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Tuesday the 9th a weighty vapour descended from a thick stratum of clouds that seemed progressively to deepen in color and density. This was an awful day: the superstitious were alarmed, and even the thoughtless were struck with a mixture of astonishment and terror, at an appearance for which no one could account. At sun-rise the clouds varied in color, some times assuming a greenish hue; at others, a dark and almost pitchy black. The sun, at that time, appeared of a dingy orange color, which at moments varied to a blood red, and at others to a dark brown with but a slight degree of luminosity remaining. Towards noon the darkness was so great, that it was found necessary to have candles burning in the Court House, the Banks, and most of the public offices in the city. The gloom alternately increased or diminished, according to the ascendancy of the wind, which, during the day, was very fitful and changeable. The inhabitants began now to express their surprise, and indulge their speculations, as to the probable cause of so unusual an appearance. It was likely that a volcano, had burst forth in the interior of the Province, and that its smoke, vapour, and ashes were now over the city. Even the extinct crater of a volcano, stated to be the credulous supposed to have resumed its operations; and the city itself at its base appeared about to undergo the fate of Pompeii or Herculaneum. By some an Indian prophecy was quoted to the effect that the island of Montreal would, at some period, be destroyed by an earthquake, while the opposite shores and surrounding country should remain unharmed. Others supposed that some immense woods and prairies had been set on fire, and that the ashes were borne on the same winds which fanned the devouring flames. The few animals that remained to be seen, places of shelter; all species of cattle uttered mournful sounds, dogs of various breeds were restless, and all the prognostics of a coming storm were distinctly perceptible. Towards three o'clock a formidable body of clouds from the North East hurried over the town, and moment of general awe—the crisis appeared now and became, like others, tried and fearful. One of the most vivid flashes of lightning that the oldest class of thunder that was echoed and reverberated for some minutes. This was followed by a loud, which to the affrighted citizens felt like an earthquake, as many persons fell from the trembling of the floor under their feet. Rain again fell of the same dark, sooty appearance as on the preceding Sunday. A momentary brightness succeeded; but the clouds again collected, and at four o'clock it was nearly as dark as ever. A flash of lightning was seen to strike the summit of the steeple of the Roman Catholic Parish Church; it seemed to have touched the ball at the foot of the cross, and continued playing and whirling a short time around it, when it descended to the earth by the roof. Suddenly the fire or fire-alarm was sounded from every bell in the city, and streets resounded with every bell. The sky was completely veiled in gloom, swelling by the floods of people who poured in from the adjacent streets; while, towering over the heads of the immense throng, was to be seen the steeple of the church, with its ball blazing like a meteor, and throwing out from the foot of the cross with which it was surmounted, a rain-



MUIR'S BUILDINGS.

Engraved by J. H. Walker for the Montreal Gazette.

tion of sparks rendered lurid by the incandescent and surrounding haze: in the evening it appeared like a light-house seen out at sea. By great exertions the fire was extinguished: about a quarter of an hour previously, the iron cross fell on the pavement in front of the church with a tremendous crash, and there broke into many pieces. A small place that had fallen before, lighted on the roof of the corner house in the square, partly penetrated the roof, and there remained. The rain which had fallen during the day had deposited larger quantities of soot than on Sunday, and as it flowed through the streets it carried on its surface a dense foam resembling soap suds. The evening again became darker; among the *des arts* of Montreal. The range of this phenomenon must have been very extensive, for several of its appearances were noticed at Quebec below, at Kingston above, and in many parts of the United States. A similar darkness is said to have occurred in Canada in the year 1781, and the time of it is still known by the name of the dark Sunday. The cause of it is still unexplained.

## MUIR'S BUILDINGS.

Muir's buildings, which form the corner of Notre Dame Street and the Place d'Armes, have been erected by E. Muir, Esq. The frontage on the former street is sixty-three feet, and on the latter forty-five feet.

As these buildings are to be used for retail stores and offices, all the light, for which could only be obtained from the front; it has been necessary to devote the greater portion of the frontage to openings for glass, and make the stone-work as light, as consistent with safety and strength. The columns for the first story are three-quarters diameter, detached from the piers behind them, and all the small columns of the upper stories are entirely detached from the piers. Each column has a richly-carved capital, from which springs the arches, the soffits, of which are made deep by keeping the surface of the glass nearly to the inside of the wall, producing depth, so great an essential in street architecture.

All the lines of the cornices and belt courses are continuous and without break, except at the circular angle.

The fonts are crowned with a bold, massive cornice, with deeply-sunk dentils.

The ground-floor is divided into three stores, the first, or one next the Place d'Armes, being occupied as a show-room by Mr. R. Houdry,

Silversmith, and by Mr. E. Muir, Jun., as a drug shop; the furniture in which is of a very rich character, and was made by Messrs. J. & W. Hil- ton, from designs by the architect for the buildings. The second store is occupied by Mr. H. Prince, of musical fame, and the third by Messrs. Gagnon and Watson as a retail dry goods store.

The second and third stories are divided into offices, two of them on the second story being occupied by the Lancashire Insurance Company. The fourth story is used by the Free Masons, as a Lodge Room, which is fifty-two feet long by thirty-four feet wide by sixteen feet high; adjoining the Lodge Room are several waiting and ante-rooms. The Masonic Fraternity are decorating their room in a very handsome manner.

Access is had to the offices and Lodge Room by the door next the Express Office, from which a wide staircase communicates with each floor.

The mason work was done by Messrs. Burns & Taylor, carpenter work by Mr. Robert Weir, plas-

tering by H. McLean, painting by A. Craig, galvanized iron work by Messrs. Prosser & McFarlane. The whole has been executed from the designs and under the superintendence of Alex. C. Hutchison, Architect.

## SKETCH OF WESLEYAN METHODISM IN MONTREAL.

As with a river of immense width and impressive associations, so with an important form of church organization, either general or local, much justifiable enthusiasm may be felt in as- sessing the character of its use. Did it spring like the Nile, as a youthful giant from some great inland lake, or like the Amazon, bubble obscurely into existence in some far off region? Did it first assume shape like the Christianity of Antioch, when "a great number believed and turned unto the Lord," or like that of Philippi, when a solitary female whose "heart the Lord opened" was the first fruit?

The commencement of Methodism in this city, unquestionably belonged to the latter type. Much obscurity rests upon the date and circumstances of its introduction, but there is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that it could not be later than 1785. On the 13th of March, 1783, Dr Coke, the world-wide Evangelist, who crossed the Atlantic eighteen times while prosecuting his great missionary life-work, and who was the "first Protestant Bishop in the Western Hemisphere," wrote "an address to the pious and benevolent, proposing an annual subscription for the support of missionaries in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec." This address, which was quite a lengthy, lucid, and forcible document, contained the following suggestive sentence: "In the province of Quebec a few pious soldiers have formed societies at Quebec and Montreal on the Methodist plan, among whom we have reason to believe that our preachers would be gladly received."

Who these pious soldiers were, under what circumstances they laboured, and to what extent they succeeded, are questions intensely interest- ing, but to which we are unable to give a definite reply. Possibly, they may have been a detachment of the 44th Regiment, disbanded about that time, and a commissary of which named Tuffey had commenced in Quebec in 1780 to officiate as a local preacher. This soldier was conferred upon him the honour—which an Apostle might have envied—of preaching the first Methodist sermon