

terranean abodes most useful for their religious services; there they could worship God and join in chants and hymns without fear of being overheard by their prying persecutors. Here they could fly for refuge, and defy their pursuers within the remote walls that could be found only by themselves. And here too they laid their dead, many of them martyrs to their faith in Christ.

The Catacombs at Rome, which are the most accessible, are those called the cemetery of St. Calixtus, a Bishop of Rome, and the martyr of the 3rd century. They are entered from the Church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, 3 miles outside the city. It is said that 46 bishops of Rome and 74,000 martyrs were buried in this cemetery. A long flight of steps leads down to the excavations, and to one just out of the brightness and warmth of an Italian summer sun, the darkness and the chill are very painful. Guides and lights are of course necessary. Long, narrow passages regularly cut so that the roof and floor are at right angles to the sides, stretch away into the distance. These passages are crossed by others, which are again in their turn intersected by others, until from the multitude of openings and the similarity of the surroundings, it would be the easiest thing imaginable to be fatally lost. The walls of these passages are honeycombed with recesses, of a size made expressly for the body to be interred; the recesses were formerly closed with marble slabs carefully laid in cement, and were inscribed with religious emblems and short affecting inscriptions. These slabs, or at least the most interesting, are found in the museums of the Vatican and the Lateran.

Beneath the first range of passages, other ranges, of similar character have been excavated. Staircases, cut in the soft rock, lead down to these ranges, and even the walls on either side of these staircases are pierced for the reception of the dead. At times the narrow passages open into chambers or halls, in the centre or at one side of which stands a sarcophagus covered with a slab of marble. The sarcophagus enclosed the remains of an illustrious martyr, and served as a table for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when the hall was used for the worship of the assembled Christians. Some of these halls are elaborately ornamented with paintings, exhibiting a high state of art, and contain, around the walls, seats for the congregation, and special accommodation for the bishop and priests taking part in the celebration.

The immense number of the dead laid away in the catacombs implies that the Church in Rome multiplied very rapidly, and embraced a very considerable proportion of the population. But it must not be forgotten that when the custom of burning the bodies of the dead fell into disuse, the catacombs served readily for the disposal of these bodies, and were in fact so employed. It may be, therefore, that remains supposed to be those of saintly persons are merely those of ordinary persons, and even of slaves and of criminals put to death for their crimes.

An immense amount of writing has been devoted to the catacombs, but it is in a very expensive form. A very interesting account of these excavations, with illustrative engravings, can be cheaply procured in a romance, by Cardinal Wiseman, entitled, "Fabiola, or the Church of the Catacombs," published by D. and J. Sadlier and Co., of New York.

#### Our Indian Homes.

SIR,—As spring is now advancing and we are expecting shortly to have our Homes for Indian children once more in full operation, after having closed down partly for the winter, I would like with your permission to tell our many friends a little about the present position of our work and our prospects for the future. I have only quite recently returned from a visit to my distant Homes at Medicine Hat and Elkhorn. At each of my centres I have now an "Advisory Council," consisting of the Bishop of the diocese and several of the clergy and the laity living in the neighbourhood. At the Sault Ste. Marie Homes the Bishop of Algoma is president; Rev. E. A. Vesey, secretary; Judge Johnson, W. G. McNeil Thompson and myself, members of council. At Elkhorn the Bishop of Rupert's Land is visitor; Ven. Archdeacon Phair, president; Rev. R. G. Stevenson, secretary; Rev. C. Guinsey, Dr. Rolston, Rev. H. L. Watts, Rev. Rural Dean Rogers, Mr. W. Wilson and myself, members of council. And at Medicine Hat the Bishop of Qu'Appelle is president; Rev. G. N. Dobie, secretary; and Rev. I. W. Tims, Judge McLeod, Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Sanderson, Rev. H. W. Stocken and myself are members of council.

I am thankful to say that the debt—about \$900—with which we began the year is now about one-third wiped out. It is also satisfactory to be able to record that during the five months which have elapsed since the commencement of the year our receipts (including government grants), for main-

tenance of both our Algoma and Elkhorn Homes, have a little exceeded our expenditure.

When I partially closed our Shingwauk and Wawanosh Homes last fall, it was with the intention, as our friends know, of economising funds during the winter, and I fully hoped to be able to open again with full numbers in the month of May. I am sorry that we are not as yet entirely free of debt, still I think we may venture to make a fresh start, and already our Homes are beginning to fill up again, and, as the summer advances, we shall probably have from 80 to 100 pupils to provide for at our Algoma Homes. We expect also, with government help, to have a good deal of building going on. A new laundry, with modern appliances, is to be built, and the foundation of a new Wawanosh Home for 50 girls to be laid. We have a splendid new school-room, and two school masters, each of whom will teach school half the day and superintend work the other half. The trades to be taught are carpentering, blacksmithing, shoe making, and tailoring. At Elkhorn, my brother, Mr. Wilberforce Wilson, is now local superintendent. Miss Vidal, teacher; Mrs. Vidal, in charge of girls' department; Mrs. Seale (who has served both at Shingwauk and Wawanosh), matron. My brother, I am sorry to say, has been very ill for nearly two months, having taken cold, followed by congestion of the lungs; this has been an anxiety and has put things back, but he is now, I am thankful to say, recovering. With government assistance we are putting up farm buildings and starting our large farm of 640 acres, Mr. King, whom I have just engaged as farm instructor, being placed in charge. During my brother's illness, my eldest son, A. S. Wilson, who is now 22 years of age, has been assisting in the Elkhorn work, and I am thankful to say he has proved himself very efficient.

At Medicine Hat, the Central Building, which is being erected at a cost of \$4000, is waiting for the expected government grant before it can be completed and furnished. We hope to open it, if God will, with about 20 pupils in September next,—but beyond the promised government grant of \$2000 towards the first year's maintenance, we have literally nothing to depend on for its support. I am proposing therefore to take two of my elder daughters, make my headquarters there for the winter, and start the Home in a sort of a family way at as little expense as possible; then when spring arrives I hope that money may be coming in so that I can engage a local superintendent and employ a regular staff as we are doing at Elkhorn, and so come back to my headquarters at the Sault. The Medicine Hat work is I believe going to be of a most interesting character; all the Indians about here are wild blanket Indians with faces painted and hair plaited. People who have travelled west will know how wild and uncouth they look as they come up to the train at Medicine Hat, and other points along the line, to sell their black polished Buffalo horns. We hope to have a market garden and a dairy on our Medicine Hat Home. All the trains stop half an hour to take water and replenish the dining cars, and we may probably arrange to supply milk, cut flowers, &c., to the passengers.

And now I must urge once more very strongly and very earnestly that this extension work I believe Almighty God has called me to, may be more steadily and more liberally supported. I have always urged that the Church of England Sunday schools throughout Canada should be encouraged to make a specialty of this Indian work. If only this were done, I believe the government grants, and the Sunday school together, could keep all these Indian schools, both mine and others that have since been established, in successful operation. We have need immediately of the help of at least forty Sunday schools to undertake the support of Indian pupils at Shingwauk, Wawanosh, Elkhorn, or Medicine Hat; \$50 a year if clothing is supplied; or \$75 a year if clothing is not supplied; \$25 or \$37.50 a year for half support of a child. We are making a fresh start now once more. We have a great work before us. Whether it is to prosper and succeed or whether it is to languish and again be partly closed, must depend in great measure on the kind feelings, confidence, and liberal help of our friends—especially, I may say, our young friends.

E. F. Wilson.

Shingwauk Home, May 25th.

#### Notes and Queries.

What are the Irish Round Towers, and have they any special ecclesiastical significance?

DERMITUS.

Ans.—They seem at one time to have been common in Ireland, and a considerable literature had been formed round them, but no assured conclusion has been attained. They are now for the most part in ruins, many have disappeared and a very few are complete. They are found only in Ireland, with the exception of two in Scotland, and one in the Orkney

Isles. There is great uniformity in the design; a plain narrow round tower of ashlar, with a few small windows in the ascent, and a deeply splayed door from eight to twelve feet above the ground. The height is usually ten or twelve times the breadth of the base, and small windows as if for observation are under the cap at the top. They were always destitute of permanent fixtures, and access to the top must have been by a series of inside ladders on temporary floors. Some regard them as prehistoric, belonging to the primeval races, but they are probably within the Christian era, and not of an early date, perhaps from the seventh to the twelfth century: some say not earlier than the ninth. Beyond their being frequently attached to old religious houses, their connection with Christianity is not often specially marked, and their purpose appears to have primarily been for the providing of safety in cases of sudden alarm; for this they were excellently adapted, and they could not have stood a long siege. The name of Bell-tower marks their secondary use, and their defensive purpose has precluded the employment of much ornamentation. They must always form an interesting study, especially as they are so much shrouded in mystery, and they are a noticeable feature in the landscape of old Ireland.

SIR.—If an increase of salary is moved, seconded and carried at an annual Vestry Meeting, and at the adjourned meeting the chairman will not permit the minutes of previous meeting to be read, thereby preventing discussion on and having the said minutes confirmed and signed, would the Churchwardens be justified in paying such proposed increase out of church funds, even supposing that the members of such Vestry were in accordance with the canon?

VESTRY.

Ans.—The validity of a resolution does not depend on the confirmation of the minutes of the meeting at which it was passed. Such confirmation is only a convenient precaution for further reference. The Churchwardens would be quite justified in paying the increased salary. Primary evidence of their authority to do so would, in a court of justice, be the production of the written resolution as it passed, with the chairman's certificate of its being carried. In the absence of that they would have to produce either the personal testimony of those present at the time, or a certified copy of the minutes from the secretary, or the minutes as confirmed at a subsequent meeting. Any of these would be good evidence, though not primary. An adjourned meeting is really a continuance of the same meeting at a subsequent session. It is the wisest course to read and confirm the minutes of a meeting at each adjournment day by day (as in Synods), because the memory is then fresh. They may also be further confirmed at the next regular meeting—as at Easter—or at a special meeting. Every such confirmation adds to value, but not to validity.

#### Sunday School Lesson.

2nd Sunday after Trinity. June 7, 1891.

THE STATE PRAYERS.

Loyalty and obedience to the "powers that be" are well worthy of a place among our Sunday School lessons. The very existence of a government depends upon the regard in which those who have authority are held. The Church Catechism explains the fifth commandment as including our duty to "honour and obey the Queen, etc."—Our Saviour showed the Jews that they were bound to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," (St. Mark xii. 17). St. Paul strongly enforces upon Christians obedience to the civil government, (Rom. xiii. 1-6). When our Lord spoke, Tiberius was Emperor, and St. Paul was speaking of Nero, two of the worst tyrants that ever reigned. How much more should we uphold the free and enlightened institutions under which we live, and give all due honour to our gracious Queen!

When God "created the heaven and earth," He made fixed laws by which the whole creation was to be governed. The Greek word *cosmos* means "order," and it also means "the world." The Greeks knew that everything in the universe was order—the movements of the earth and stars, etc., the growth of plants and animals, etc.—and science has shown the same thing still more fully in modern times. "Order is Heaven's first law."

It is the same in the nation as in the world. Every soul is to be "subject to the higher powers and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii.). It is a part of the religion of every true citizen of the British Empire to give honour to the Queen, and the Governor-General as her representative, and the Parliament, and to obey the laws which they make. It is our duty, also, to pray that God's blessing may rest upon them.