

PARISH NOTES.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 2, 1891.

Parish Notes.

THE month before Advent is usually a quiet and uneventful
period in the life of a parish, but our Thanksgiving Service
and the annual examination of our Sunday School gave interest
and occupation, while in other spheres of labour our societies
were more than usually diligent.

THE selection of the day and hour for the Thanksgiving
Service has always been a matter of difficulty. In former
years both the Sunday recommended by the Bishop and the
week-day appointed by the Governor-General have been used,
although the objections to a double festival are obvious, and it
is much to be wished, as Canon Roberts remarked in his sermon,
that our secular and spiritual authorities might agree as to a
fixed time.

This year it was determined to hold but one service on the
official holiday. The disadvantage of a week-day service was
not so apparent as usual, and a fair congregation was gathered
together, although not a fourth part, probably, of the assemblage
on a Sunday evening on any special occasion. The music was
very effectively rendered, and it was abundantly manifest that
a harvest Thanksgiving Service does not need any theatrical
decorations to be devout, hearty and solemn.

THE annual examination of our Sunday school commenced
on Sunday November 15th as previously announced. On that
day the junior classes were questioned *visa-voce*. The elder
students assembled in the school-house on the following Tuesday,
for a written examination. Unfavorable weather kept some
at home, and is at present under deliberation to hold all the
examinations in future on the concluding Sunday before
Advent. Once more the highest place was taken by a girl,
Miss May Ward's papers obtaining almost the highest possible
marks, and reflecting the greatest credit upon her teacher
and herself. Other results are given below. The prizes
were presented to the successful candidates by Mrs. T. W.
Daniel on November 29th, after Sunday School.

THE death of Mr. Peter Besnard removed from our city a
notable inhabitant. Even those who had only known him

in later years of physical decay, were at once attracted by
the striking physiognomy, and the genial flow of recollection.
The funeral service was attended by a large assemblage of
old friends. At the desire of the relatives the hymns 'For
ever with the Lord,' and 'Nearer my God to Thee' were sung
by the choir. Miss Wilson, who kindly undertook the organ
in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Ford, played Handel's
Dead March as the bearers left the church.

OUR Advent services have been already announced. The
special feature is the holding a deanery service in the evening,
at a time convenient to the general congregation. We hope
that the service will maintain our traditions of dignity and
beauty, and that the body of clergy expected to be the present
will meet a large congregation.

THE DEBATING CLUB.

By far the most successful and stimulating meetings held last
winter by the Y. M. A. were those when the doors of the association
room were thrown open to the public, and this season it
has been resolved "that all debating in connection with the club
shall be open to the public unless otherwise previously ordered
by a motion carried at a previous meeting by a three fourths
vote; the public shall be excluded"; and further that all males
over the age of sixteen years of any denomination shall be eligible
for membership. The entrance fee to any who are not
members of the Y. M. A. is 25 cents while the annual fee is
put at 50 cents. Thus for a mere nominal sum the young
men of St. John have afforded them an opportunity to exercise
and develop whatever debating talent they may possess.

Nature has endowed every one with the ability to express
more or less clearly their thoughts, while engaged in ordinary
conversation, but the cases are rare where a man without
practice can stand before an audience and express his thoughts
in a clear and forcible manner.

During ordinary conversation, a remark from one party
almost invariably calls forth a reply from a second, and this
in return by introducing some new line of thoughts calls forth
a rejoinder from a third and so the ball of conversation is
kept moving without a great amount of effort. But in
addressing an audience all this is changed, the speaker starts
forth alone, his hearers settle back in their seats with a feeling
that on the speaker alone rests the responsibility of entertaining
them. With them remains the privilege of being carried along
and guided solely by his utterances, but they also may remain
tangibly unsympathetic, and coldly critical, which latter has
frequently the effect of completely dumbfounding a brilliant
conversationalist when he appears as a speaker. A debating club
cannot strike deep thoughts into a shallow mind, but a
persistent and diligent use of its opportunities enables a man
to overcome to a great extent the terrible sensation of one's
thoughts "sinking into one's boots" so perplexing to the
inexperienced debater.

The first public meeting of the debating club was held on
the 26th ult., when the following resolution was introduced
and discussed :-