

Ministers and Churches.

Our Toronto Letter.

The days of the canvasser for votes are upon us, and his cards are thrust into our hands, or stare at us from the shop windows, or are dropped in at our doors. For the most part the decision of whom we shall vote for is made upon the lesser of two evils. Our best men do not enter the field of municipal politics. This year there are signs of better things. Among those offering themselves for the vote of the people there are one or two names that command respect. The service itself is simpler, being more like the observance of the Lord's Supper after the usual daily service. Perhaps in time this special observance would lose its effect, and it will be well to drop it, but meantime it has been found helpful.

In many of the churches the special communion on the opening Sabbath of the year will be again observed this year. It marked the opening of the Century last year, and was so helpful that there is a prospect that it shall be continued, and that it may yet become a permanent custom. It differs from the usual communion observance in that it is less formal. There are not the customary cards, nor the usual classes preceding it. The service itself is simpler, being more like the observance of the Lord's Supper after the usual daily service. Perhaps in time this special observance would lose its effect, and it will be well to drop it, but meantime it has been found helpful.

Many congregations have been thinking of their fellows who have been unfortunate, and have shared their abundance with their neighbors. In spite of this there have been many poor who have suffered from hunger and neglect during these weeks of feasting and goodwill. There are those, and we like them for it, who keep a smiling face to the world even though the heart is sore, and the body famished. There is something about much of our generosity that makes it hard for self-respecting men and women to accept it. We may not mean to patronize, but it is one of the most difficult things on earth to do a kind deed helpfully.

Special services have been going on in the Parkdale Church for the past fortnight, and the attendance and interest has been all that could be desired. There are not wanting evidences that the good seed sown has in many instances found good soil, and is already springing up. That it does not yet bear fruit will not trouble the wise pastor, who is alarmed when those who did not know Christ yesterday, demand a place in His vineyard today. He waited thirty years before He began His life-work. It would be well, sometimes, if there were not such an intense desire to do something to show our earnestness. In good time the fire within us will burn, and then it will be impossible for us to refrain from action. But all this has nothing to do with the services in the Parkdale Church specially only that here, as elsewhere, the usual conditions are likely to follow a season of religious awakening.

The presbyterial visitation planned for the Toronto Presbytery has begun. Early last week three of the Toronto congregations were visited, — Bonar, Fern Ave., and Chadmer's church. The aim has been to encourage and to awaken to higher and more effective effort. Investigation and the exercise of discipline is the strange work of the committee, who come in the spirit of helpers, and counselors. That there will be good results from such visits is assured, that there may be unpleasant results is just possible, but the chances are very remote. Certainly there have been none in the cases mentioned. One of those who formed the deputation remarked that he had learned something, at least, and would be the better for having taken his share in this work.

The fine church at Georgetown, rebuilt after the fire, was recently reopened. The spirit shewn has been admirable, and must greatly encourage the heart of the minister, Rev. Louis Perrin. The church as it now appears is very much what it was before, but improvements have been made in certain directions. Here and at Milton the churches in which the people worship are creditable to the towns, and will serve the purposes of the congregation in each for some generations to come.

In one of the city congregations the members are becoming restive because the minister is pressing the claims of mission work upon them so constantly. That they take the trouble to find fault with him and that they do it pretty vigorously is a good sign. Too often the people pay no attention to what their minister

says. When they do it indicates that they admit, to some extent, the justness of what he says, and that they are not prepared to meet the demands he would make upon them. It is a healthy sign to hear grumbling some time.

The Sunday evening sermons in Old St. Andrew's, Toronto, are as full of interest as ever. Yet they are not great oratorical displays. They are filled with material for thought, and the eager faces that look out from the pews are not the faces of those who have come to be entertained, but the intent faces of young men and women who listen to a message. The inspiration of such an audience is great, and the man who can rise to it knows something of the joy of the true preacher. Dr. Milligan puts all his strength into these sermons, and his strength is that of the matured man. From such a course of study there will certainly come clearer thought, and higher aim in the after life.

Western Ontario.

Rev. A. A. Laing, B. A., preached his farewell sermon in the Morpeth Church on the 15th inst.

Rev. H. N. Manning, of St. Paul's church, Brampton, preached the annual missionary sermons at Ashgrove on the 15th.

The anniversary services in connection with the Coldwater Presbyterian church, will be held on Sunday, December 29th. The Rev. J. McD. Duncan, B. A., B. D., of Woodville, will preach at both services, and address the Sabbath School at 3 p. m.

On Sunday, Dec. 29th, anniversary services will be held in the Bradford church. The Rev. Alfred Gandier, B. D., of St. James' Square church, Toronto, will preach. On the Monday evening following at a social gathering, Mr. Gandier will lecture on "The Land of William Tell."

The Barrie Examiner in speaking of the new church at Allandale says: "The new place of worship, as it stands complete, is a very handsome specimen of Norman architecture. Even a casual observer is impressed with the many features that give it an interest unusual to buildings of its size."

At the meeting of the Canadian Temperance League held in Massey Hall, Toronto, Rev. Dr. Johnson, of St. Andrew's church, London, was the principal speaker. He spoke very strongly on the subject of prohibition, and made an eloquent appeal that Canada should show the way in this as in other reforms.

On the 15th inst. the anniversary services of the Avonorton church were held; Rev. A. Drumm a former pastor of the church, preached both morning and evening. On Monday a supper was given by the ladies, and a social evening was spent. The pastor was chairman, and Rev. M. S. Leitch, of Stratford, also spoke.

The 23rd annual sale of the senior and junior mission bands of MacNab street church, Hamilton, was held on the 10th inst. and was, as usual, a most successful affair. It was held in the Sunday School room, and the several tables were prettily arranged with the many dainty and useful thing the young ladies had made during the year. The proceeds will go to the Foreign Mission Fund.

On the evening of the 18th inst. the choir of St. Paul's church, Hamilton, gave a splendid production of Handel's "Messiah," the first time that an unorganized church choir has ever produced this most exacting musical composition, for every singer that took part was a bona fide member of the choir. Dr. Harris presided at the organ, and considering that the singers had only the organ to lead them, for there was no one conducting, the choruses were sung with wonderful precision and spirit.

Rev. Dr. Johnston, of St. Andrew's Church, London, delivered his well known lecture on "Scottish Heroes" to a very large audience at Cook's Church, Toronto, on Tuesday evening. Hon. G. W. Ross presided, and introduced the lecturer in eulogistic terms. Dr. Johnston, in responding, referred to the efficient service that Premier Ross had done his country in the past and predicted that in the not-distant future the people of the province would follow his masterly leadership into measures of still greater progress. Dr. Johnston's lecture was well received, and the mover of the vote of thanks, which followed, referred to it as the most brilliant lecture that a Toronto audience had enjoyed in years.

Bruce Presbytery has granted permission for the erection of a place of worship in the vicinity of Cargill village; and the North Brant congregation allowed to sell the old manse property, and apply proceeds toward the providing a new manse.

Next meeting of Bruce Presbytery will be held at Paisley, on the second Tuesday of March at 10.30 a. m.

Sacramental services were held in Carmel Presbyterian church on the 15th inst., when quite a number united with the church. The preparatory service, on Friday afternoon, was conducted by Rev. Mr. McLellan, who was recently inducted to the charges of Kippen and Hills Green. Mr. McLellan delivered an able and eloquent sermon, which was listened to with very much interest and profit. On Sabbath, the communion was administered by the pastor at the morning service, the attendance being very good. In the evening the usual Thanksgiving service was held, when Rev. Mr. Cranston, who was lately inducted as the Presbyterian minister at Cromarty, preached, delivering in a fluent, forcible and pleasing manner a most excellent sermon suitable for the occasion. The communion services were much enjoyed throughout, affording, as they did, an opportunity for the congregation to hear the two ministers who had so recently been inducted and whose services were so much appreciated.

An important meeting of the Barrie Presbytery was held in the Allandale church on Tuesday, the 17th. There was a large attendance. Rev. Jas. Skene presiding. Calls were sustained:—From Penetanguishene to Dr. Isaac Campbell, late of Erskine church, Ottawa; from Coldwater to Mr. Mercer of Owen Sound; from a recent graduate of Knox College; from Bruce bridge to Mr. Bremner also a recent graduate of Knox College. Penetanguishene has increased its stipend \$165 and is now self-sustaining. Rev. Dr. Smith, of Bradford, declined the call to Chinese Mission work in British Columbia and Rev. C. D. Campbell, of Stayner, tendered his resignation. The proposal to change the name of the Y. P. S. C. E. to Westminster Guild was deferred but the views expressed were not favorable. The trustees of Shanty Bay manse were given permission to raise by mortgage \$200 for repairs. Rev. W. H. Ness late of Truro Presbytery, but now of Stroud, was added to the roll. A commission was appointed to confer with a commission from Orangeville Presbytery regarding re-arrangement of Angus, New Lowell, Airle, Avening, Blackbank, Southampton and Maple Valley with a view to lessening the augmentation grants. The Allandale ladies provided an excellent dinner.

The anniversary services in connection with the Sarnforth church were held on the 15th inst. The day was intensely cold, and the roads not being good, the weather was not favorable for the occasion. But notwithstanding this drawback there were large congregations both morning and evening. The services were conducted by Rev. T. Eakin, pastor of St. Andrew's church, Guelph. On Monday evening the annual tea-meeting was held. The attendance was not quite so large as usual, owing, we presume, to the unfavorable weather. All present, however, seemed to have a most enjoyable time. The chair was taken by the pastor, Rev. F. H. Larkin. Brief addresses were delivered by Rev. I. B. Wallwin, of the Methodist church; Rev. Rural Dean Hodgins, incumbent of St. Thomas church; Rev. Mr. Musgrove of McKillop, and Rev. Mr. Shaw of Egmondville. But the speech of the evening was, of course, that delivered by Rev. Mr. Eakin. He took as his theme "The Church and Militarism," and was given a hearty vote of thanks for his very interesting lecture. On the whole, these annual services were, throughout, very successful and satisfactory both financially and otherwise. The children of the Sabbath School were entertained by the ladies on the following afternoon, and attended in large numbers and had a good time.

On the 15th inst., Mr. Daniel, who taught for ten years in the Presbyterian college, in Oranmiah, Persia, and who has been pursuing theological studies in the United States and Canada during the past four years, gave a very interesting address in Knox church, Perth. For about three quarters of an hour he held the close attention of the congregation while he drew striking and amusing contrasts between conditions in Persia and Canada. By his realistic comparisons he showed the immeasurable superiority of Christian over Mohammedan and heathen civilization.