

Local News

CORNER STONE LAYING ACCIDENT.

Five hundred persons, without the least warning, were given a drop of 15 feet Sunday afternoon by the collapse of a platform from which they were watching the laying of the corner-stone for the Beth David Russian Hebrew Orthodox synagogue in Miller street, near Center avenue. Scores were hurt, but none, it is believed, fatally. The victims include men, women and children. Some of the injuries were due to a panic following the crash, several persons having been trampled in the efforts of others to escape. The accident seems to have been due entirely to the weight of the crowd being too heavy for the platform, which was constructed over the excavation for the foundation, the people being dropped into the cellar.

Closes Like a Jackknife.

Owing to the fact that the platform, about 50x50, closed like a jack-knife, causing the hundreds of people to be heaped in a mass in the cellar, it is considered marvelous that no one was killed.

The laying of the corner-stone was set for 2 o'clock. Previous to the service a parade of Zionist societies, including about 800 men, formed in Fulton street and marched to the new church in Miller street, headed by a brass band. When the procession reached Miller street there were several hundred persons, including the rabbis and principal officers of the new church, grouped on the platform. The arrival of the marchers and the music of the band soon swelled the crowd about the church to thousands and the platform was filled in a few minutes. It had been decided that each of the Zionists marching should sign his name to a parchment which would be placed in the corner-stone. For this purpose a table had been placed in the center of the platform and surrounded by the rabbis and church officers, and it was the intention to have the men march by and sign their names.

The band, stationed in the street, was playing a lively air when the first of the marchers stepped up to sign his name on the parchment. At this moment the crowd, which had been held in check by several policemen, surged forward to witness the signing of the paper.

Crash Without Warning.

The additional weight was too much for the planking to hold and without a moment's warning the entire front section of the platform collapsed with a crash, dropping the crowd into the cellar. The screams and groans of the men, women and children caught in the wreckage of broken joists and flooring was appalling.

Hundreds of rescuers were soon at work, and headed by Policeman John McDonough and William White, who, although they had gone down in the

wreck of the platform, had escaped unhurt, carried out the injured in a short time. Most of them were cut and bruised about the head, face and body, but were without serious injury.

Dr. Alfred Sigman, who resides only a short distance from the scene, hastened to the rescue and gave aid to the most seriously hurt. He revived more than a dozen women who had fainted after being assisted from the ruins.

After quiet had been secured and all the injured attended to it was decided to hold the corner-stone services in the street. Rabbi Ashinsky, although suffering great pain, pluckily insisted on the services proceeding. A large box, on which a chair was placed, was used for the speakers. Addresses on the history and growth of the congregation were delivered by Rabbis Ashinsky, Graffman and Bloom, Harry Teel and Harry Gorshman. The privilege of laying the corner-stone was auctioned off and was bid in jointly by N. Sakolsky and B. Morris for \$80. Stones on each of the other three corners of the structure were sold at prices ranging from \$20 to \$50. Nearly \$1,000 was raised by collections during the services.

In the box placed in the corner-stone were copies of papers containing an account of Kishinev and Gomel massacres of Jews by the Russians, a parchment with the names of the contributors to the synagogue, and other church records. The new synagogue will be of brick with stone trimmings and will cost \$10,500.

Rabbi Levy's Lectures in China.

We are in receipt of a communication from Shanghai, China, in which the publisher is thanked most heartily for forwarding some of the lectures of Rabbi Levy to that far-off land, and the editor of one of the influential Shanghai papers expresses the hope that they may be received regularly, as he finds in them much material of great value.

In connection with these lectures it is interesting to note that Dr. R. P. Doremus, one of the editors associated with Dr. Lloyd Jenkins Jones in the publication of Unity, recently stated that the lectures of Dr. Levy on the "Prophets of the Nineteenth Century" were of surpassing interest and that the subjects had been treated in a highly appreciative style.

Sigma Iota Phi.

The Sigma Iota Phi Society entertained at a dance given at the home of Gustave H. Kann, one of its members. Decorations were carried out in blue and gold, the society colors, the color scheme being maintained throughout the house. Covers were laid for 40, and the table decorations consisted of numerous streamers of blue and gold, with flowers attached to each streamer, making a very pretty scene. The committee in charge of arrangements were Gustave H. Kann, Bernard H. Feldstein, Harry Marcus and Leroy A. Klater.