

MONTREAL NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

A special meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal was held on Thursday, when the call to Rev. L. H. Jordan, B.D., of Halifax, from Erskine Church, was laid on the table. The call was signed by two hundred and seventy-seven members and seventy-seven adherents, and was supported by Rev. R. H. Warden, Messrs. King, Davis, and Hutchison. The call was unanimously sustained, and ordered to be forwarded to the Presbytery of Halifax.

Cote St. Antoine is the name of the municipality adjoining the City of Montreal on the west. Though a separate municipality, it is virtually a part of the city and its most progressive suburb, being inhabited by persons engaged in business in Montreal. The population is almost entirely English-speaking, and of late years many fine villas have been erected. The Presbyterian families are identified with the city churches. Recently a movement has been made to have Presbyterian services in Cote St. Antoine, and several meetings have been held with this end in view. The movement has the sympathy of the Sessions of the City Churches, and bids fair to prove successful. A canvass is being made of the Presbyterian families in the municipality, and thus far they have subscribed about \$1,000 per annum toward the support of ordinances, and upwards of \$2,000 for the erection of a church. There are about forty Presbyterian families in the district, and as these have all more or less contributed towards the building of the city churches with which they are now connected, it is confidently anticipated that in return they will receive substantial help towards the erection of the contemplated church building in Cote St. Antoine. At present there is a vigorous Sabbath School under the superintendence of Mr. A. C. Hutchison; and, as the municipality is likely to make rapid strides there is good prospect of a large self-supporting congregation, being established ere long, the more so that most of the people are in comfortable circumstances.

The congregation of Taylor Church, established a few years ago in the eastern portion of the city, is making satisfactory progress under the Rev. J. J. Casey, B.D., its first pastor. The church building and site are entirely free from debt, as are also the Sabbath School rooms erected two years ago. The Sabbath School, with Mr. James Brown as Superintendent, numbers upwards of two hundred. The church membership has more than doubled in three years, it being now one hundred and twenty, and the contributions of the congregation towards the minister's salary have increased from \$400 to \$800 per annum, every year an addition having been made. The envelope and plate collections last year amounted to \$1,184, an average of about \$23 per Sabbath, or nearly \$10 per communicant. In addition to contributions for ministerial support, the congregation contributed last year a little over \$100 for missionary purposes. This is an exceedingly creditable record, especially when it is borne in mind that the congregation consists entirely of the working classes, the contrast between the eastern and western sections of the city being very marked in this respect in Montreal, as in most other cities. The congregation of Taylor Church bids fair soon to outgrow its present church accommodation.

A fortnight ago last Sabbath the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered at the Pointe-aux-Trembles schools, and a most deeply interesting and solemn service it was. The congregation consisted of the one hundred and twenty-one pupils at the schools, together with the teachers and their families, and a few friends. The ministers officiating were Prof. Coussirat, Messrs. Warden and Robertson, (Eromanga.) The singing was most hearty and inspiring, and the staid demeanour and marked attention of the hearers most exemplary. Thirty-eight partook of the Lord's Supper, twenty-eight of whom were pupils. Eleven of these then made profession of their faith in Christ for the first time. In the afternoon Mr. Robertson gave a brief address on his work in Eromanga, and examined the pupils as to their acquaintance with God's Word. He manifested much surprise at their intimate knowledge of the Bible, and its leading doctrines, and stated that he had never come in contact with any mission work that so thoroughly met his approval and reached his ideal. The schools are in admirable condition. The pupils hold a prayer meeting weekly, attended and conducted by themselves alone. They range in age from thirteen to twenty-eight years. Many of them are earnest, devoted Christians, and, as was remarked lately by one who has had large and intimate experience of mission work, it is doubtful if in connection with any church or society there is an institution more worthy of sympathy and support than these Pointe-aux-Trembles schools.

The Rev. John McEwen, Secretary of the Sabbath school Association of Ontario, was in the city this week and addressed the students of the Presbyterian and Methodist Colleges on Friday afternoon.

Rev. P. McF. McLeod, of the Central Church, Toronto, is announced to preach on Sabbath first in Erskine Church, and the Rev. E. F. Torrance, M.A., of Peterborough, on the 22nd inst. Mr. Torrance on the afternoon of that day lectures in the David Morrice Hall on "Critical Theories of the Life of Christ."

The Rev. R. Warden, of this city, preached in St. Andrew's and Knox Churches, Ottawa, on Sabbath last in the interests of the Augmentation Fund. Last year, St. Andrew's Church contributed about \$1,100 to the Fund, and it is expected that both it and Knox Church will do well this year.

The Philosophical and Literary Society of the Presbyterian College here have issued invitations to a large number of the Presbyterians of the city to a conversazione to be held in the David Morrice Hall on Friday evening, 20th inst.

OBITUARY.

MR. HUGH MCKAY.

Mr. Hugh McKay, the subject of this sketch, was born in 1820, in the parish of Farr, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, and the next year the family moved to the parish of Tongue, in the same shire. In 1845 he married and emigrated to Canada. After teaching school for several years in Nelson and Trafalgar, in the County of Halton, he moved, in 1853, to Georgetown, where he entered mercantile life, remaining in it until his death. Upon his arrival in Georgetown, he immediately interested himself in church work, becoming a teacher in the Union Sabbath-School, then in existence, and striving unremittingly to gather together the scattered Presbyterians of the place. When the church was regularly organized through Rev. Dr. Burns, in 1850, Mr. McKay was one of the three men chosen and ordained as elders of the Georgetown branch of the charge. Some years after, Rev. Robert Ewing was inducted pastor, and then the Presbyterians formed a Sabbath-School of their own, Mr. McKay being chosen superintendent, which office he ably filled until the end of his life. He was during late years also treasurer of the congregation and clerk of the session; at meetings of session his counsel was all the more valuable because of his long and varied experience. All will bear witness to his faithfulness in the dark days of the church's vacancies. Only at the last annual meeting, it may be added, he resigned the secretaryship of this branch of the Bible Society, which position he had filled continuously for twenty-five years. We knew not that his life's work was so nearly over, but so it was; on January 20th, apparently without a moment's warning, he fell from heart disease, and in one short minute God had called him away.

We all mourn one, whose loss we shall deeply feel; one, whose life in connection with the Sabbath-School, the congregation and the session, as well as in the community, was for over thirty years one of honoured usefulness, and who, we believe, has passed away from a labour of love to a service of truer joy above. Our truest sympathy is extended to the bereaved wife and family in this great and unexpected trial, and our prayer is that He, who has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a friend to the widow, may richly fulfil His promise to them. W. G. W.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

March 1,
1885.

PAUL SENT TO FELIX.

{ Acts 23
12-24

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."—1 Peter iv. 16.

TIME.—May, 58, A.D.

Introductory Review.—1. Who first "laid hands" on Paul? 2. What charges did they make? 3. Who was "that Egyptian?" 4. What defences did Paul offer from the top of the stair? 5. At what point was he interrupted? 6. What broke up the Council meeting of the next day?

INCIDENTAL TOPICS.

Felix.—A freedman, who became governor of Palestine about 52 A.D. The historian, Tacitus, says, "He exercised the authority of a king with the disposition of a slave, in all manner of cruelty and lust." By the help of a magician, named Simon (perhaps, Simon Magus), he enticed Drusilla from her husband and married her himself. It was before them that Paul reasoned of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come"—a fit theme for such an audience. He has been charged with countenancing robberies and enriching himself with the spoils. He had a brother in favour at the Roman Court, who protected him from deserved punishment, but no doubt his sin found him out. Although history does not reveal his fate, his wife Drusilla and child perished in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Troops.—The Roman soldiers were divided into Praetorian guards, which served in Italy, and legionary troops which served in the provinces.

A legion consisted of from 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers. There were, besides auxiliaries, armed with pikes, called spearmen, and a regiment of cavalry attached. There were probably 35,000 of these troops in Judaea, and 1,000 in the Tower of Antonia.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

The enemy is becoming desperate—they have had Paul twice in their hands and twice he has escaped. They enter into a conspiracy that can scarcely fail to accomplish their

object. The parties to that conspiracy are the Council and forty assassins.

Ver. 12-15: Assassins, called Sicarii, because they carried a short dagger under their garments, by which they murdered those who happened to become odious to them. Probably some at least of these forty men belonged to that class—others may have been from a distance, from Ephesus, or some other place where Paul organized churches and had so many enemies.

Oath: They bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. That oath was a prayer that God would curse them unless they carried out their purpose. Some of them may have thought that "they were doing God service," according to Christ's predictions; but we need not attach too much importance to the oath as an evidence of sincerity, because they always had a back door by which to escape the consequences of an oath when it became impossible to carry out their designs. It must be done *speedily*, as they were not to eat or drink until he is slain. Not take time to let passion cool.

Council: What an idea they had of the moral character of the Council, to dare to make such a proposal! But they had seen enough in the last few days to justify their expectations.

Co-operation: They ask not only for assent, but co-operation, and they get both. The Council is to tell a *lie*, to enable them to commit a *murder*. It is not said that the Council entered into the contract, but it is certain that Paul's nephew reported the situation correctly. Ver. 20.

Did the Pharisees agree? The Pharisees became friendly before—possibly when they had time to reflect they felt more indignant than ever, that Paul got the better of them by dividing the Council; at any rate the Sadducees had a majority in the Council. The High Priest was a Sadducee. Thus the plot is skillfully laid. It is in all respects likely that the Chief Captain will give them another chance of examining Paul, as the last examination was interrupted, and forty desperate men can scarcely fail in doing the awful deed. They could overpower the unsuspecting guard leading Paul to the judgment hall before the situation could be realized. In addition to all this, so far as can be seen, the Christians of Jerusalem are inactive. Paul seems to be, like his Master, "treading the wine press alone."

II. He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh—the Lord shall have them in derision.

It is amongst the most interesting of studies to examine the different instances in which God allowed His people to be taken in the net until, to all human appearances, there was no escape, and then suddenly the meshes are broken and the enemy is confounded.

See Israel at the Red Sea; David's many hair-breadth escapes from Saul; Hezekiah and Sennacherib; Daniel in the den; Peter in prison, etc. See Job v. 12-25, for a beautiful description of the manner in which "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty," and "saveth the poor from the sword."

The Lord used *such* circumstances to disappoint these men and save Paul.

1. Paul's nephew: The presence of this young lad in Jerusalem at this time turns the tables. Why he is here is not known. Whether in school, as Paul was formerly, or whether his mother lived here; whether he sympathized with Paul's views, or simply acted from natural affection, all is uncertain—at any rate he overheard what was going on, and went and told Paul, who was always accessible to friends.

Paul was in good spirits that day, through the vision of the night before. He quietly asks a Centurion to lead his nephew to the Chief Captain—for he had something to communicate—and awaited the results. The Lord had undertaken to carry him to Rome and why should he be afraid? So the Lord has undertaken to carry us to heaven, who trust in Him, why should we tremble when terrors frown?

2. Paul's citizenship: Already at Philippi it served him well. Now again it secures respect. Had he been a common prisoner the Centurion might not have regarded him, and the Chief Captain might have given little heed to the warning. But Roman citizenship guaranteed immediate attention. The time is coming when citizenship of heaven will be the passport to the world's greatest honours. Ps. xlv. The Captain kindly takes the young man by the hand, leads him aside and listens. The eagerness of ver. 21. "But do thou not yield to them," sounds like a boy's voice. His story believed. Lysias decides with the promptitude of a soldier, that Paul must leave Jerusalem that night, and gives orders accordingly. Off to Caesarea a party of 200 legionary soldiers, 200 spearmen, seventy horse, and beasts on which to set Paul, are ready, and they are away by nine o'clock at night—before the request of the Council is presented, or any of these wide-awake assassins know what is going on. They went that night to Antipatris, about forty-five miles. Thence to Caesarea, about twenty-five miles, the horsemen went alone the next day, the infantry returning to Jerusalem. So large a company was necessary on account of the very unsettled state of the country at that time.

Paul was put into the hands of Felix, the Governor, with the letter from Lysias, explaining and slightly colouring the situation. He is committed to await his trial when his accusers are come.

To Paul, in an eminent degree, belonged the beatitude: "Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

SUGGESTIONS.

1. How sin perverts men's thoughts as to what is pleasing to God. Ver. 12.
2. What a travesty of religion church courts may become. Ver. 14.
3. The value of natural affection to society. Ver. 16.
4. The coolness that comes from nearness to God. Ver. 17.
5. The dignity of decision of character. Ver. 23.
6. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. Rom. ii. 33.