

Correspondence.

(We are not responsible for the opinions of our Correspondents.)

A BISHOP FOR CHRISTCHURCH.

To the Editor of the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.

SIR.—It gave me great pleasure to see your last week's issue record the pleasing fact that the NEW ZEALAND TABLET is a success even as a monetary speculation, and that the Company were able at their last meeting to declare a handsome dividend to the shareholders. This is as it should be. The TABLET deserves all the support it receives, and more than it receives, from the Catholics of this colony. It is their one only exponent and representative, their one only unswerving and faithful expositor, the one only journal on whose pages they are neither maligned nor misrepresented to the outer world. The TABLET, when it commenced, had a great work before it. It had to combat the arguments and the sophisms of Protestantism and Infidelity; it had to expose the fallacies of secularism, and to raise out of the mire and the mud of fanatical bigotry the character of the Irish race and the Catholic religion. All this and more it has done, and is doing weekly. It is obliged to be ever on the defensive, but bravely and well it defends itself. It is encompassed on all sides by those who have ever been hostile to its cause, and who would think it a good thing could they but accomplish its utter destruction; but it has nobly maintained its position from the beginning, until now it is acknowledged on all sides to be the one only independent journal in Dunedin. I have often wondered that the Catholic clergy of the colony do not contribute as they might to its pages. With the whole world an open book before them, with the all-absorbing and interesting history of the interminable past lying on their shelves, or locked up in their bookcases, with all the events of ancient and modern times staring them in the face, what intellectual treats could they not occasionally give us, if they were so minded! Yet with all this, the strange and unaccountable fact remains, that we are seldom or never instructed by their knowledge, guided by their advice, or enlightened by their erudition. It may be true that the Catholic priesthood of New Zealand have more important work to do than writing for the TABLET, they may deem it of more consequence to save souls than to feed curiosity, but when we look over the pages of the Catholic papers of other countries—notably those of England and America—we are struck by the vast amount of knowledge and information which the clergy of those places find time, and deem it not beneath them, to convey to the people through the columns of the press. I, for one, hold that it is the duty of every Catholic to support the Catholic paper; the layman by his purse and the priest by his pen; the one by his subscription and the other by his contribution. It must not, however, be thought that I am at all dictating to the priesthood in this matter. Far be such an intention from me, and if I have said aught that I should not have said, I here retract it unconditionally. I have been constrained, as it were, to give expression to these thoughts from a sincere desire to see the one Catholic paper of the colony—the one only representative journal we have—well and ably supported. When I sat down to pen this letter I certainly did not intend to say one word of what I have yet written. My intention was simply to congratulate you on your financial success, and to tell you how the Catholic population of this city have increased and are increasing since the inauguration of the free immigration scheme. Our Church, that had been more than ample for the congregation about two years ago, although it has since been considerably enlarged, is now fast becoming too small for their requirements. With a sitting accommodation for about 1,000 persons, many are now obliged to remain in the porch at last Mass and at Vespers. Seeing all this, and feeling the necessity that exists for having a resident bishop in Christchurch, the people here have got up a petition to Dr. Redwood, the Bishop of Wellington, to lay their case before the Holy Father, and to forward their cause at Rome for the purpose of obtaining, if possible, a bishop for this important and populous city. This they are now encouraged to, and they have no doubt but his Lordship will gladly undertake the task, since he has stated in a letter, an extract from which was read from the pulpit on yesterday, that he had already moved in the matter, and that twelve months ago he had entered into negotiations with Rome about the division of his diocese, but that they considered the time inopportune. In these colonies population increases so rapidly that twelve months effects a wonderful change in a congregation. Moreover, the people here, seeing that Christchurch is the seat of the Protestant Primate of New Zealand, that it is the very centre and stronghold of Protestantism in this colony, that the other denominations—and their name is legion—possess the power, that wealth invariably gives to bigotry, have come to the conclusion that the time has come when they ought to have a bishop of their own, who would minister to their wants, and give them a position, a status, and a dignity which they will never possess without him. It will be seen that theirs is no childish longing when they say that they have not had the Sacrament of Confirmation administered in the parish since it was given by his Lordship Bishop Moran about four years ago.

Christchurch, May 28, 1877.

THE GAOL CHAPLAINCY (?)

To the Editor of the NEW ZEALAND TABLET.

SIR.—It is very interesting to observe the pleasant unanimity with which the denominations of Dunedin consent, through their ministers, to consign the pastoral care of the sick and erring of their flocks to Mr. Torrance—a gentleman dogmatically connected with no religious sect. I am not altogether surprised at the latitudinarian views upon this subject of Congregationalists and other very liberal Dissenters, but how a dignitary of the Church of England (who is supposed to believe in the Creeds and swear by the Thirty-nine Articles) can reconcile it to his conscience to thus delegate the most important functions of his ministry, I am at a loss to understand. No wonder that the rubbish talked by Mr. Bright, and the blasphemous maunderings of Walker, attract delighted audiences when those who aspire to guide the faith and practice of the people show, in the most practical manner, their disbelief in the efficacy of the systems of which they are the official exponents. Providing a chaplain of no known creed or persuasion at their joint expense, for those who need spiritual consolation most, is a proof beyond contravention that the Dunedin Ministers regard faith as a matter of no importance; and I should like to know what their stand-point is for holding their positions, and making a very good thing out of it.—I am, &c.,

Dunedin, June 13, 1877.

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H.A.C.B.S., DUNEDIN.

THE Quarterly Meeting of the H.A.C.B. Society was held in the South Australian Hall on Monday, 11th inst. The chair was occupied by Bro. Brennan, and about fifty members were present. Mr. David Murphy was duly installed a full benefit member. The principal business of the meeting was the nomination of officers, which was then proceeded with, and resulted as follows:—President, Bro. John Dillon, proposed by Bro. Moroney, and seconded by Bro. J. Moylan; V.P., Bro. Whitty, proposed by Bro. Moylan, seconded by Bro. Gallagher; Treasurer, Bro. M. Connellan, proposed by Bro. Dillon, seconded by Bro. Leatham; Secretary, Bro. Gallagher, proposed by Bro. Moylan, seconded by Bro. Dillon. There being no opposition, the foregoing officers were declared duly elected. The following nominations were then made:—Wardens, Bro. Bennett, proposed by Bro. Moylan, seconded by Bro. Moroney, and Bro. B. Cunningham, proposed by Bro. Kehoe, seconded by Bro. Dillon; Guardians, Bro. Leatham, proposed by Bro. McNulty, seconded by Bro. Dillon, and Bro. Molloy, proposed by Bro. Cunningham, seconded by Bro. Gallagher.

THE PASSOVER.

EASTER-TIDE is preceded by a still older celebration, the Feast of Passover. To-day is the 15th of the month Nisan and the first day of the Passover. Last night was the night of the Paschal supper, and by many Jews the ceremony of eating that meal with prayer and blessing will be gone through again to-night. Coming thus on the eve of Good Friday, the service would precisely coincide, in its relation to the days of the week, with the Last Supper. The word "Paschal" is an adaptation of the Hebrew word "Pesach" ("He spared"), used in Exodus, and still employed by the modern Jews to denote this festival and its characteristic sacrifice of the Paschal lamb. The Paschal lamb is so integral a part of the institution that, although sacrifices in the Jewish Church have long since been abolished, the roasted shank-bone of the shoulder of lamb is still placed upon every table where they celebrate the Passover, to commemorate the slaying of the lamb which the children of Israel in Egypt ate roast with fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs, and in haste, having sprinkled the blood with a bunch of hyssop upon the lintel and side-posts of the door, so that the Lord might pass over or spare them when he smote the first-born of the Egyptians in the night before the journey to Succoth. The first-born children fast on the day before Passover in memory of their special preservation. Bitter herbs are still eaten, but the austerity of the ritual has been mitigated by its being permitted to disguise the flavour of the worst of these herbs in an agreeable mixture of cinnamon, almonds, apple, &c., which has much perplexed some of the book-learned commentators, and is commonly supposed to represent the bricks and mortar wherewith the souls of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt were vexed. The modern Passover evenings are times of family reunion, when the meanest Hebrew servant sits at table with his employers. The prayers and the recital of the history of the festival are followed by feasting and jollity. The children receive each a little piece of unleavened cake to save till next Passover, when their abstinence is rewarded by a small gratuity on the deposit being produced. A cup of wine is set apart for Elijah the Prophet. The evening concludes with joyous hymns and psalms, and with the ejaculation, not always quite sincere, "May we celebrate the Passover next year in Jerusalem!" Unleavened bread is eaten during the week which follows, and the first day and the last are solemn festivals. An extra day is added by many to each of these. The Passover is not merely a national festival to commemorate the exodus; it is also an agricultural feast marking the gathering of the first of the fruits of the earth. The daily offering of a sheaf, or Omer, began in Passover, and continued for 50 days till Pentecost was reached. It was a busy period for an agricultural community, and the modern Jews, though till recent times they have been in most countries forbidden to hold land and engage in rural pursuits, still preserve the memory of the great preoccupations of the season by contracting no marriages during those 50 days of the Omer, except on one day (the 33rd) interposed as a holyday. Passover is also a festival of the full moon. It comes in the middle of the month Nisan, when the orb of the moon has attained its largest, and not yet begun to wane, for the Hebrew months really coincide with the changes of the moon. "The Easter full moon," Denn Stanley observes, "which has so long regulated the calendars of the Christian world, is, one may say, the lineal successor of the bright moonlight which shed its rays over the palm-groves of Egypt on the 15th night of the month Nisan."—*Home Paper*.

RATHKEALENSIS.