

MONTREAL NOTES.

THE Rev. James Robertson, Superintendent of Missions in the North-West, has been in this city for the past week. He addressed the congregations of Knox, Crescent Street, St. Paul's and Erskine Churches, on the present position of the work in the North-West. It is encouraging to know that the supply of labourers is increasing, and that even during the present winter, so few comparatively of the fields are without service. His presentation of the claims of the Indians was most forcible, and evoked a large measure of sympathy here. Notwithstanding the cheering fact that there are now about twenty students in Manitoba College having the ministry of the Church in view, the services of most of whom will be available in the Mission field next summer, Mr. Robertson is endeavouring to secure a number of the students from the colleges in Ontario and Quebec. On Thursday evening he addressed about sixty of the students of the Presbyterian College here. It is hoped that he may be able to induce some members of the graduating class from each of the colleges to accept appointments to the North-West.

MR. ROBERTSON is evidently the right man in the right place. He has rendered most efficient service, and to him is largely owing the present prosperous condition of Presbyterianism in the North-West. His persistent and successful prosecution of the work of raising money for the Church and Manse Building Fund is worthy of all commendation. Mr. Robertson left here for Ottawa on Saturday. He purposes returning to Winnipeg next week.

MRS. BARNEY, from the New England States, has been delivering a course of lectures and Bible readings, in several of the city churches, during the past ten days, under the auspices of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The meetings have been largely attended, and have resulted in a revived interest in the cause of Temperance. Mrs. Barney is a pleasing and forcible speaker.

On the evening of Tuesday week, the Rev. Professor Shaw, of the Wesleyan Theological College, delivered a lecture on the "Inspiration of the Bible," in Knox Church lecture room, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Sabbath School Association. The president, Mr. J. Murray Smith, occupied the chair. After stating and criticising several theories of inspiration, he expressed his own opinion that every word of the sacred volume was inspired, and showed that the errors of copyists and translators were of no serious consequence. He complimented the Presbyterian Church for the great service it had rendered by its scholarship and faithful defence of the truth, and urged his hearers to cultivate an intelligent and humble reliance on God's Word. On motion of the Rev. W. R. Cruikshank, a cordial vote of thanks was tendered Professor Shaw, who in acknowledging it expressed the hope that next winter a series of lectures for Sabbath School teachers would be given under the auspices of a union of the several Churches.

IN the eastern section of the city a number of Plymouth Brethren have of late been labouring to sow dissension among the French Protestants connected with the city churches. Instead of seeking to evangelize the Roman Catholic or infidel French-Canadians in the city, among whom there is ample scope for missionary work, they with characteristic zeal, expend their energies in trying to withdraw from Church connection those already gathered into the Church of Christ, and thus mar the Lord's work—and all in the name of the religion of peace and love.

RUSSELL HALL (St. John's Church) was well filled on Thursday evening, the occasion being the first social gathering of the Italian Presbyterian congregation. Nearly 400 persons were present, of whom about 300 were Italians. The Rev. R. H. Warden presided, and during the evening brief addresses were delivered by Revs. Principal MacVicar, J. Robertson, of Winnipeg; Heine, Campbell, Doudet, Professor Murray, of McGill College, and Newnham, of Christ Church Cathedral. The musical part of the entertainment was of a high order and greatly delighted the congregation. Several of the young people took part, the singing of one girl, an Italian new-girl, being specially attractive. The entertainment was in every respect a marked success. This is the only Protestant Italian congregation in the Dominion and the first gathering of the kind ever held in Canada. So painstaking and diligent is the missionary, Rev. A. Internoscia, that he knows nearly every Italian family in the city and about one-half of the Italian population were present at this gathering, and a most respectable, orderly congregation it was. Mr. Internoscia's attendance on Sabbath now averages fifty, and very recently he received eighteen Italians into the fellowship of the Church. At the close of this unique social gathering Italian cakes and coffee were served.

THE Rev. Dr. Smyth, of the St. Joseph Street Presbyterian Church, left on Saturday to preach at the opening of a new church at North Gower, in the Presbytery of Ottawa.

At a meeting on Monday last of the city members of the Montreal Presbytery arrangements were completed for the public meeting to celebrate the centenary of Presbyterianism in Montreal, on the evening of Friday, 12th March. The meeting takes place in Knox Church, Rev. J. Fleck to preside. The speakers will be Rev. Dr. Reid, of Toronto, and Revs. Principal MacVicar and G. H. Wells. A large committee was appointed, with Rev. R. H. Warden as convener, to arrange for a public breakfast or some social gathering in connection with the centenary celebration.

On the 27th ult. the Rev. W. A. Lang, M.A., died at his home in Wales, Ont. Mr. Lang was for several years minister of the congregation of Lunenburg and Avonmore; but on account of declining health was compelled last year to resign his charge. He was Clerk and Home Mission Convener of the Presbytery of Glengarry, and in these positions rendered efficient service to the Church. Of a singularly gentle and lovable spirit, he was highly esteemed by all who knew him. His widow has the sympathy of very many friends in her sorrow.

PRAYER is the key of evening and the bolt of the morning.

OBITUARY.

REV. WM. A. LANG, M.A.

We regret to have to chronicle the death of the Rev. Wm. A. Lang, M.A., Clerk of the Glengarry Presbytery, which sad event took place at his residence, Wales, on the night of the 27th ult. Mr. Lang was comparatively quite a young man at the time of his death, being only in his thirty ninth year. For the past three years he has been suffering from an affection of the liver, which necessitated the resignation of his charge two years ago. Last summer his health greatly improved and he and his many friends were looking forward hopefully to the time when he would be able to resume the active duties of the ministry again. Last autumn, however, he was seized with a malignant type of diphtheria, and while that was not the immediate cause of his death the system was so enfeebled that he never fully rallied. About the New Year the old trouble returned, and after years of patient suffering he sank peacefully to rest on the above date.

Mr. Lang was a distinguished graduate of Queen's University, Kingston. Throughout his arts course he held the first position in his class, and graduated as Prince of Wales prizeman in the spring of 1873. His theological course was equally successful, and on the completion of his studies at Queen's he proceeded to Scotland, where he spent a session in Edinburgh, and after a brief season of travel through the United Kingdom and on the Continent, he returned to his native land. The congregation of Lunenburg and Avonmore was the first vacancy in which he preached—who at once took steps to secure him as their pastor. Declining overtures from other congregations, Mr. Lang accepted their call, and on the 4th of March, 1878, he was ordained and inducted into the pastoral charge, of which he continued the successful and popular minister until failing health obliged him to resign in the spring of 1884. The Presbytery accepted reluctantly and with deep regret his resignation and appointed him clerk. This office he held at the time of his death, and notwithstanding his feeble health he all along discharged the duties of the clerkship with rare ability and fidelity.

Mr. Lang was married on the 4th February, 1880, to Miss Grass, daughter of Mr. Charles Grass, Front Road, Kingston. In the fullest sense of the term she was an "helpmeet" to him during his pastorate. In the choir and Sabbath school she gave invaluable service, and during the long illness of her husband her wifely devotion, her hopefulness and her Christian fortitude were beyond all praise. In her bereavement she has the heartfelt sympathy of a wide circle of friends. Mr. Lang was buried at Kingston. The funeral took place on the 30th ult., and was very largely attended. The services at the house were conducted by the Rev. A. Macgillivray, of Williamstown, an old college friend of the deceased. The Revs. Dr. McNish, T. R. Baile, A. Matheson and G. McArthur took part. Other engagements prevented other members of Presbytery from being present. At Kingston the remains were met by a large number of citizens, and several of the professors and many of the students of Queen's. The services at the vault were conducted by Rev. Dr. Bain. Mr. Macgillivray, of Glengarry Presbytery, and Mr. McArthur, of Brockville Presbytery, accompanied the remains to their last resting place. Few men enjoyed a wider or better-earned popularity than Mr. Lang. His was that gentleness that disarmed opposition, and that earnestness and cordiality that made and retained friends, and in him, as much as in any one we ever knew, the words, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace," had their exemplification.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY REV. R. P. MACKAY, B.A.

March 7, 1886.

READING THE LAW.

{ Neh. 8: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."—Neh. viii. 8.

INTRODUCTORY.

The prayer of Nehemiah, recorded in the first chapter, was answered speedily. But it was prayer with him all the time, hence his success.

He got permission from the king to come to Jerusalem, and besides, letters to the governors to give him assistance in his undertaking, which they gave very reluctantly. On the third day after his arrival he surveyed the situation, and then revealed his purpose and commission to the rulers and nobles and got their hearty co-operation. No sooner does a good work commence than the enemy begins to oppose. At first they begin to ridicule and laugh them to scorn, saying that the work did not amount to anything—if a fox should spring upon it, it would tumble down. But the work went on in spite of that. Then the adversaries decided upon a secret attack; but their intention was disclosed, and by prayer and watchfulness disappointed. After that an internal difficulty arose. Many of the Jews were heavily mortgaged to their brethren, and Nehemiah by his own unselfish example got that put right. (Chap. v.) The enemy next thought, under the pretence of desiring a consultation, to entrap Nehemiah and slay him, but his shrewdness thwarted them. At last the wall was finished in fifty-two days (vi. 15). The work had been divided into small sections, each allotted to a company of workers. (Chap. iii.) That is precisely the way in which the Lord's work is to be advanced—to each his work—and if each did his work faithfully we would soon see splendid results.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Occasion.—It was the first day of the seventh month, or the Feast of Trumpets. The new moon, or first of every month, was distinguished by the blowing of trumpets over the burnt offerings. And there were special sacrifices offered,

but only this new moon was a holy convocation day. On that occasion the trumpets were probably blown for a longer time.

The blowing of the trumpet, which is so often associated with the voice of God, as on Sinai and the last day, probably meant that the people were called to greater activity and attention, as when God speaks. And as the seventh month was the sacred month—in which the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles came—it was suitable that they should be summoned to special diligence. It was a joyous month and hence joy was the suitable exercise of the spirit. (Ver. 9.)

II. The Convocation.—It was a remarkable gathering. It has features that would be very encouraging if more frequently seen.

(1) *Spontaneous.* (Ver. 1.)—They came of their own accord. There was no insisting on the part of the authorities, as is now so often necessary in order to get anything like a reasonable attendance on divine ordinances. The time is coming when people will say: "I was glad when they said, Let us go up to the house of the Lord."

(2) *Large.*—It was a very large gathering—consisting of men, women and children who had reached years of understanding—which is very much younger than many people think.

(3) *Hungry for the Word.* (Ver. 1.)—They applied to have the law of Moses read to them. It is always delightful to find people hungering for the bread of life, and asking for more, instead of complaining that too much time is spent. The natural consequence of such an appetite was:

(4) *Attention.* (Ver. 3.)—"The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." They did not allow a word to slip—endeavoured so to seize the truth as to carry it away. That eagerness was so great as to enable them to give attention for at least six hours at a time. The congregations in Japan, it is said, have such a desire for knowledge that they will listen to seven sermons in succession each an hour long, having an intermission after the third.

III. Place of Meeting. (Ver. 1.)—It was in the street, or broad place before the water-gate.

It is supposed to be that slope of Moriah called *Ophel*, enclosed between the city and temple walls. There are said to have been great subterranean reservoirs from which the gate received its name. Whether the gate belonged to the city wall or led into the temple area is uncertain.

There must have been room for 20,000 or 30,000 people.

IV. Preacher and Preaching.—Ezra was distinguished as an expounder of the law. In the last lesson we made his acquaintance. Whether he was in Jerusalem whilst Nehemiah was building the wall is uncertain. Probably not, or some notice would have been taken of him. At any rate he is now called upon to read the law to the people and with great zeal he responds to the public demand.

(1) *Pulpit.* (Ver. 4.)—He stood on some wooden structure, so high as to be seen, and sufficiently wide to allow thirteen other prominent men to stand by him, and no doubt in some way to assist him in his work. It is not likely that he read from morning until noon—at least six hours—without any assistance.

(2) *Other helpers.*—Besides these, many others took part in teaching the people. The audience being very large, and many of them very ignorant, they would require much patient repetition.

(3) *Character of teaching.* (Ver. 8.)—It was distinct, so that all could hear. It was expository, so that no obscure passages were left unexplained, and it was practical, so that all could understand how it applied to themselves.

(4) *Prayer.* (Ver. 6.)—They began the service by praising and blessing God for what He did in the past, and what of His goodness they then enjoyed. The people joined in the prayer, by saying *Amen*, by lifting up their hands in the attitude of supplication, and bowing their heads in humiliation.

V. Effects of Faithful Teaching. (Ver. 9-12.)—The seed rightly sown will produce fruit to the glory of God.

(1) *Sorrow.*—They mourned over and wept on account of sin. How different their lives from the requirements of that holy law!

But their sorrow was excessive, and it was not appropriate on that occasion, so that Nehemiah, the Tirshatha (governor), and Ezra corrected them.

It is good to lament sin, but better to rejoice in mercy.

(2) *Joy.*—They are exhorted to rejoice—eat the fat and drink the sweet, which are indications of plenty and happiness.

The Scriptures constantly urge joy. Paul says: "Rejoice always, and again I say, Rejoice." It is better for body and soul to be happy and joyful—if it is a joy that has its origin in God.

(3) *Charity.*—They were not like the rich man to give the crumbs to the poor, but to share their joys. (See Luke xiv. 13, Isa. lviii. 7, 10.)

The people obeyed and went away to make great mirth. Next day they came back again to hear the Word, and learned their duty as to the Feast of Tabernacles, and at once attended to their duty. Christians thrive when study and obedience go hand in hand.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Go to church—we need mutual encouragement.
2. Take the children to church.
3. When in church give attention to the sermon, and join in the prayers.
4. Apply the sermon to your own life, and see how you stand.
5. Obey the truth in your daily life.

THE present lineal representative of the Black Douglas, Sir G. B. Scott Douglas, of Springwood Park, Kelso, is a writer of fiction. He is the author of two novels, "The Adventures of William Jermy," and "A Love's Gamut," and also of various articles in the magazines and reviews.