

EATING THE LEEK.

A CERTAIN Otago journal, which shall be nameless, has, during its short career, acquired an unenviable notoriety for the very questionable veracity of its statements, and the ability which it invariably displays in "wriggling" when called upon to prove assertions made with a reckless disregard of consequences. It would appear, however, that those qualities are more generally possessed than we had imagined, and that Victoria can boast of a journal of the same *genus*. We make the following extracts so that our readers may learn the exact amount of credence to be placed in the statements of those so-called "liberal" and truthful organs, and as a wholesome lesson to those journals nearer home who have a *penchant* for such tactics. It would appear that a young lady, named Miss Crosby, had taken the veil in one of the convents in Melbourne, and the town correspondent of the Ballarat 'Star,' in chronicling the occurrence, thought proper to draw largely on his imagination for something sensational, to pander to the public taste. With this aim in view, he manufactured a most attractive paragraph, stating that the feelings of Miss Crosby were most repugnant to a conventual life, and asserting that she had been coerced into taking the veil. Unfortunately for the reputation of this accommodating chronicler, the statement being totally void of truth, it was but natural that the father of the young lady should not feel satisfied to have his character maligned and his reputation blasted, merely that a sensational dish of scandal should be provided for the delectation of the readers of the 'Star,' and a letter was forthwith despatched to that journal, demanding an immediate and unqualified retraction of the vile slander. This unlooked-for and unpleasant phase of the matter was sought to be avoided, and the journal which so unhesitatingly admitted into its columns a calumny against a respectable member of society, and an institution which commands the respect and esteem of all members of the community, cowardly sought, by the following speciously-worded statement, to escape the uplifted lash:—"On the 20th November last a paragraph appeared in our Melbourne correspondent's letter respecting a young lady who was said to have been coerced into taking the veil. This paragraph is objected to Mr B. Crosby, of Church street, Richmond, who asserts that he has no doubt whatever that his daughter is the young lady referred to, and that the paragraph is question is calculated to hold him up to ridicule, and to injure him in his business relations. We do not know to whom our Melbourne correspondent refers, but, from inquiries made, we are bound to say that he may have been misinformed; and such coercion as he speaks of being denied so far as Miss Crosby is concerned, we willingly withdraw the remarks, and express our regret that the words used should have been deemed by Mr Crosby or by others as being applicable to that gentleman's conduct." This not having the desired effect, Mr Crosby placed the matter in the hands of his lawyer, who addressed a letter to the publisher of the 'Star,' of which the following is a portion:—"Mr Crosby has no doubt whatever but that his daughter was the young lady referred to, and instructs me to state that the remarks concerning the coercion used towards her by him and his spiritual advisers are maliciously false and without the faintest color of foundation, and are calculated to hold him up to ridicule, contempt, and infamy, and to materially injure him in his business relations. I am therefore directed by him to demand from you a complete, emphatic, and instant public retraction of and apology for the said paragraph, otherwise he will at once institute legal proceedings against you for such libel. And I beg to give you notice of the same accordingly." An outlet from the dilemma was then sought by an offer to the gentleman whose character had been so gratuitously slandered to open the columns of the 'Star,' in case he were still of opinion that the allusions made were intended for him, and stating that any explanation that he would make would be freely published. Fortunately, however, the unscrupulous journalist had to deal with a gentleman able and determined to compel that the nauseous dose should be drained to the last dregs, and a wholesome fear of the chastisement due to its mendacity was caused by the receipt of a letter, in which it was stated that "Mr Crosby does not desire access to your columns, but demands from you an absolute apology. It is mere idle

nonsense to talk now about there being no intention to ridicule him, or expressions of sorrow because he has been aggrieved; the harm has been done, and proper redress and satisfaction must be obtained; *it is even a concession that he is willing to accept a retraction, however ample and complete.* I am, therefore, further instructed to inform you that unless the apology asked for be given by you on or before the 9th inst., I am directed to issue a writ against you for malicious libel." Hopelessly driven into a corner, and seeing no loophole to further shirk the penalty of its rashness, the sponge was at last thrown up, and what neither honesty, honor, or the spirit of impartial journalism would prompt, a wholesome fear of the law successfully accomplished, and by the publication of the most complete denial and abject retraction of its unfounded statements, tardy and unwilling justice was done, and the slanderer freed from the punishment so richly deserved. The conduct of the 'Star' is, we regret to say, far from singular, but it differs from that of other unscrupulous journals inasmuch as it so happened that the victim of malicious falsehood was enabled to refute the slander, and to read the 'Star' a wholesome lesson, which it would be well some journals would profit by. The refutation of the cowardly lie has been ample, as far as Mr Crosby was concerned; but the 'Star,' no doubt, will gloat over the inability of an individual to take a similar course for its malignant slander of the general body, and the poor gratification thus derived may serve as a salve to its wounded feelings in being forced to fix upon itself the brand of falsehood and calumny.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE Sisters of St. Joseph's Dominican Convent, who have removed during the Christmas Vacation to the Priory at Waikari, entertained between twenty and thirty of the pupils of the day school at the Priory on Tuesday last. The treat was given as a reward to those of the scholars who, during the past year, had in some way deserved this especial mark of favor, and as an encouragement to emulation for the coming year. The little visitors arrived at Waikari about midday, and after having partaken of the good things so generously provided by their kind entertainers, spent a most enjoyable day in the spacious grounds attached to the Priory, in skipping and swinging, and other pleasant juveniles games, returning to town about six o'clock. We have little doubt that Tuesday will rank as a Red-Letter Day in the juvenile calendar, and it is more than probable that the pleasure thus derived will be a powerful incentive to further the kind aim of the Sisters, and will be the means of taxing their hospitality to a much greater extent at the next annual vacation.

THE prisoner John Brennan, who was lately sentenced by his Honor Judge Chapman to imprisonment for life for his murderous assault on the girl Mary Hall, arrived in town, in the charge of Constable Flannagan, on Sunday. He will take his place amongst the hard labor gang in the Dunedin gaol.

ON Christmas Day the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church at six, seven, eight, nine, and eleven o'clock, at which hour the Rev. Father Higgins delivered a most eloquent and impressive sermon. The choir mustered strong on the occasion, and Haydn's and Mozart's No. 1 Masses were most effectively rendered, under the conductorship of Mr R. A. Loughnan. In the evening, after Vespers, his Lordship the Bishop delivered an eloquent address on the festival celebrated by the Church, followed by the Holy Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

WE must apologise to our readers for the absence of the usual quota of the tale, which has been unavoidably held over, owing to a press of advertisements. We shall, however, make amends for the omission by publishing a double portion in our next issue.

LAST WEEK we had occasion to remark upon the number of accidents and sudden deaths which had taken place. This week the casualties have assumed the phase of fires, two of which have taken place within the past few days; but in both cases, fortunately, not to any great extent. The first took place early in the week at the premises of Mr. Murray, confectioner; and on Tuesday a fire broke out at the Well Park Brewery, Rattray street, which, were it not for the prompt attention of the Brigade, and the energetic measures taken, would undoubtedly have been attended with large loss. The damage done, amounting to about £400, has been fully covered by the insurance.

THE half-yearly meeting of the H.A.C.B. Society took place in St. Joseph's schoolroom on Monday evening. During the evening Bro. Hallenan put in a claim for £1 10s, having had to engage Dr Burrows, in consequence of Dr Cole refusing to attend his family when called upon. It was moved by Bro. J. Toal, and seconded by Bro. Dooley that the claim be allowed, and deducted from Dr Cole's account. Bro. J. J. Connor reported that he and Bro. Toal, in compliance with instructions from a previous meeting, had attended to the medical question, and had made temporary arrangements with Dr Brown, which were considered satisfactory. Dr Brown was then, on the proposal of Bro. Connor, duly elected medical officer. The half-yearly Balance Sheet was submitted, but owing to the numerous holidays the Secretary could not get it audited. The consideration of it was