

ANOTHER!

**This Time the Dundas Street
Center Methodist Church
Goes Down.**

**The Fire Leaves Nothing But
Crumbling Walls.**

**Chief Roe and Fireman Riddell
Painfully Injured.**

**Were Struck by Falling Walls
While Fighting Flames.**

**The Loss Is \$36,000 and the In-
surance \$22,000.**

**Grave Conjectures as to the Fire's
Origin.**

**The Congregation Will Rebuild With-
out Loss of Time.**

**The Blaze Broke Out Shortly Before 2
a.m.—Was Thought To Be Under Control
—Then Broke Out Again, and Com-
pletely Destroyed the Building—Church
History.**

When the citizens of London awoke on Sunday morning a little more than a week ago they were surprised and pained to hear of the loss which had befallen Methodism in London, in the loss of the magnificent structure of the Queen's Avenue Church. To say that the average citizen was surprised and pained to hear of the complete destruction, at an early morning hour, of the sister church—Dundas Street Center, as it was best known—is putting it mildly. Indeed, the news spread with astonishing rapidity, and the ruins were visited by large crowds, beginning with the workmen on their way to work at day-light, following with the school children, and then the school members of the congregation stood with consternation and amazement written on every feature. The majority of them knew nothing whatever of the calamity that had overtaken their beloved church in the night until they read the startling headlines in the morning papers. They thought of the already homeless congregation of Queen's Avenue, and then of their own condition. Two of the largest and most influential Methodist congregations in Ontario churchless, and without even a schoolroom left! No wonder.

THEY WERE APPALLED as they looked up at the bare and tottering walls or watched the blackened and ice-mantled firemen gather up the stiffened lines of hose, and wondered how they would rid the walls were left intact, and it was sad to think that in the fall of the portions that gave way some of the brave fire ladders had received serious and painful injuries. The large front door was jammed with black and fallen timbers, while through the interstices little columns of thin smoke were floating lazily upwards. A pile of bricks and the cornice at the southern end of the church marked the spot where Chief Roe received his injuries. In the rear the dismantled and almost completely leveled wall, with the fragments of broken timbers, showed how Fireman James Riddell and Daniel McDonald.

NARROWLY ESCAPED DEATH. The only portion of the building that retained any roof was a few square yards of the interior of the church, which had been erected on the west side of the place. The door was shattered by sturdy blows from the firemen's axes, and from this corner a gallant but losing battle was waged against the fierce destroying element. And while the members of the congregation were gathering to view the ruins this morning, and while P. C. Gillson was busily engaged in keeping pedestrians out of range of a possible fall of the front wall, a number of girls and boys crowded into this place and stood under the impending roof and shaky walls to get a view of the interior of the ruins. The policeman, as soon as his attention was drawn to the fact, hurriedly warned them to leave, and they left.

The members of the congregation stood around in little groups and discussed the fire. "It strikes right home when it affects our own church," said one man. On the faces of others were ominous looks. They spoke of the remarkable coincidence of the two church fires, and some hinted darkly that there was more than a mere coincidence. They could not imagine how the different church furnaces—if furnaces they were—should go wrong just at this season of hard times and scarcity of employment. Others took a brighter view and refused to believe in a theory of incendiarism hinted at by their fellows. They pointed out that a concert had been held in the church last evening, and that possibly that would account for the blaze. And so they talked.

As briefly stated in this morning's "Advertiser," the fire was first noticed about 1:50 a.m. by Major Thos. Beattie and Dr. Bayley, who were returning from a party. A couple of members of the "Advertiser" staff passed the church on their way home at 1:30 a.m., and saw no sign of fire. They passed P. C. Lucas between Maitland and Colborne streets and a stranger in the center of the next block, in which the church is situated. P. C. Lucas continued his way down Dundas street and passed the two men who discovered the fire at Wellington. When the major and the doctor arrived at Maitland street.

THEY NOTICED SMOKE pouring from the roof of the church and heard the crackling of the fire in the

rear end. They took in the situation in an instant, and were quick to act. The fire alarm box stood on the corner, the key was in Mr. Goodge's store. Major Beattie set to work to wake up the neighbors and Dr. Bayley played a rapid tattoo on the grocery store door. His cries of "Fire!" speedily awoke Mr. Goodge, and the box was pulled within a couple of minutes from the time the fire was first discovered. The central situation of the box makes it a very fast one for the brigade to answer. It is just 100 yards midway between central and No. 2, so that both companies usually arrive about the same time. The men answered the call very speedily, and had tumbled into their clothes and were on the sleighs in less time than it takes to record the fact. The sleighing was good, the road unobstructed, and the drivers let the horses do their best.

"We were going at a very rapid clip," said Driver Gleason this morning, "and did not know what the trouble was. As we turned the corner to go up to the church Dan McDonald shouted, 'IT'S THE CHURCH!'"

and so it was. The central team was first on the scene, but was almost immediately followed by the men of No. 2 station. In a few minutes the extent of the fire was realized, and a second alarm was sent in. This brought the men of No. 3 station, who had proceeded to No. 1 hall on the first call. Together the three companies fought the flames. The fire originated in the back of the structure, and it was here that the heat was the fiercest. The wind was in the north-west, and a good stiff breeze was blowing. This, and the fact that the fire started in the north end, gave ground for the suspicion of many that the blaze was of incendiary origin. The fire was pouring from the back doors and windows when the firemen arrived, and as soon as the five streams of water that were on began to take effect, the firemen thought that a victory had been won, and that the fire was under control. Then, seemingly as if by magic, the blaze appeared in the body of the church, and burned even fiercer than it did at the back. It carried everything before it, and completely baffled the skill of the firemen. As the fire progressed new dangers arose. Portions of the

WALLS BEGAN TO FALL. and, as the neighbors clearly saw that the total destruction of the church was imminent they began to fear for the safety of their own homes.

The homes of Dr. MacArthur, Mr. A. E. Pavay, and Mr. R. D. E. Nicholson were situated right in the path of the storm of red hot cinders, and the three waited them from the burning structure. Then the home of the pastor, Rev. E. B. Lanceley, which is situated within ten yards to the east of the church, was probably in most danger of all. These different residences all owed their salvation to the heavy load of snow on the roofs. The parsonage was on fire a couple of times, but a handy stream from the near-by firemen speedily checked the progress of the flames. Mr. Lanceley's family was removed to the residence of Mr. Benjamin Higgins, next door. Dr. MacArthur's children were also badly frightened, and were taken to a neighbor's house. The doctor's frame barn was a source of danger, but by careful watching it was saved.

Meanwhile the fire got hotter and continued to spread until the roof began to fall in. Pieces of projecting cornices were dropping here and there, and the FIREMEN WERE WARNED several times of their danger. Chief Roe and Fireman Wesley O'Brien, standing at the southwestern corner of the building, directing a branch through the basement window. They had not their helmets on, having had no chance to get them from the sleigh. While the men beneath, Fireman O'Brien is a young and active man, and he managed to spring clear enough to escape all the bricks but one, which caught him right on the top of the head. The chief stepped as close to the wall as he could get with the extreme heat prevailing, and to this action he owes his life. Several of the bricks struck him on the head and shoulders and bore him to the ground. A fireman cried for "HELP, IN THE QUEEN'S NAME!" but the cry was hardly necessary. Willing hands raised the chief, who did not lose consciousness. He was in a semi-conscious condition, but insisted on walking across the street to Dr. MacArthur's house. He was assisted by P. C. Lucas and Mayor Little. The latter was early on the scene, and did not leave it until all danger was past and the injured were attended to. Mr. Roe's injuries were examined by the doctor. He was bleeding freely from a severe wound in the head, which at first looked like a serious fracture. While the skull was found to be injured, there were none of the attendant signs of concussion. The scalp wound necessitated six stitches. The chief's back was severely injured, and it was an hour and a half before he could be removed to his home. It was nearly 4 o'clock by this time, and the fire had died away. The majority of the spectators had gone home. At no time during the fire were there over 200 or 300 persons present, owing to the early hour and the quiet of the night. Firemen Daniel McDonald and James Riddell were on a ladder at the back of the church giving the finishing touches to that end of the building. Mr. Higgins had provided coffee and sandwiches for the refreshment of the men, and it was the turn of these two to go and get some. Fireman John Alken went to inform them of the fact, and the men were just in the act of turning off the stream and withdrawing the line when the back wall fell out with a startling crash.

TWO FIREMEN INJURED. The news spread that two of the firemen were under the ruins, and a rush was made to extricate them. The rescue column arrived at the scene in time to see Fireman Riddell stagger from the debris. Fireman McDonald could not be seen, but his groans could be plainly heard by the searchers. It was now quite dark where the accident happened, as the fire had practically burned itself out. To the joy of his comrades, McDonald was at last described clinging half-conscious to the remains of the ladder and to the roof of the rear entrance to the western extension. With the first crash Mr. Riddell jumped boldly in the dark to the ground, fifteen or twenty feet below. Mr. McDonald was not so quick, and it proved well for him that he was not. The wall scattered as it fell—partly inside and partly out. To this fact the men probably owe their lives. Both were taken to Dr. MacArthur's office, and Mr. Riddell was plainly very badly injured. He was bleeding from injuries about the head; his left

hand was broken, and he complained very much about his side. His left arm was badly bruised. Mr. McDonald's injuries were on his head, but he has no external wounds. Fireman Riddell was sent home and Mr. McDonald was told by the doctor to remain in bed at least a day. He was back at the fire in two hours, apparently entirely recovered.

From a report on another page it will be seen that the children of the Mission Band connected with the church gave a concert in the church last night under the auspices of the Young Ladies' Mission Circle. The concert was fairly well attended, and the little ones were fairly brimming over with enthusiasm as they said their little recitations or took part in the many choruses provided. They little thought as they left for the night that in a few short hours there would be nothing left of their church but bare and very dangerous walls. Mr. Lanceley conversed with an "Advertiser" reporter in the basement of the church before the concert, and

THE RECENT FIRE at Queen's Avenue was one of the topics of conversation. The piano used at the concert was borrowed for the occasion from Mr. Burnett, of the Heintzman Company. It was valued at \$400, and was insured by the Toronto agent of the company.

THE JANITOR'S STORY. After the concert the ladies waited and made arrangements for a forthcoming convention of the London District W. M. M. S. that was to be held next Monday. While this was in progress Mr. Charles Hall, the janitor, who lives at 657 Lorne avenue, went his usual rounds for the night. He has been even extra careful, if anything, since the Queen's Avenue Church was destroyed. He paid special attention to the condition of the furnaces. To an "Advertiser" reporter this morning he stated that he was positive that the fire could not have originated from any of the furnaces. He left them carefully banked and almost out. The two heaters in the front end of the basement in which the Sunday School was held were merely metallic jackets surrounding two large stoves. There were two Pease furnaces in the rear portion of the building which were nearly new. Mr. Hall closed up the premises about 10 o'clock and left for home. He was entirely unconscious of the fire until his son, who is a railway employe, found out what had happened on his way to work and rushed back and told him.

THE INSURANCE. The loss, it is almost certain, will be total, and will range between \$30,000 and \$35,000. On the building \$16,000 insurance was carried, apportioned among the following: London, \$8,000; Assurance, \$6,000; Lancashire, \$6,000; London and Lancashire, \$2,000; Liverpool and London and Globe, \$2,000. Total \$16,000. The contents were insured for \$6,000. On the beautiful pipe organ which was purchased about twelve years ago at a cost of \$5,000, \$3,000 insurance was carried. The furnishings, such as pews, benches, organ, gas fixtures, etc., were covered by a \$2,625 policy, the sum insured being \$75, and piano \$300. The various companies have been notified of the loss, and valuations will probably be in the city in a few days. The parsonage was insured for \$2,500, but fortunately the loss on it will be trivial. There is a debt on the church building of \$13,000. Thus the trustees will have about \$9,000 to begin rebuilding.

The present board of trustees is composed of Messrs. Robert Lewis, Thomas McCormick, ex-Ald. Wm. Bowman, Gilbert Glass, J. H. Glass, Isaac Webster, Wm. Lewis, Frank Cooper, Amos Bradford, A. Keenleyside, J. G. Shuff, J. Green, W. Plewes, W. Willis and C. J. Beale (recording steward).

WILL REBUILD AT ONCE. "What do you intend doing?" was asked of the pastor, immediately after a hurried meeting of the board had been held this morning. "We will rebuild at once," replied Mr. Lanceley. "Of course," he continued, "we have not got the corner stone laid yet. However, we will not let the grass grow under our feet, but will clear away the rubbish as fast as it comes. Mr. Lanceley said they had, like their brethren in distress at Queen's Avenue, received several kind offers from different churches. Both St. Andrew's and the Christian Church had offered them the use of their churches for one service a day. A committee consisting of Messrs. C. J. Beale, Col. Lewis, Isaac Webster, J. G. Shuff, D. A. McDermid and the pastor was appointed to entertain the various offers for immediate relief and report on their feasibility at a meeting of the board to be held to-morrow.

The plan which has been on tapis for some time to build a new Sunday School will of course be dropped. A committee was appointed to make arrangements for the building of a church to seat at least 1,200 to 1,500.

CONDITION OF THE INJURED. Both Chief Roe and Fireman Riddell are resting quietly at their homes to-day. Dr. MacArthur reports that the chief is apparently the most seriously injured of the two. However, unless some unexpected change occurs in the condition of both men, they will probably be out in a few days. Fireman McDonald suffers much from bruises, and Fireman O'Brien has a very sore head. The firemen remained on the scene of the fire until about 8 a.m. Each man looked like a walking dead being, and was covered with grime from head to foot. The hose was frozen stiff in a great many instances.

NOTES. St. Andrew's board of managers to-day decided to hire a watchman for a temporary period, at least to guard the church at night.

The walls of the church as they stand are exceedingly dangerous. Steps will be taken immediately to pull them down before the first wind-storm does the work instead.

The loss on the Sunday School library will not be total, as Sunday last about 500 of the 1,200 books were distributed among the scholars. The library was valued at about \$750. The loss will probably reach \$400.

All day long absurd rumors were flying around town to the effect that an attempt had been made to set the Tai-bot Street or Adelaide Street Baptist churches on fire. They proved to be utterly without foundation.

THE CHURCH HISTORY. Dundas Street Center Church, which was recognized as one of the most influential local branches of the Methodist denomination, was the outgrowth of a mission station of exceedingly mod-

est origin. In 1856 a small body of ardent Methodists, some twenty in number, among whom were recognized No. 1 English, Geo. Webster, James Carey, James Whiting, Leonard Perrin and Murray Anderson, concluded that indications were sufficiently hopeful to warrant establishing a congregation in the east end of the city, to be conducted as a mission station in connection with the North Street Church (lately Queen's Avenue), then, as it then days ago, the powerful center of the district. In the same year a lot situated on the corner of King and Adelaide streets was purchased as the intended site for the edifice. The response to the building fund was, however, too meager to allow of the erection, even upon the smallest scale, and in the following year, to keep the spark of life aglow, a small cottage was taken on Adelaide street at an annual rental of \$15, and utilized as a place of worship.

THE FIRST PASTOR. Rev. John Douse was the first to occupy the pulpit. At the outset the effort to establish a congregation in the locality seemed as if it would prove futile, and at a meeting of the trustees held in September of the same year, pecuniary assistance and more strenuous exertions decided upon. This proved the critical moment in its infant history, and from that time to the present date the march had been steadily one of increasing effort and remarkable progress.

The Rev. James Preston followed Mr. Douse, who was in turn superseded by the Rev. George Sanderson, and by this time (1860) the infant congregation had time to such an extent that more extensive accommodation was found necessary. Rev. Dr. Rooney was also an early preacher.

AN EARLY PRAEACHER there, The lot purchased for the purpose was now called into service, and a frame structure capable of seating some 300 was erected. Revs. Richard Jones, James Bishop, W. J. Hunter and James Elliot followed as pastors in the order named, each remaining for three years. In 1869, in the second year of the pastorate of Rev. Wm. Briggs, now steward of the Methodist Book Room, Toronto, the circuit had become so populous and the congregation so increased in strength that the erection of the ruined structure known as "Dundas Center Methodist Church" was decided upon. Operations were commenced forthwith, the corner stone being laid in the summer of 1869, the late Rev. Wm. Morley Punshon presiding, in presence of a large assemblage.

THE DEDICATORY SERVICES. The sacred edifice was dedicated on April 3, 1870, Rev. Mr. Punshon preaching in the morning a sermon replete with the charm of his eloquence, from the parable of the sower. In the afternoon Rev. John Combs occupied the pulpit, and Rev. Dr. Dewar, editor of the Guardian, at night. Mr. Amos Bradford conducted the singing on that day, Miss Burgess presiding at the organ. Externally the church was almost puritanical in its simplicity. The church trustees at the time were: Alex. Johnston, Anthony Keenleyside, Murray Anderson, Isaac Webster, Geo. Burdett, John A. Nelles, John Green, Geo. Smith, George Robinson, Charles Douthwaite, Thos. McCormick, Amos Bradford, Obadiah Richards and R. Lewis. In the meantime the sale of the old frame church had been effected to the Episcopalians for \$500. Afterwards it passed into the hands of the Baptists. The pulpit of the new church was supplied alternately till the succeeding Conference by Rev. Mr. Elliott and Rev. Mr. Briggs. Succeeding Mr. Briggs in the pastorate was the Rev. Alex. Langford, and after him Rev. Dr. Parker, Rev. G. N. A. F. T. Dickson, Rev. J. S. Ross, Rev. Dr. Rykman, Rev. J. S. Rev. J. V. Smith was stationed in charge. Mr. Smith was duly succeeded by Rev. A. C. Courtice, who was called from the Montreal Conference by the Dundas Street Methodists. Mr. Courtice went to Kingston after his term as pastor was concluded, and was, at the last General Conference in this city appointed to succeed Rev. Dr. Dewar as editor of the Christian Guardian. Rev. J. Cooper Antiff, D.D., followed Mr. Courtice, but only stayed two years, having been called to

THE PROFESSORSHIP of the Wesleyan Theological College in Montreal, made vacant through the death of Rev. Dr. Douglas. Dr. Antiff's stay in London was a busy one, and through his earnest efforts the church work rapidly assumed greater dimensions. And then, from Ridgeway, came the present pastor, Rev. E. B. Lanceley, a comparatively young and able preacher, who, in his very undertaking, is backed up by the large congregation.

THE COST OF THE CHURCH. The edifice was erected at a total cost, including the parsonage, of about \$20,000, but extensive alterations and improvements materially increasing its value have since been made. In the spring of 1887 large transepts were added to the east and west of the church at a cost of some \$6,000. The entire church property was valued at about \$30,000, and the edifice, with the addition of the transepts, would accommodate 1,200 to 1,300 worshippers. Extensive alterations were also made in the interior, the choir gallery having been enlarged.

THE CHOIR AND SCHOOL. Dundas Center has long been noted as possessing one of the best choirs west of Toronto. Its reputation is widespread. For several years Mr. W. J. Birks was the talented and popular organist and leader, and it was he who brought the choir to its state of efficiency. Over a year ago, however, Mr. Birks resigned to take charge of one of Montreal's largest Methodist churches, and he was succeeded by Mr. Wm. Moxon, of England. Mr. Moxon has proven himself thoroughly capable to fill the position. His choir concerts have pleased thousands of Londoners.

That all-important branch, the Sunday school, has largely increased its usefulness and proportions. The school at the cottage started with a membership of some 40 scholars, but at present the school of Dundas Center boasts a roll of 700 scholars. The average attendance being about 600. The teaching staff number 50 and the officers 15. The superintendent is Mr. D. A. McDermid, and he is assisted by Mr. Wm. Yates.

FORTUNE FOR A FENCE-BUILDER. ST. THOMAS, Feb. 12.—Mr. Davis, fence-builder on the M. C. R., has been notified by his son, a lawyer in England, that he has fallen heir to \$215,000 by the death of an uncle. Mr. Davis will leave for the old country in a short time to get possession of the estate.

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COTTONS

OF ALL KINDS.

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The Best in the Trade.
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- Two cases full yard wide American Cotton, bleached, only.....10c Yard
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