

We are glad to learn that the Catholics of Alexandra, in the Waikato district, are manifesting a most commendable zeal in the cause of our holy faith. The Church Committee, appointed by the Rev. J. Golden, pastor of the Waikato district, have been indefatigable in their exertions to embellish the church and its grounds. To enable them to carry out their laudable endeavors, a concert was given on the 17th ult., which proved a genuine success, and placed a considerable sum at their disposal for the furtherance of the object in view. The schoolroom in which the entertainment took place was thronged to excess, persons of all denominations being present.

No doubt many of our readers have read the speech of Sir J. D. Astley, Bart., which has been going the rounds of the Colonial Press during the past few weeks. That creditable specimen of the English aristocracy, at a ram show in Lincolnshire thought proper to vilify the Irish members, whom he characterised as the "most confounded rascals he ever saw," with other remarks equally choice, candid and complimentary. It would appear, however, that one of the "covies" honored by the learned baronet's notice, the Chevalier O'Cleary, had the effrontery to take offence thereat, and through Captain Lynch, of Killester Hall, demanded satisfaction on behalf of the Irish members. This course would seem to have brought the eloquent M.P. to a different opinion, and to have elicited the following reply:—"Elsham Hall, Lincolnshire, Sept. 14.—Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst., and to state that I did make use of the expression to which you refer, and at the request of your friend, the gallant member for Wexford, I hereby withdraw them.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,—J. D. ASTLEY." Should the hon. member for North Lincolnshire at a future time favor his constituents with his experiences of "the Irish rascals," there is a prominent national characteristic—of which he has evidently been hitherto in ignorance—upon which he can now speak as an authority.

In the person so highly eulogised below, some of our readers may recognize their old friend Mr Shaw, who was the senior partner in the firm of Shaw, Harnett and Co., Manse street, some twelve years ago. Some few months since a telegram from California notified the fact of the invention of which the following are the details:—"William Shaw, the inventor of the paging machine now in use all over the world, has patented an improvement in types and printers' tools which will bring to him the blessings of the compositor who have to do that most distasteful of all tasks, "altering and correcting." By this invention "correcting" will be a pleasure instead of a penalty. Mr Shaw has the lower shoulders of the types extending down one-fifth of the length of the piece of metal, and terminating in a little slot or nick cast in still deeper, so that when the little correcting tool is slipped down between the lines, which look as if "leaded," the hook catches a slot, and the letter, space, or quadrat to be removed is easily withdrawn. The correcting tool is manufactured from a fine piece of watch-spring. The invention is of incalculable advantage in correcting tabular or column work, though it is of enough importance to warrant its use in every kind of work. The foundries are willing to alter their moulds, and cast the types, for a division of the royalty claimed by the inventor; and the amount of royalty will be saved from the cost of the types by diminished weight—a very happy accommodation of the advantages to all parties; the purchaser pays no more for his founts of type, the waste and destruction of letters is stopped, the inventor and founder are compensated, and the compositor is transported to the seventh heaven of delight."

The seat in the Provincial Council for the representation of Mount Ida, vacant by the resignation of Mr Oliver, is to be sharply contested. At the nomination, which took place on Monday, four candidates were proposed—Messrs Armstrong, Ewing, Leary, and Dillon. The correspondent of the 'Times' telegraphed that the show of hands was in favor of Mr Leary, while, strange to say, the organ of which Mr Leary is commercial manager, gave the show of hands in favor of Mr. Armstrong. However, a poll being demanded, the election takes place on Monday, the 28th inst.

The opening of the new Catholic Church at Raupaki, in the Province of Canterbury, took place on Thursday week, the ceremony being witnessed by large numbers from all parts of the Province. The time of service was fixed at 11 a.m., and shortly after this the Rev. Father Chervier, assisted by Father Francis, commenced high Mass. This was succeeded by the consecration of the church. The members of the Lyttelton Choir, assisted by some Christchurch musical friends, sang in excellent style during the whole of the service, which, throughout, was most impressive. At the close of the service, Father Chervier preached a very impressive sermon. After the service, refreshments were partaken of by all present. The repast being ended, Father Francis addressed those present in an eloquent speech. The visitors spent the remainder of the afternoon in visiting the wharves and wandering over the hills. On arrival at Raupaki, they were met by the Maoris and warmly welcomed, being invited into the Kiangas.

THERE is a probability of America being brought within eight days of Europe. The Admiralty have before them a new form of steamer, with a bottom composed of two or more parallel consecutive inclines, of which great things are expected. The inventor, a Mr Ranus, states that with his model, he has actually attained a speed of sixty-three knots an hour. From Melbourne to Sydney or Adelaide in nine hours, to Launceston in four, and to London in eight days, would rather revolutionise ocean steam navigation. But it is much more easy (says the 'Melbourne Leader') to attain a great speed for a few hundred yards in a model, than to keep it up for thousands of miles on board a ship. Theory and practice are not always in accord.

We ('Guardian') yesterday had the opportunity of inspecting a splendidly-executed life-sized oil-painting of Bishop Moran, by Mr Power, of Leitch street, opposite the Grange estate. The frame is a

handsome one, and the picture itself has a fine effect, being well managed in regard to the colouring, and also subdued in the lights, and after the Italian and French style of figure paintings. No curtains are introduced—a garment suspended from the shoulders renders it unnecessary. The figure has an easy and dignified appearance, the right hand resting on one knee; the left, beautifully foreshortened, hangs gracefully from a table, upon which is placed a book. The tone of the painting is very rich, and the drapery of the figure is excellently handled, especially the high lights on the sleeve. Mr Power first attempted to paint the picture from a photograph taken of his Lordship when in Rome. This, however did not prove satisfactory, and the idea was abandoned, and the present picture painted, we are informed, from life. Though Mr Power has hitherto possessed considerable reputation as an artist, yet he has spared no pains during the last three months in order that his present undertaking might surpass all his former efforts. There is no doubt that his ambition has been more than realised, for not only has Dr Moran expressed himself as being well pleased with the result produced by Mr Power's pencil, but all who have seen the painting have admired it as a work of art, and considered it an excellent likeness. It will be delivered to his Lordship on Saturday, but in the meantime we are instructed to say that any person wishing to see it may do so by calling at Mr Power's. He is also engaged painting an altarpiece, the Crucifixion, for St. Joseph's Church. This, from its nature, presents many difficulties, but, to judge from the progress already made, these promise to be overcome in a very successful manner. It is expected that the picture will be finished on Christmas Eve: if so, it will then be hung over the altar of the church.

No doubt many of our city residents will recognise in the interesting stranger alluded to below by the Invercargill 'Times,' a recent visitor to Dunedin, and whose departure we chronicled in our last issue:—"The Bluff was stirred up on Saturday by the presence of a real live organ-grinder, a passenger by the Alhambra, who has been travelling New Zealand. He combined with the thrilling notes of the organ an imitation of the notes of a canary, very cleverly executed with his fingers and mouth."

THE 'Napier Daily Telegraph' has hit upon an ingenious expedient to rid itself of importunate poetical contributors. In its last issue there appears an answer to a contributor, informing him of the rejection of his "poetry," and winding up with the suggestive intimation:—"We never insert original poetry in our columns unless as a paid advertisement."

The London 'Athenæum,' one of the highest standards of literary criticism, in reviewing John Boyle O'Reilly's poems, pays the following graceful tribute to the abilities of that gifted Irish poet. It may not be known to our readers that Mr O'Reilly was one of that unfortunate band whose love for their country caused their exile to Western Australia. Mr O'Reilly, more fortunate than many of his compatriots, escaped from bondage by taking to the sea in an open boat. The following is what the 'Athenæum' says:—"Mr. O'Reilly is the poet of a land far different from the Lake Country of England. [Referring to a preceding review.] He sings of Western Australia, that poorest and loveliest of all the Australias, which has received from the mother country only her shame and her crime. Mr O'Reilly, in a short poem, speaks of the land as 'discovered ere the fitting time,' endowed with a peerless clime, but having birds that do not sing, flowers that give no scent, and trees that do not fructify. Scenes and incidents, however, known to the author in this perfumeless and mute land, have been reproduced by him in a series of poems of much beauty. 'The King of the Vaase,' a legend of the bush, is a weird and deeply pathetic poem, admirable alike for its conception and execution. In a dedication to the captain of a whaling bark, we learn that, in February, 1869, the poet left the coast of Western Australia in a small boat, without sail, and that 'peculiar circumstances' rendered it impossible he should return there. His only path lay across the Indian Ocean, where he was picked up by the whaler. If the 'peculiar circumstances' indicate that Mr O'Reilly's sojourn in the convict settlement was enforced, we congratulate him on his escape."

NEWS IN BRIEF.

"A History of the Great Irish Famine of 1847," by the Rev. John O'Rorke, will shortly be published at home.

The 'Cork Examiner' states that the first act of Brook Richard Brasier, Esq., of Ballyellis, Mallow, on coming of age, was to give to the Very Rev. Dr. Downes, P.P., rent free for ever, a beautiful site for a new church to his Catholic tenantry in the town of Mallow.

The manufacture of carpets in Philadelphia is annually greater than in any other city in the world.

The net stamp duty on "playing cards," in the year ending 31st of March last, was £12,528.

Scotland has a grant of £20,500 a year for the training of teachers; England and Wales, £95,000; while to favored Ireland the magnificent sum of £500 is allotted.

The Armenian peasantry about Mount Ararat believe that the world rests upon a large ox, which, being irritated by a large fly, tosses its head, and thus causes earthquakes.

Fearful stories are going about concerning the Thames, which famous stream is showing a strong disposition to "dry up." Between Teddington Lock and Richmond Bridge the steady subsidence of the water has caused great alarm; the present high-water mark is lower than the low-water mark of 1872; and in places about Eel Pie Island, where river steamers passed freely last April, there is scarcely depth enough for four-oared gigs and the lightest skiffs when the tide is low.

Advices from Strasburg lead to the belief that Germany does not mean to confine her attention to the Jesuits, for the Christian Brothers have been ordered by the German authorities to quit Alsace-Lorraine.