

## MONTREAL PROTESTANT ITALIAN MISSION.

The story of Italian Protestant mission work in Montreal is one of obstacles constantly overcome. Comparatively few people know of its uphill but successful struggles, especially in the last three years. From very small beginnings in the basement of St. John's Presbyterian Church, on St. Catherine Street, the mission is now centrally and conveniently located for its work in a substantial, well-equipped edifice at No. 30 St. Denis Street, at the corner of Lagachetiere Street. The building was formerly the residence of the late Mr. F. X. Perrault, and it was bought for its present purpose just over twelve months ago, at a cost of \$12,000. On the ground floor is the chapel where services are held, and, in addition, there are two class rooms for day and Sunday scholars. The religious services are held at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, conducted by the pastor, the Rev. S. B. Castellini, who has his residence in the mission house. The services and preaching are in Italian, but in the Sunday school the classes are both Italian and English. There is also a day school connected with the mission, and its curriculum is the same as that of the elementary schools in the city, the whole of the lessons being given in English. On three nights in the week during the winter months, commencing in October, a night school is conducted, and last session there was an average attendance of from twenty-three to twenty-five. Last year the teacher at the day school was Miss McCloud, niece of Professor McKenzie, and during the two months immediately preceding the summer vacation, Miss Mowat, daughter of Dr. Mowat, taught the classes. This year Miss Margaret, an undergraduate of McGill University, will teach in the day school.

There are about forty members of the mission, and an attendance at the religious services on Sundays of between fifty and sixty. Owing to the fact that the Italian population of the city is constantly changing, it is not to be expected that the mission's membership will ever be very large, but the seed of good teaching has brought, and is bringing, forth good fruit, of which there is evidence not only in Montreal, but in different parts of Canada and in the United States. Mr. Castellini is a man of prayer and unbounded faith. It is his purpose to carry the Bible and its teachings to the Italians who have left their own country to make their homes in Canada, and to do a truly uplifting and beneficial work in the interest of the Kingdom of God, humanity, and the country. He has avoided all controversy with those who think different to him on the subject of creed. He goes about his duties in a quiet and unassuming manner. The result is a steady progress, the enjoyment of the confidence and affection of his own people, and the respect of those of other nationalities and creed. He needs all his faith and energy and youth to overcome the task he has in front of him, which is to clear the mission of the heavy debt it has had to incur incidental to moving into its new home. This debt is \$11,700, and, according to the minutes of the Presbytery of Montreal of December, 1906, 'The Rev. G. B. Castellini is authorized to collect funds for the purpose of paying the interest and the first instalment of the purchase price of the Italian mission building.'

Up to date Mr. Castellini has collected \$1,000 for the purpose stated. His congregation is not by any means wealthy, but what money they donate is offered in the spirit of the cheerful giver. They have during the past year paid the whole of the running expenses of the mission, amounting to \$200; they have contributed \$60 towards the pas-

tor's salary, and have contributed \$500 towards clearing off the debt.

Mr. Castellini has done some good temperance work. He is quite aware of the mischief the drink oftentimes leads his compatriots into, and he knows how tempting the saloon is to men who are in the city without friends and without resort in their idle hours. Therefore he keeps the doors of the mission constantly open for such as will accept the safe and comfortable shelter of his rooms for the purpose of reading or writing or for friendly converse. Very valuable help is rendered in all the mission work by Mrs. Castellini, and in their hospital work they have carried comfort and consolation to the sick and dying. They deserve praise and encouragement and practical support in their good work. Mrs. Castellini is an Italian lady, but she was educated in America. She is a most accomplished musician, and her singing has added much to the effect of her husband's preaching, and greatly aided the religious work. She is organist and choir leader at the religious services in the mission, with Miss Margaret Lawson as assistant.

## HISTORY OF THE MISSION.

About thirty years ago the Presbyterian Church established a mission for the Italian population of Montreal. Among its earlier pastors was the Rev. A. Internoscia, a converted priest, and uncle of Mr. Jerome Internoscia, advocate, of this city. He took a course at the Montreal Presbyterian College, and devoted himself faithfully to the work of this mission for twenty years. Mr. Internoscia was succeeded by Mr. C. A. Buffa, a clergyman of the Waldensian Church. He remained about two years, and then went back to Italy, where he had been called to fill an important position among the Protestants there. The Rev. V. di Genova was the next missionary. He had been converted to the mission, and after being educated at the Pointe-aux-Trembles schools and at the Montreal Presbyterian College, he labored earnestly at the mission for about four years, and his good work was then cut short by the hand of death. For several months Mr. A. Giovanni, a young student, carried on the work with acceptance, until, in 1903, the Rev. G. B. Castellini, the present pastor, was appointed.

Mr. Castellini is a native of Genoa, and he was born a Roman Catholic. After his conversion he studied at the Waldensian College, in Florence, Italy, from which he graduated in 1897. He labored for some time in Italy in association with the Methodist Episcopal Church, having charge of churches, first in Pisa, and then in Milan. Bishop Walden heard of the young man, and sent him an invitation to come to America. Mr. Castellini accepted, and came to Cincinnati, where he took charge of the Italian Methodist Mission. From Cincinnati, Mr. Castellini came to take up his present important work in Montreal. Both he and his wife are completely consecrated to mission work.

Speaking of the work of the mission, Mr. Castellini says:—'As you, know, I took charge of the mission some three years ago, and from that time on it has grown considerably, both in the number of converts and in the esteem of the people. I began to preach the new birth, and to work directly for the salvation of souls, saying to all that if they were not born again of the Spirit, they need not hope of ever being saved. In so doing, my wife and I and several of the members began to meet privately for prayer. We prayed for the conversion of those who frequented the services and for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and our prayers were nearly always answered. We exercise a judicious care in admitting new members, and this has given the mission a certain

stability which is good to see. The meetings are well attended by all members and many others, and we always feel the spirit of the Lord among us. During prayer meetings we have many who testify and pray, and we may say that all give good testimony out of the church as well as in it. All the members give liberally for the cause of the Lord, and I firmly believe this is due more to our united prayers than to my preaching. We have now a debt of about twelve thousand dollars, and to pay it off I rely mostly on prayer. The Presbyterians of Montreal and our other Christian friends will help us, but in view of the great mission work carried on by the churches in other directions, in the great North-west and among the heathen abroad, we feel justified in making known our needs and opportunities in this way. We trust in the Lord and in His people, and feel sure He will see that the debt is wiped out soon.'

Mr. Castellini appeals for help for his work, and he will cordially welcome all who care to visit the mission, and for reference he names the Rev. Dr. Mowatt, of Erskine Church; the Rev. J. S. Taylor, secretary of the French Board; the Rev. J. Patterson, secretary of the Presbytery, and all prominent Presbyterian ministers of the city.—'Montreal Witness.'

## REV. PETER WRIGHT, D.D.

Rev. Peter Wright, D.D., now pastor of the English Bay Presbyterian church in Vancouver, B. C., recently supplied the pulpit of his old charge in Stratford during the vacation of Mr. Martin. Dr. Wright has been for some years intending to retire from regular work and take occasional services and went to British Columbia with that end in view. But congregations insisted on his continuing in active work, and recently a mission on the Beach at English Bay offered to become self-supporting if they could secure Dr. Wright as pastor, and he is now settled there. His many friends in the East will read with pleasure the following from the Stratford Herald:

I have heard nothing but golden opinions of the sermons of Rev. Dr. Wright in Knox church last Sunday. Dr. Wright, of course, was no stranger to the congregation he spoke to, and though the membership of Knox church has largely changed since his ministry here of eighteen years ago, he could not but feel that he was preaching to a familiar people who listened to his words with a kindly sympathy that would be impossible with strangers. The announcement of Dr. Wright's return to Stratford for a few weeks gave no little pleasure to his old friends here and it is well within the truth to say that his discourses on Sunday even enhanced the reputation which he held among his people during his former ministry. For a third of a century Dr. Wright has been a leader in the Presbyterian church in this country—a powerful preacher and an influential member in the councils of that body. His pre-eminence in the pulpit is undisputed; his sermons are marked by ripe scholarship and a spirituality of more than ordinary impressiveness. Dr. Wright's strong personality was nowhere more evident than in the school room, for in the olden days before he became a minister he wielded the stick of the pedagogue with an efficacy that was uncommon even in the primitive days of education in this province. As an inspirer of youth he had few equals and his pupils (I was one of them) will still tell you of his immense influence as builder of character among the young. Dr. Wright has long since passed the age when men are called young, but his intellect has never ceased a vigorous growth, and he stands to-day in the very front ranks of Canadian preachers.