. James Croil.

The annual meeting of the Celtic Society was held in the Presbyterian College on Tuesday evening, Dr. MacNish presiding. After the reading and adoption of the annual report a spirited discussion took place on the question, "Should the Celtic language be perpetuated in Canada?" in which Rev. Professor Campbell and others took part. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Hon. D. A. McDonald, honorary president; Rev. Dr. MacNish, Mr. J. K. Ward and Judge Mackay, vice-presidents; Mr. McKenzie, recording secretary; Mr. A. D. Landskill, corresponding secretary; Mr. William Greig, senior, treasurer; Professor Cousin, Dr. Stewart, Professor Campbell, Messrs. John Lewis and W. Drysdale, committee.

The Montreal Branch of the Evangelical Alliance, at its meeting on Tuesday, decided to observe the week of prayer (first week of the New Year) by holding a noonday prayer meeting in the Y. M. C. A. rooms daily, and a union service on Tuesday evening in Knox Church, and on Friday evening in Olivet Baptist Church. The officers of last year were re-elected as follows: Sir William Dawson, president; Hon. James Ferrier and Ven. Archdeacon Evans, vice-presidents; Rev. W. Jackson, secretary-treasurer; Rev. Messrs. A. B. Mackay, R. Lindsay, T. Laffleur, G. H. Wells, Bishop Ussher and J. Philip and Messrs. D. A. Judge, D. Bentley and J. Baylis, executive committee.

The Sabbath school of Erskine Church have arranged to distribute groceries, clothing, etc., as Christmas gifts to a number of poor families in the city. The gifts are to be brought to the lecture room of the church on Thursday afternoon of this week and distributed on the following day. On Sabbath the pastor invited thank-offerings for missionary purposes from any of the members or adherents who had been specially blessed or prospered during the year. These to be put in envelopes and placed on the collection plate next Sabbath.

Wednesday is the evening set apart by all the Protestant congregations in the city for the week evening service. There is a growing tendency to interfere with this service by holding special entertainments of a public nature on this evening. The formal public opening of the skating rink, with the Governor-General and Lady Lansdowne present, was held on Wednesday night last, and even the St. Andrew's Society on a recent Wednesday evening held a public ball. By the way, the membership of this society consists largely of Scotchmen of mature years. Could not a way of celebrating St. Andrew's Day be devised that would accord better with the staid sobriety of grave and reverend seignors and with the character of their patron saint?

HOME MISSIONS AND AUGMENTATION FUND.

The following circular has been addressed to the ministers, missionaries, elders, members and adherents of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Manitoba and the North West: The action of the members and adherents of the Church connected with the Manitoba and North-West Synod will powerfully influence the rest of the Church in averting a deficit in the Home Mission and Augmentation Funds. Let the facts be fully stated, and the situation made plain. During the last five years the Presbyterian Church increased in Manitoba 104 per cent., and advanced from the third to the first place with a decided lead. In the Territories thirty-two per cent. of the white population are out. With much labour and at a large expense of men and means, the present advanced position has been attained. Shall it be lost? Shall money, labour, sacrifice, prestige, be all thrown away? If church extension is to cease, if missionaries are to be recalled, then thousands of the children of the Church are to be left to moral and spiritual decay. When the Methodist and Baptist Churches are perfecting their appliances, and all Churches are voting increased sums to push their work, is our Church to retrench and retire from the fields broken up and cultivated? Shall Prince Albert, Edmonton, Kenistino, Revelstoke, Donald, Battleford, Touchwood and the rest be abandoned? Then may we despair of ever occupy-

ing them again, for congregations will scatter and confidence is destroyed.

That people are willing to help is manifest from a trial at a few points. The missionary collection at Oakland amounted to \$52.50, and at Prospect to \$89. A partial canvass at Morden part of one day secured \$75. At Pilot Mound, \$50, Morden, \$185, Carberry, \$220, Portage la Prairie, \$250, Rat Portage, \$85—in short, seventy-eight persons have paid, or pledged themselves to pay before March 31. \$965. To secure the \$15,000 needed for Augmentation and Home Missions, could not fifty men in Manitoba and Ontario be got this year to give, specially, over and above their other contributions for these funds, \$100 each, 100 \$50 each, 200 \$25, 500 \$10, and 1,000 \$5. To make this practicable Manitoba must take the initiative, and our ministers and missionaries must lead. Objections will be urged, but they must be overruled. Church debts and deficits of past years will rear their heads. The low price of grain, "we must be just before we are generous," "charity begins at home," will all be urged. I have heard them urged. Listen as patiently as you can, and then try the point of another argument to pierce them through.

With this circular collecting cards are sent. May I ask the assistance of all pastors in the work? Contributions of \$5 or upwards are asked. All sums below \$5 can be given through the ordinary channels. This is intended to be special. It would be a great favour if results were reported to me as soon as possible, care of Rev. Dr. Reid, 50 Church Street, Toronto, Ont., as I go to Ontario to prosecute the canvass there. Love of country and church, of men and Master, should move us to sacrifice. God has blessed us and He will continue to do so, but we must quit us like men.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

Winnipeg, Dec. 6, 1887.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The following circular has been addressed to the Moderators and Sessions of congregations.

Dear Brethren,—You are earnestly asked to consider, in apportioning your mission funds for the current year, the claims of the foreign field.

Among the Indians of the North West, who are still left by the General Assembly, under the care of the Foreign Mission Committee, the need of additional labourers is urgent. The conviction of this has been deepened in the mind of every minister and elder visiting the North West at the time of the last General Assembly.

In Central India, there are within a short distance from Indore, the centre of our operations there, villages, towns and cities in which schools and preaching stations might at once be opened. There are men and women ready to go and occupy these posts, had we the means of sending them.

Our work in Formosa is being wonderfully extended. (For instances of the difficulties which our missionaries there have to encounter, the trials through which they have to pass, and the encouragements by which they are cheered, see Dr. Mackay's letter in the forthcoming number of the Record.) We have over forty preaching stations there, and a preacher in every one of them. We have Oxford College and the Girls' School at Tamsui, in operation. "Work prosperous and spreading," writes Dr. Mackay, "but Komish priests plotting night and day to hinder us." He appeals to us not to fail him in sympathy and aid. Shall his appeal be vain?

At this date, the contributions to the Foreign Mission Fund, notwithstanding the zealous and self-denying efforts of our students during the summer, are nearly a thousand dollars less than they were at the same time last year.

You are asked to think of these things in view of the fact that so long as there is one soul to be saved, one sinner to be plucked as a brand from the burning, one member of the human family, poor and perishing, who has never heard of the way of salvation, the command of our blessed Redeemer is binding upon us—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." THOMAS WARDROPE,

Guelph, Dec. 15, 1887.

Convener.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

The indebtedness of the Board at this date exceeds \$6,000. Of this amount \$5,000 has been borrowed on the security of a note which falls due in a few weeks. The contributions being received are not nearly sufficient to meet current expenses. It is deemed undesirable to add to the indebtedness, which at the present time could only be done, if at all, with difficulty, and at a high rate of interest. Not having this year an agent in Britain, no revenue is received from this source as heretofore. The Board is therefore forced to consider whether it can retain its present staff of missionaries, colporteurs and teachers or be obliged to reduce the number.

Before taking any such steps we earnestly appeal to ministers, sessions, Sabbath school superintendents and the members and adherents of the Church to come to the aid of the work by forwarding generous contributions with as little delay as possible. The present expenditure of the Board exceeds \$3,000 per month. Contributions should be addressed to the Treasurer, 195 St. James Street, Montreal. Yours faithfully,

D. H. MACVICAR, D.D., Chairman.

ROBERT H. WARDEN, Secretary Treasurer.
195 St. James Street, Montreal, Dec. 19, 1887.

DR. OSWALD DYKES is spoken of as Moderator of the next Synod of the English Presbyterian Church.

It is well worth the trouble for any of our readers to examine the Semi-Tooline Return Premium and Commercial Plan of the North American Life Assurance Co. on another page of this issue. The latter system is daily growing in popularity, and is being largely taken by some of our leading merchants, giving as it does the larger insurance at the lesser cost. The management is to be congratulated upon the many new and desirable features added during the last two years.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Jan. 1. } HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST. { Matt. 14
1887. } 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.—Matt. xiv. 12.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Question 54.—God's name is thrice holy. It should never be mentioned with levity, far less used profanely. Profane swearing is terribly common at the present time. Because it is common it is none the less a great sin, and one which the law of God expressly forbids. The third commandment requires the reverent use of all by which the infinitely holy God has made Himself known to men.

INTRODUCTORY.

Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, was the son of Herod the Great. That monarch divided his sovereignty among his three sons. To Archelaus was given the half of the kingdom, to Herod Antipas and to Philip II. a fourth each. This Herod during the Saviour's ministry was tetrarch, ruler over a fourth part, including Galilee and Perea, east of the Jordan.

I. Herod.—The fame of Jesus at length reaches the court of Herod. Bent on schemes of ambition and pleasure it is not likely that he concerned himself much with what was going on among the people. If teachers and preachers of righteousness only let him alone why need he trouble himself with what they said or did? Now that he hears of Jesus his slumbering conscience and fears are aroused. The mighty works wrought by Jesus alarmed him. To his attendant courtiers he says, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead." The martyred Baptist terrifies the king. He is more powerful dead than living. The memory of his crime in beheading John would linger with him to his dying day. There is a sense in which an unrighteous deed cannot be undone. The evangelist here gives an account of how John the Baptist's imprisonment ended. Herod had married a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabian Petrea, but having seen Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, he persuaded her to forsake her husband and live with him. This flagrant violation of God's law called down upon him the direct and stern rebuke of the faithful servant of God. John fears neither the greatness nor the power of the offender. "It is not lawful for thee to have her," was his unflinching rebuke. It struck home, but did not induce him to repent. Instead he thought of putting his faithful reprover to death, but he who feared no to do wrong was afraid of the opinion of the people. They understood and respected John's character. So the king bound him and cast him into the dungeon of the fortress of Machabrus, on the border of Arabia.

II. A Birthday Festival.—In the principal apartments of the palace the sumptuous feast is held. In the dungeon the faithful servant of God is in confinement. While the revelry proceeds the daughter of Herodias enters, having laid aside her womanly dignity, and demeans herself for the amusement of the king and his guests, now probably inflamed with wine. Pleased with the exhibition, the king makes the rash promise that whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom, should be given her. Less than the horrible request she subsequently made would probably have satisfied her, but less would not have satisfied her wicked mother, whom she consults before preferring her request to the king. Herodias was living in sin, and it is ever the nature of sin to go from bad to worse. This infatuated woman so resented John's reproof that, like a wild beast, she lay in wait watching an opportunity to procure his death. She has found it, and is determined not to miss it. Her daughter is sent back with the request: "Give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger." It was a startling demand. Herod's conscience, so far as the narrative informs us, is the only voice that pleads for John. Not one of the guests in that banquet hall utters a plea in favour of John. The king was sorry. Not that he repented of his sin, though he saw where it was leading him. He knew that it was a hazardous thing for him to do. To have given the half of his kingdom would have been less dangerous. But with oaths he had sworn to give what was asked of him. He was in a dilemma. He must either be guilty of violating a foolish and wicked oath, or of murder. He chose the latter, and had reason bitterly to regret it as long as he lived.

III. A Terrible Crime.—Herod was a weak and foolish man, and as such, could be as cruel as he was unjust. To what depths some occupants of a palace may sink, the revelry and its ending of this birthday banquet only too plainly reveal. The unbecoming dance, the rash promise, the daughter's degradation and the mother's malignity, present a scene of awful wickedness. Herod gives the command, which is instantly obeyed. The fearless and faithful John's life on earth is ended, and such an end to a life of righteousness which by speech and act he preached! Into the banquet hall the head is brought, and the young woman, who might have been expected to be graceful and refined, bears her ghastly present to her almost inhuman mother. The disciples of the Baptist who knew him best and loved him most, are not afraid to show the mangled remains the last tokens of respect. They took up the body and buried it, and it is significantly added "they went and told Jesus."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Conscience may be outraged, its voice for a time may be stifled, but it cannot be effectively silenced.

A guilty conscience is an awful load to carry.

The true servant of God will not be silent in the presence of great and powerful sinners.

Sorrow for the consequences of sin, and not for sin itself, is the sorrow of the world that worketh death.

Jesus is ever a refuge for the distressed.