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REPORT
OF
Evangelistic Hall
AND
Girls' Reading Room



2424 ST. CATHERINE STREET
MONTREAL

1905

REPORT FOR 1905.

The annual meeting of the Girls' Reading Room and Evangelistic Hall was held on Tuesday afternoon, February 13th, Rev. Mr. Gilmour presiding. The meeting was opened by the singing of a hymn, reading of the Scriptures, and prayer.

Rev. Mr. Gilmour made a few introductory remarks, expressing his pleasure in being asked to preside at the meeting, and saying that he greatly appreciated the work being done for young women and girls in the Reading Room.

The following report was then submitted:

Early in the winter of 1886, the Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association wrote to Miss Barber, whom he knew was actively engaged in Christian work, saying that, in his estimation, there was a great need of more definite work among young women and girls than was at that time being done, and asking her, if nothing more could be attempted—if she would not try to reach them on Sunday evenings after the usual church services.

Miss Barber interviewed the President of the Young Women's Christian Association, asking if that organization would not rent a room in some central place for Sunday evening gospel services, saying that she would gladly help them in the work. After a few days she received a letter from the President, saying the subject had been put before the committee of the Association, and that while they, too,

saw the need of such a work, they did not see the way to meet the expenses that would be incurred, and therefore could not undertake it. Miss Barber then put the subject before the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, who, too, saw the need, but had not the money necessary; however, at her urgent entreaty, the Union promised a certain sum to cover rent of a hall for three months, as an experiment, if Miss Barber would assume all other responsibility. On the evening of the 7th of March, 1886, the first meeting was held with a fair attendance. The meetings were continued for three months, but the location was not the most desirable, and the Union, thinking that results did not warrant further expense, withdrew their support. The experiment, however, deepened the conviction in Miss Barber's heart that there were very many lonely, homesick girls, away from home influence and restraints, who, for lack of some bright, home-like place, where they felt they had a right to go when their day's work was done, naturally took to walking the streets, stopping, now and again, to look into the shop windows, thereby making themselves easy prey for evil, designing persons, just watching for the unsuspecting to lure them to their ruin; yet who, if such a place were opened, where they always felt sure of a welcome, would gladly avail themselves of it, and much would be done to stem the tide of evil and many a girl would be saved for a life of usefulness.

Day by day, and night after night, the subject pressed heavily upon Miss Barber's heart until she felt sure the voice of God was calling her to definite action, and in *sole dependence* upon God for support, on the 18th of June, 1886,

she opened the Girls' Reading Room in what is now 2254 St. Catherine Street.

Many were the discouragements and prophecies of failure, but, with a faith that never faltered, she went on. Some of you will recall how gladly the girls availed themselves of the privileges held out to them, and that very soon after the opening God set His seal upon the work, by bringing one of the girls, as an earnest of what was to follow, to a definite knowledge of His saving power, and soon after led her out into active work in His service.

The work went on growing in interest, the Woman's Exchange sprang into existence, and the classes and meetings so increased in numbers and attendance that, at the close of the first year, it was necessary to enlarge our borders, and the adjoining store was secured and added to the first one. Nine happy years passed, God fulfilling His promise, and the daily needs were supplied, though there were days when faith was sorely tested, and all we could do was to stand on the promises of God. While many times we passed through deep waters, God gave us to understand, as we could not otherwise have done, the power of prayer and the blessedness of trusting in His word.

In 1895 the premises changed owners, and the rent so increased that it seemed advisable to look for a new home. Again we could not see a step before us, but when the right time came God, who had gone before, led us into this building, where we have remained ever since.

Seven years ago, when dear Miss Barber, *so consecrated, so eminently fitted, and so specially set apart for this work,* was called to the heavenly home, the cry rang forth from

many lips, "What can be done with *her* work, who can carry it on?" but again God proved the work was *His*, and that He could take even the weak and foolish things to carry forward His purpose, and after twenty years this work stands to-day as a monument to His praise.

Many hundreds of lives have, in various ways, been touched, and there are scattered in different parts of the great harvest field workers for God who first heard His call and yielded themselves in the Reading Room. Quite a number are doing definite mission work, others have married and are training young families for God, still others are doing their *daily drudgery* as for God, while a few have been called away from earth, and are, we believe, with Miss Barber, watching and waiting on that beautiful shore, their garments having been made white in the "blood of the Lamb."

The past year has had nothing in it to mark it as very different from previous years.

The industrial and educational classes have been well attended and the interest maintained. The Corticelli Silk Company have very kindly supplied an experienced teacher for art needlework, and we have been very fortunate in retaining the voluntary teachers who have for so many years kindly set apart Monday evenings to help here, and we would give them very special thanks.

The attendance at the classes for reading, writing and arithmetic under Miss Hall has been well kept up on Friday evenings, and the girls have made good progress.

The socials have been held as usual the first Thursday of each month, and have proved very helpful as well as enjoyable. In April Mrs. (Rev.) T. G. Williams, and in Decem-

ber, the Rev. Dr. Symonds, gave most helpful addresses, which were much appreciated by the girls, and as we sometimes hear quotations from them we believe seed sown will bring forth fruit in their lives.

The Circle of the King's Daughters have met the three other Thursdays in the month. The second Thursday is devoted to a consecration meeting, when we renew our vows and receive new members. These meetings are times of heart-searching, as we count it no light matter to put on the little cross marked I. H. N., which signifies that what we do is to be done "In His Name." Several new members have been added during the year. As usual, the two remaining Thursdays are devoted to some special work, while one reads aloud some book that should inspire to more earnest service.

The attendance at the Children's Sewing Class on Wednesday afternoons has been larger this year than last. The ages range from four to fourteen years. The older girls have been cutting out and making their undergarments, and it has been very interesting to watch them as they have tried to cut the cloth to best advantage. Some who have learned to sew well by hand have been learning to use the sewing machine. We have not been able to press them forward as we hoped owing to lack of teachers, but we feel sure that other lessons than sewing have been learned which we have reason to believe they are now putting into practice in their daily lives.

The Bible Class at 3.45 on Sunday afternoons has increased in average attendance and in interest during the year. 76 names are on the roll. Again, last summer the class was carried on by the girls themselves during our absence from

the city, and as the prayer meeting was discontinued the last fifteen minutes were given to prayer and praise. A letter was sent every week to the class and one returned by the class, so we were able, though away, to keep in touch with the girls. There has been a very earnest spirit manifested in the study of God's word. The tea hour, for which from 15 to 30 remain, with its opportunity for a quiet word with one and another before separating for their various church services, has been much blessed. One girl was lately overheard saying to another: "I just live for Sunday Bible Class, I look forward to it all the week," and we can but thank God that the Holy Spirit is indeed taking of the deep things of God and revealing them unto these dear girls.

The prayer meetings have had a larger attendance, and Saturday evenings have been times of refreshing. It is very gratifying as one girl after another comes hurrying in, though often very tired with the week's work and the hour is late before she can get out, yet eager to have a share in the blessing. Prayers have been very definite, praying by name for those the Spirit has laid on their hearts and many answers have been recorded.

We had the privilege in November of having with us Miss Todd from India, the missionary who found for us the little girl to whom we gave the name of Emma Barber, and placed her in school. She has kept watch over her these seven years and has faithfully kept us in touch with her by her very interesting letters. While with us she spoke four times to the older girls, and also to the children. As she told us of Emma's intellectual ability, her bright, joyous spirit, and, above all, of her deep Christian character, we could but thank God that He had given us a *little* part in the work of

preparing her for future usefulness. Emma has been advanced to a higher school and the expenses have been increased, so that in future the girls will send fifty instead of thirty dollars a year. Miss Todd's visit was an inspiration to the girls, her simple self-denying life and her deep consecration touched many hearts as she spoke of the needs of the girls in India, making them realize, possibly, as never before, *their* privileges and responsibilities, and put into their hearts a desire to make their own lives tell for God.

The Bridge Fund has helped several during the year over very difficult places. Occasionally we must loan money with little expectation of its being returned, but nearly all, so far the past year, has come back. The sums loaned vary from fifty cents to six dollars. The largest sum ever loaned was fifteen dollars, but though it took three years to pay it back, every cent was made good.

The Christmas tree for the children overlooked by Santa was the closing feature of the year. Over fifty children, with several mothers, whom Miss Brown, the indefatigable Bible-woman for the Central W. C. T. U., found in her visiting, were entertained by our Circle of King's Daughters, kind friends also sending us generous donations. After a good supper, to the great delight of the children, their photograph was taken standing in front of the tree loaded with presents. Each child received two gifts from the tree, and a parcel of clothing when they went away. It was difficult to say who were the happier, the children, or the girls who entertained them.

I have held myself free one evening every week to meet any girl who might wish to see me alone, either for advice or encouragement, and many have come for a quiet talk.

The Woman's Exchange has done good work the past year, helping many in times of need, and some of the letters have been pathetic in their expressions of gratitude for help received.

In a few weeks we enter upon our twenty-first year, and a serious difficulty has confronted us. For the past eleven years the rental of this place has been within our means, but with the increase of property value on St. Catherine Street, the rent has now been so increased that it has not seemed wise to try to remain, and we will remove on May 1st to 111 Stanley Street. It is true that most of our work could be as easily done on a side street, if near St. Catherine, and a house large enough could be found. Naturally, no landlord wishes to enlarge a house on a street that is not likely to become a business street, so that if we should go out, he could not rent it for a store. Much to our regret some of the work of the Woman's Exchange must, therefore, fall out, though we hope still to take *orders* for plain sewing and art needlework, also for cleaning gloves, feathers and laces, and trust our many friends will still give us their patronage. Whatever changes may come, we hope never to lose sight of the primary object for which these rooms were opened, *salvation of souls*.

The number of classes held this year are as follows: 91 industrial and educational, 52 Bible Classes, 35 prayer meetings, 20 meetings of the King's Daughters, 8 consecration meetings, and 8 socials. The library has been very much used, besides many hundred pages of literature have been distributed. Over 700 names have been recorded of those who have in some way enjoyed the privileges held out here.

In closing this report we would thank the committee who have always been so considerate and so willing to advise and help, thus making the work much easier; the teachers who, year after year, have come to our aid; Mr. Baker, for keeping the piano in tune; the "Witness," for copies of the daily paper, and 50 copies weekly of the "Northern Messenger"; Mr. Leet, for advice and help in many ways; and all friends everywhere who have helped us with their money, sympathy, and prayers.

Will you not pray that He who has been with us hitherto will go with us into the new home, and that richer, fuller blessing may be given than has been given in the past, so that His name may be glorified?

Respectfully submitted,

S. H. FROST.

After the Treasurer's statement was read, Mr. S. P. Leet, K.C., spoke very feelingly of the work, with which he had been acquainted since its first inception, and moved the adoption of the reports, which was seconded by Mrs. Radford, and carried.

After remarks by the chairman, Mrs. Radford, Mrs. Savage, and Mr. D. Fraser, the meeting was closed by singing the doxology and benediction.

Nearly all present remained for a social hour and to enjoy a 5-o'clock tea, which had been prepared by the ladies of the committee.

The committee for the ensuing year are Mrs. M. H. Gault, Mrs. S. Finley, Mrs. R. Reford, Mrs. S. H. C. Miner, Mrs. Alex. McArthur, with Mrs. R. Reford as Honorary-Treasurer.

THE TREASURER IN ACCOUNT WITH

To Balance from former year	\$ 82.32
General donations	1,357.05
Rent of house	300.00
Special rentals	268.25
Proceeds from storage	106.50
Proceeds from classes	85.95
Circle of King's Daughters, for library	19.22
"Girls," toward support of Emma Barber	30.00
Happy Circle, for summer crèche	7.50
Special donations for Christmas tree	25.25
Special donations for socials and Sunday teas	19.25
Special donations for printing	2.00
Interest on deposit	6.89

\$2,490.18

Examined and found correct, with such vouchers as are usually to be had in such cases.

(Sgd.) SETH P. LEET.

February 6th, 1906.

THE GIRLS' READING ROOM, 1905-1906.

By Rent and taxes	\$1,277.00
Salary and wages	646.75
Coal	50.00
Gas and Auer lights	65.15
Books, printing, and stationery	89.60
Classes	92.30
Insurance	15.58
Support of Emma Barber	30.00
Summer crèche	7.50
Christmas tree	25.17
Socials and Sunday teas.. . . .	72.72
Telephone	15.00
Repairs.. . . .	11.97
Water tax	3.16
Furnishings and sundries.. . . .	19.56
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	\$2,421.46
To Balance.. . . .	68.72
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	\$2,490.18

GENERAL DONATIONS.

Mrs. S. Finley	\$ 200.00
Mrs. S. H. C. Miner	125.00
Mrs. M. H. Gault	105.00
Mrs. (Dr.) Fisher	100.00
Mrs. Henry Lyman	100.00
Mrs. H. Shorey	100.00
Mrs. R. Reford	100.00
Miss Orkney	100.00
“In Memory of S. F.”	100.00
Legacy of A. F. Gault	100.00
Geo. Hague, Esq.	50.00
Mrs. Aitken	45.00
Mrs. E. H. King	25.00
Miss I. McLennan	25.00
Miss A. McLennan	25.00
Henry Birks & Sons	25.00
S. H. C. Miner, Esq.	25.00
Mrs. Alex. McArthur	20.00
J. C. Holden, Esq.	20.00
Dr. Adams, per Mrs. Finley	15.00
Lady Galt	15.00
Mrs. J. Hutchinson	15.00
Mrs. Colin McArthur	10.00
Miss Dow, per Mrs. Gault	10.00
Mrs. Orr Lewis, per Mrs. Gault	10.00
Hochelaga W. C. T. U.	10.00
Mrs. David Lewis	10.00
St. Andrews' W. C. T. U.	6.50

Miss Rollings	6.00
Mrs. Foster, Knowlton	5.00
Mrs. Polito, Winnipeg	5.00
Mrs. (Dr.) Gurd	5.00
Mrs. W. Patterson.. . . .	5.00
A. Reford, per Mrs. R. Reford	5.00
Mrs. Utting	4.00
Mrs. Jack, per Mrs. McArthur.. . . .	2.00
Miss Greene	2.00
Miss Hobbs	2.00
Mrs. M. Molson	1.00
Small sums	3.55

SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS TREE.

Mrs. S. H. C. Miner.. . . .	\$	5.00
Miss Orkney		5.00
Mrs. G. McIntosh, per Miss Hall		5.00
Mrs. M. H. Gault.. . . .		2.00
Miss Horton		2.00
Mrs. Finley		1.00
Miss Gee		1.00
Mrs. Green, Sutton		1.00
Miss Brethour		1.00
Miss Rollings		1.00
Prof. J. P. Stephens		1.00
“Friend”..25

