

A VISIT TO POINTE-AUX-TREMBLES.

Having had the opportunity recently of visiting the school at Pointe-aux-Trembles, I take the liberty of presuming that a few words descriptive of the schools and expressing my impressions regarding them may not prove uninteresting to your readers. Accompanied by Mr. Bourgoïn, the Principal, whom I met at Rev. Dr. Warden's office in Montreal, I enjoyed a pleasant drive out of the city eastwards by St. James and Notre Dame Streets, past the large cotton mills, through the eastern suburbs of the city, down the Quebec Road, along the level banks of the St. Lawrence River, past Longue Pointe with its noted asylum for nine miles to the village of Pointe-aux-Trembles, then a short distance farther to the schools which are situated on the north side of the road and only about 100 yards from the river, upon whose bosom are seen the floating palaces of the Allan Line of ocean steamships, while vessels from every clime pass to and fro between their various ports.

The river here is about three miles wide and on the Southern shore looming up in the hazy distance the faint outlines of the mountains may be seen.

The writer always experienced a trembling sensation whenever speaking of the schools, not knowing the correct pronunciation of the name, so he carefully listened so as to catch the proper sound given by the natives which appeared to be *Point-aw-Tramb*, meaning the Point of the Poplars or more correctly Poplar Point.

The schools are the property of the Presbyterian Church and are under the control of the Board of French Evangelization subject to the General Assembly.

The main purpose is to educate French-Canadian Roman Catholic children with a view to their becoming preachers and teachers. Over 3,000 pupils have passed through the schools, many of them now occupying responsible positions as preachers of the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ, others as teachers, physicians, lawyers, etc., each one of them continually exerting an ever-widening influence against the errors of the Church of Rome and as earnest, faithful, zealous members of the Presbyterian Church bearing aloft the banner of Jesus Christ. As the schools are approached from the west, the first reached is the boys' school, a square-looking red brick building, three stories high with a mansard roof and high basement, while on the east side is the new bright chapel having the boys' dining-room in the basement.

Though just the opening of the session, with doubtless many arrivals of new pupils, I could not but notice the quiet and orderly behaviour of the boys while at tea in the dining-room and their prompt attendance on the wishes of the Principal as announced by taps on the bell at his side.

The pupils are divided into four mixed classes, each occupying one of the four class-rooms, two in each school; the studies embrace the rudiments of an English education including algebra and geometry, with two sessions in Latin and one in Greek, so arranged as to meet the requirements of the pupils, one being admitted last year, aged 22 years, who could neither read nor write but who made rapid progress during the term and by the end of the session could write a very fair hand.

The sessions last from October 15th to 15th May. The pupils rise each morning at 5.30, the classes meet at 9 each morning for work in the class-rooms after morning service, continue at work with needed intermissions till 6 p.m., meet for evening service at 9 retiring at 9.30.

The Boys' School which has been recently refitted and enlarged has a verandah in front which is approached by a flight of eight or nine steps, then entering the door the visitor finds himself in a wide hall extending to the back of the building, where there are stairs leading to the basement and to the floor above, on the right of entrance on the main floor are the two well-lighted class-rooms, the first lighted by windows on the south side and the second by windows on the north side. The desks used are bright and new, similar to those used in our public schools, a door in the rear of the north class-room leads into the chapel which is nicely seated with chairs, in which service is held three times on Sabbath, in the morning at 11, Sabbath School at 3 in the afternoon and an evening service at 7, which are conducted by Mr. Bourgoïn, the obliging Principal, and his assistant. The pupils have also a weekly prayer-meeting conducted by themselves, which is well attended, and has borne good results, as is evidenced by the fact that last session 36 of the pupils partook of communion on profession of faith, making 70 of the pupils who are members of our church, and during last session the pupils, themselves, contributed no less than \$170 through their missionary society for missionary purposes.

On the left of the door of entrance we see first the Principal's office and library and the rooms occupied by his family, on the next floor we find sleeping apartments for Mr. Bourgoïn and family and the other teachers with a small room used when required as an infirmary, which I was pleased to see unoccupied. The two upper floors are used as dormitories, fitted up with comfortable looking iron bedsteads which were generously sent down by Rev. H. M. Parsons, D.D., of Toronto to replace the old unsightly wooden bedsteads which had been in use ever since the organization of the school. I noticed how clean and orderly everything was kept and learned that the boys do all the housework except the cooking and washing, and I feel that they were thus acquiring cleanly and orderly habits which would be a blessing to them all through life.

In the basement we have the bright, cheerful dining-room, drying room, pantry and kitchen.

The Girls' School is a square looking stone building about 150 feet east of the boys' school, without the verandah in front

and without the mansard roof. The floors and stairs are well worn, showing that many busy feet have passed over them and showing how much in need of repair and enlargement it is.

Miss Vessot, the directress, points out the different rooms; on the right of the entrance door is a small plainly furnished, though comfortable, reception room, while back of that is the room in which lessons in music are given, a pupil being then busy practising at the piano, while on the left of the hall are two class-rooms, both being occupied at that hour by classes. In marked contrast to the desks in the boys' school were those in use by the girls, plain, long wooden desks reaching nearly across the room, antediluvian in appearance, bearing the knife marks of antiquity and ornamented with a coat of dark red paint, with old wooden benches to match. It was remarked that the boys had more attention paid to their wants than had been paid to the girls, a very unusual thing in these chivalrous times, but that was accounted for and condoned in the fact that the boys' school had been much more out of repair than the girls', so had to be attended to first, but that they hoped that kind friends throughout the Church would not forget the great need that existed, not only for repairs and renovation, but for enlargement, for though with accommodation for only forty the number of fifty were taken in last session, rendering it necessary that a class should be held occasionally on benches around the stove in the hall, and on benches hard, plain, unvarnished and without backs, while the dormitories were so crowded even with the old aged wooden bedsteads that there was only a narrow passageway between the rows scarcely wide enough for two to pass, while even that passageway had to be closed while the beds had to be moved so as to gain entrance to the rows of cupboards fastened to the wall, and every bed had to be moved before it could be made up in the mornings and though thus crowded application for admission to the school had to be refused to sixty girls, many of them children of Roman Catholic parents who were anxious to be admitted. The doors had to be closed against them because there was no room for them at the school.

We read with sorrow that in days gone by as they were in Bethlehem of Judea, "there was no room for them at the inn," while our church, its congregations, its Sabbath Schools, its individual members, its Sabbath School scholars and Bible class members are saying, There is no room for you at the school.

We hear the Master say, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," but while they are willing and anxious to come the rank and file of our church are practically forbidding them as they have not yet risen to remove the barriers that keep them out, have not made provision for their reception. The ladies of Montreal have done, are doing much towards raising sufficient funds for the enlargement of the school. What are the sisters in Protestant Ontario doing?

On the second floor of the school are the teachers' rooms and dormitories, and the balance of the beds are crowded together in the attic.

In the basement are the dining-room, kitchen, pantry etc. There are some glaring needs of the schools that are patent to every visitor. The boys have no recreation room, no play-room for either wet or cold weather and no reading room, all of which would help very much in the discipline of the school and would be of lasting benefit to the pupils.

The Girls' School needs first of all enlargement, more room for pupils anxious to come, new beds for the dormitories, a recreation room and a reading room, with additional classroom accommodation and new desks and benches for class-rooms something that will not be fifty years behind the age.

The annual report of the Board of French Evangelization states truly in speaking of these schools that "no means are likely under the blessing of God, to be more efficacious in the work of French-Canadian Evangelization, and in advancing the cause of Christ in the Province of Quebec," for here we have 145 pupils, 65 of whom are children of Roman Catholic parents, 70 of whom are members of our church going to their homes for five months each year exerting an influence for the Master, ever widening, untold and which only eternity shall reveal, while those who have passed through and are students in our colleges or are pastors of our churches are ever extending their influence and are thus doing a noble work for our country and our God in dispelling the darkness and superstitious errors of the Church of Rome.

And this is a work in which not only the individual members of our church but our Sabbath schools, our Bible-classes or Sabbath school classes and the individual members of our Sabbath schools can take an important part by paying for or assisting to pay for the tuition of a pupil, or contributing as they may be able to the important work of French-Canadian Evangelization.

VISITOR.

INCIDENTS OF EXTRA-PASTORAL WORK.

III.

The following occurred in the course of ordinary pastoral duty, but as the person referred to was during the most of his life outside my congregation, and was only incidentally brought into connection with it, and that but for a short period, the case may have a place among these sketches.

After I had been some years in the ministry there came into the neighbourhood a young lad, rather, I should say, a boy from abroad. He was of Scottish descent and, I believe, of Scottish birth, but if I recollect right, came to us from the neighbourhood of Chicago. One, or both of his parents were dead and he came to live with a relative, upon whom he

was dependent. Here I heard of him as his friend, though residing only four or five miles from my house, belonged to a neighbouring congregation, I was not then brought in contact with him.

But after attending school for a time he undertook to teach and the terms on which license for that purpose could then be obtained being easy, he was duly authorized to assume that office at an age at which persons would not now be admitted to teach in any of our schools. His first school was in my immediate neighbourhood, and he was thus brought under my ministry. I and my people paid him the ordinary attention that we would show to a stranger coming among us, perhaps feeling a little more interested in him from his dependent position. I confess that we did not entertain any high expectations as to his future career. Perhaps we judged him by his physical frame, for he was small of stature and of slender make. Had he possessed greater thews and sinews, our anticipations regarding him would probably have been higher. Indeed, in our estimate of him I fear we did him injustice. But still we showed him kindness, and I was glad to hear lately that he retained a kindly recollection of his residence among us. He this time made a profession of religion, but I have no recollection of the circumstances and cannot say that it was through my ministry that he was led to the saving knowledge of the truth.

After one, or at most two terms, teaching with us he left and soon after went to live with some friends in the neighbourhood of Chicago. From this time for some years I lost all trace of him. I never had his address, and if he had correspondents in this province I did not know them, so that for a good many years I heard nothing of him, and he had almost passed from my mind, when, to my surprise, some friends, who had emigrated to California, told me of a minister of the name who, after proving useful and successful in one of the Western States, had come to take charge of an influential Presbyterian congregation in San Francisco, and on enquiring he was found to be our friend.

I have since heard of him several times as sometimes in delicate health but always as the popular pastor of an important city charge, a position which he maintained at the time of the last accounts I had of him. I may add that one of the American colleges has honoured him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

This case shows the importance of ministers watching for promising young men, drawing out their gifts and helping them forward to the ministry or other important positions. Mr. Chiniquy tells us that the priests in going their rounds are in the habit of looking out the smartest boys they find among their people, and encouraging them and their parents to take the steps necessary to prepare them for the priesthood. It is a lesson that Protestant ministers might well learn, even from their enemies. Many may have the richest fruit of all their labours in some one, two or more, men that they have drawn from obscurity to exercise a commanding influence in their day and to benefit after generations.

In this case I do not take credit to myself of having brought this brother from obscurity. On the contrary I have to confess that I did not entertain high anticipations of him, and the lesson which I would draw from the case is that we should be cautious in forming an unfavourable judgment regarding individuals whose capacities may not appear to be brilliant or may even seem dull. Those who can look upon the careers of those whom they knew a generation ago will have remarked that many whose talents seemed to promise a brilliant future have made little show or even proved failures in after life, while others who were looked down upon by their companions and perhaps by their teachers have proved good and useful men, or even have risen to the highest positions.

In regard to the ministry there is a class of aspirants for the office for whom I have little sympathy. It is those who having failed in the grocery business or getting above labour, fancy themselves at once qualified to preach the Gospel—who regard the Church in asking any course of preparation for the office as setting up unreasonable hindrances to the work of the Lord—who, if they had been in the days of our Lord, would have thought His placing His apostles under three years' training with Himself as their tutor, as quite unnecessary, and would have undertaken to go forth to evangelize the world without any such delay in preparation. In regard to such I think that they should remember the exhortation, "Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called," and the Church has reason to give good heed to the warning against putting new converts into the ministry (1 Tim. iii. 6).

But when a minister meets a young man with the love of God in his heart, and with such views of the ministry that he is willing to give time and labour to prepare himself to fill the office creditably, then I say let him beware how he discourages such an one, even if he give no indication of brilliant powers. I have seen men that were despised as of inferior talents, who yet possessing true piety with diligence and perseverance, have proved themselves most useful men in the Church. Such qualities are often sufficient to render it our duty to give them all the encouragement and aid in our power. Indeed, there will be cases in which just as Paul "would have Timothy to go forth with him" (Acts xvi. 3), we would be warranted in using a measure of pressure to induce them to devote themselves to serve God in the Gospel of His Son. Perhaps in no way will a minister better serve his generation, and when he rests from his labours perhaps in no way will his works follow him more extensively, than in the services rendered to the Church and to the world by those whom he has been the means of leading or helping forward to the ministry.

AN OLD PASTOR.