

represents. It is never possible, to recognise the actor beneath the mask of the part assumed by him. The power of thus uniformly concealing his own personality is a very rare one, and where it exists to so great a degree, combined with the other advantages we find in Mr Dampier, it is certain to entitle its possessor to the applause of critics, and the admiration of all. Miss Marion Willis made her re-appearance on Monday last, in the rôle of Marguerite, which she sustained with her accustomed grace and ability. To-night "The Green Bushes" is announced, in which Mr. John Bryan, who takes a benefit, will appear as Jack Gong.

A CONTEMPORARY apparently nettled by certain allusions made in a San Francisco newspaper to the infamous Sullivan, who is spoken of as a resident of New Zealand, thus remarks:—"It is rather hard on Sullivan, however, to call him the bloodiest murderer of the century, when the annals of America teem with the reckless murders committed by its desperadoes." This is being patriotic and retortive with a vengeance.

A NUMBER of the boys attending the Christian Brothers' Schools are to make their first communion on Sunday next.

A VERY curious circumstance in connection with the loss of the Dandenong has been forwarded to the 'Bendigo Independent' by a correspondent writing from Melbourne. He says: "A remarkable incident in connection with the late wreck and terrible sacrifice of lives has come under my notice. One of my servants requested leave to visit a friend of hers, for the purpose of ascertaining how far the rumour was correct relative to the reported loss of her friend's husband in the ill-fated ship. Her request was acceded to, and she set out. On entering the house she was shocked to see the deep distress of her friend. It appears that her husband had important business to transact in Sydney. His immediate presence was required there, and he took a berth in the ship, not, however, without a mysterious premonition that all would not be well. He hastily placed the necessary apparel in his portmanteau, and when all was ready he bade his wife and infant an affectionate farewell. Scarcely, however, had the door closed than it was re-opened, and the husband walked in, who said that 'something was going to happen, and she (the wife) might possibly never see him again,' at the same time he handed her his watch, chain, and other valuables, and spare cash, remarking that, although only a presentiment, it had taken full hold of his mind. His last words were 'hope for the best.'"

An accident, which fortunately was not attended with any serious consequences, occurred on Tuesday afternoon last to the Rev. Fathers Donovan and Crowley, on their return to Dunedin from a visit to the Taieri. The horse which they were driving, as they were passing along MacLaggan street, commenced to kick and finally bolted, overturning their buggy and precipitating its occupants to the ground. Beyond a few bruises, however, we are happy to say that neither of the rev. gentlemen sustained any injury.

WE have been favored, by the Postmaster-General, with a specimen copy of the neat and convenient post card issued for use in New Zealand on the 1st inst.

THE tender accepted for the erection of the conventual buildings in Dunedin is that of Mr. Small. His estimate amounts to £4,507 2s 3d.

### THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SECRET.

ON Sunday evening last, at St. Joseph's Church, Dunedin, His Lordship the Bishop of the diocese delivered the second sermon of the series announced by him, on subjects selected from ecclesiastical history. Before commencing to preach, his Lordship said that his discourses would be interrupted for a time, as he proposed to set out the following day for New South Wales, whither he was going to be present at an important ceremony, and begged that his congregation would of their charity pray for his safe arrival at his journey's end as well as for his return to his diocese. He was going to Bathurst, where there was about to be opened an ecclesiastical seminary, which would be conducted in accordance with the decree of the Council of Trent, and where youths would be educated for the office of the sacred ministry. The future welfare of the diocese in which this establishment was situated, and of other dioceses as well, would depend on the success of the undertaking, and the congregation would see the importance of it, so that their prayers might be secured in order to obtain a blessing on it.

His Lordship then proceeded with his sermon, of which the subject was what is known from ecclesiastical history concerning the discipline of the secret. In the early ages of Christianity, for the first 400 years at least, it was the custom that those who gave religious instruction should not at first place before the catechumens—as they who were being orally instructed for baptism were called—the most mysterious dogmas of our holy faith. For instance, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in one of his lectures to those who were about to receive the sacrament of baptism, says, "Hitherto, I have not placed before you some of the more important mysteries of religion, but the time is now come, because you have long been under instruction, and you show all due dispositions for the reception of the sacrament." He then proceeds to instruct them concerning the Holy Trinity.

When the Apostles and their successors preached Christianity, their first care was to teach that there was only one God, the Lord and Creator, infinite and eternal; then they taught other truths, inculcating faith, eternal chastisements and rewards, explaining to the catechumens the doctrines of the Christian religion respecting heaven, purgatory, and hell, the incarnation of Christ, His labors and His divine nature; instructing them also in the decalogue, the more important points of discipline, the sacramental system, and especially baptism. When they were sufficiently instructed and believing, and were anxious to proceed, further information was imparted to them.

That the discipline of the secret commenced with the apostles

is testified to by Origen, Tertullian, St. Augustine, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem. This is a very important matter in controversy. It frequently happens that those persons who do not believe in the Holy Trinity or the Blessed Eucharist object that these doctrines are seldom mentioned by the earliest writers; but the discipline of the secret explains this. If they were kept concealed from Pagans, and Jews, and catechumens, it is not strange that they are seldom mentioned, but it is certain that they are mentioned by the early Fathers, and it is no objection to say that they are not often so mentioned. Some of those who wrote did not find it necessary to speak of these matters.

The reason why these mysteries were obscured by the apostles and their successors was, that when Christianity was first preached, erroneous ideas prevailed amongst the idolaters, who acknowledged a multitude of gods. If, therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity had been preached at once, it was manifest that it would have been in danger of being misunderstood, and it would have been taken as an excuse for saying that Christianity also admitted a plurality of gods; men would not have paid sufficient attention to instruction on abstruse points, so that they would not have been able to take up accurate ideas of them. Until the apostles had first made it clear that there was no such thing as the plurality of gods, it would have been dangerous to speak openly of the Trinity. It was necessary first to teach that there was one God only, and when this had been received as an obvious truth, there would be no danger in teaching that there are three personalities distinct yet constituting only one God.

There were three reasons for the introduction of the discipline of the secret. 1st. It was established on the principle that holy things should not be given to dogs, nor pearls cast before swine. It would have been imprudent to expose certain mysteries indiscriminately; it would only have given occasion for blasphemy, and placed obstacles to faith. 2nd. The great truths of religion should be treated with a respect corresponding to their dignity, and there should be a certain preparation of the mind and reason for their reception. 3rd. To withhold their explanation was calculated to excite curiosity. It was customary, contrary to the desire of the Church, for the catechumens occasionally to put off their baptism till they were on the point of death, but if the explanation of certain mysteries was deferred until the eve of baptism, they were induced to hasten the reception of the sacrament.

No one dreams of denying the existence of the discipline of the secret, the authorities for it are too strong; but it has been said that it referred only to disciplinary matters, and those who have said so, justify their opinion by quoting our blessed Lord's words, "That which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops." Christ, they say, commanded us to preach openly. But our Divine Redeemer only speaks here of the crime of denying him. The passage alluded to only commands us openly to profess our faith, as may be seen by its termination; but it did not enjoin upon the apostles the necessity of preaching right and left indiscriminately, and exposing to blasphemy and sneers all truths indifferently. This would have been casting pearls before swine. As a matter of fact, the apostles, to whom these words were spoken, themselves established the discipline of the secret.

The doctrine of the Holy Eucharist was not explained to the catechumens so soon as that of the Blessed Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity was explained before baptism, because the catechumens were baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but until after they had been baptised they could not receive Holy Communion. The discipline of the secret is a strong proof of the truth of the doctrine of the Church concerning the Blessed Eucharist. If Christ had not been really present in the Blessed Sacrament, what would there have been to conceal? The Pagans and Jews knew that Christ had died, that He had been a great prophet, and that His followers filled the empire 60 years after His death. What could they have found strange in a commemoration of His death being made, or in a symbol being used for this purpose? If Christ were not believed to be really present in the Blessed Eucharist, there would have been no reason for concealment.

An objection is brought against the nature of the discipline of the secret from the apology of Justin Martyr, who explains the points of doctrine said to have been hidden, but Justin Martyr did not write until more than 100 years after the establishment of the discipline referred to, and then he was obliged to transgress the rule, by the prospect of the whole force of the empire being employed to crush the Christian religion. He wrote under peculiar circumstances, and addressed the Antonines only, so that no argument can be deduced from his having done so.

Although the discipline of the secret is not now a law of the Church, it is followed by missionaries in pagan countries, whose good sense teaches them to refrain from explaining the deeper mysteries of the faith until they have prepared their converts to receive them.

A carpenter and his son were employed turning wheel-stocks in an out-house in Tipperary during the thunderstorm on Thursday last, the 27th inst. They were seated opposite each other, the boy turning the handle of the lathe, when a flash of lightning entered the house, carried the roof—a thatched one—completely away, threw down one of the gables, scattered the carpenter's tools and different pieces of work about the place, and threw the man and boy with considerable violence off their seats against the walls behind. Beyond the shock and some bruises caused by the fall they were fortunately uninjured.—Correspondent.

Liszt has just published a new orchestral work entitled "The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral." What next are we to expect from the renowned Abbate, friend of Pio IX, and right-hand promoter of Richard Wagner?