

### THE MISSION IN CHRISTCHURCH.

THE crusade against sin has commenced in this city. The Mission was opened at seven o'clock on Thursday evening to a very crowded congregation. For five and twenty years Father Hennebery said he had been giving missions in various parts of the world, and he had never before begun one that gave him such joy as the present; for, taking the number of the entire congregation into account, he had, perhaps, never before opened one that was so well attended on the first occasion. He had seen very pious and good people in Wellington, where delicate ladies were known to walk twelve miles every day to attend the mission, often attending the early Masses; but he hoped from what he saw before him on this night that the people of Christchurch would not be outdone by those of Wellington. He had given missions in six other places in New Zealand before coming here, and he was willing, at the desire of the Bishop and the parish priests, to give them everywhere. The mission opens each night with the Rosary, but previous to the saying of it, he (the Rev. Father) gives an explanation in which he does not forget to meet the objections so commonly urged by Protestants against that devotion. These objections are put and met in a way peculiarly his own. There is a freshness, and an originality, and a vigour, so to speak, in every word he says, and he has a peculiarly clear and intelligible way of explaining even the most difficult subjects. When the Rosary was over on Thursday last, he ascended the pulpit, and for about an hour and a quarter he kept his audience spell-bound "with all the omnipotence of words." His first sermon was very properly on the sacrament of penance, and on the power left to the Church to remit sin, but in proving this he turned aside, digressed a little to prove the infallibility of the Church, and if strong, compact, and powerful reasoning could convince any man, reasoning capable of carrying conviction with it to the hearts of even the most sceptical, then indeed all who enjoyed the happiness on that occasion of hearing him expound the mysteries of our holy religion, and who nightly hear him, must either shut up their hearts to truth or be convinced that Jesus Christ established a Church against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, nor over which the devil will at any time have power—that that Church still exists, as exist it must to the end of time, and further, that it is the Catholic Church.

When in his sermon on the sacrament of penance, he has plainly shown to the sinner the great love of the beneficent God, who has thus provided for us so sure and easy a means of access to His grace and mercy after we have, alas, wandered far away outside the boundary of His Divine love. When he has exhibited the horrible nature of sin, and related instances that have come under his own observation of the terrible judgments of God on hardened sinners, we cannot help exclaiming with St. Augustine, "I give Thee thanks, O God, my enlightener and deliverer; for Thou hast opened the eyes of my soul to know Thee, Alas! too late have I known Thee, O ancient and eternal Truth! too late have I known Thee."

When his sermon is over the good Father offers five Paters and five Aves for the conversion of the sinners of the entire parish, particularly for the greatest, and, oh! who does not feel themselves included in the category? Yet, if they do, what then? Here are five living tongues of purest fire rushing up to the throne of mercy to plead their cause in eloquent language with Jesus. Who can despair? Who knows what these prayers are doing nightly? and who knows what they yet may not effect in Christchurch?

At the conclusion of the sermon on the first evening he read the programme of the mission so far as it was then practicable. Every morning at 5.30 Mass was to be attended by all those who could not be present at the second Mass, which would take place at 9.30 and at 7 p.m. everyone was to attend the Rosary and the instruction which was to follow. On Saturday morning, at 9.30, he would deliver an instruction to all the married ladies and widows of the parish, and he advised them all to attend that most important instruction. On Monday, at 5 a.m., he would deliver an instruction to the married men and widowers he would begin at 4 a.m. if he thought he could hope to get them out so early. This instruction would occupy an hour and a half, and he exhorted all the ladies who wanted good husbands to get them out in time on that morning. Tuesday, at 5 a.m., is to be voted similarly to the single ladies and girls over twelve, and Wednesday to the single men and boys over twelve. The mission was to continue about two weeks, and we were to have His Lordship Dr. Redwood and several priests confessors before the end of it. Confessions were to be heard in French, German, Spanish, Italian, and in Irish.

When relating some of those pleasant anecdotes, which he is so happy in telling, there is a brightness in his eyes and a sunny smile plays round his lips, and his whole countenance beams with so pure and holy a joyousness that you can no more resist the impulse to laugh than you can the cold shudder that comes over you when in the terrible storm of indignation he denounces sin. His love for the Blessed Virgin is great and evident. His horror of sin must be intense, but his love of souls seems to a close observer to be his great characteristic. Any person at all acquainted with the life of the Curé of Ars, must detect a close likeness between him and Father Hennebery. The oneness of purpose, the indomitable energy that never bent beneath the weight of a laborious task, and the zeal for the salvation of souls,—thirty-two years in the confessional, twenty-five years (and how much longer yet!) giving missions. Even the same short sententious way of expressing themselves is observable in the discourses of both men, as we have them in the written life of the Curé. And then, how both men have peopled heaven!

Father Hennebery preached after last Mass on Sunday—yesterday—to a closely packed congregation, taking for his text the words of our Lord, "What does it avail a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?" and for over an hour and a half he poured forth one unceasing torrent of eloquence, touching every chord of the human heart. In the evening, he again—to the largest congregation ever before collected together in our church—preached a sermon of an hour and a half, taking for his text St. John vi. 52, "If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The church was never

before, perhaps, so crowded with people of other denominations, and of a certainty they went away with some facts about the Blessed Eucharist in their head that were new to them. This beautiful dogma was done ample justice to from the written word of God, from the oral and written teachings of the Apostles, from the testimony of the Ancient Fathers, and lastly, from right reason and sound sense. There has been no collection here on the week nights, the good Father Ginaty, our parish priest, having offered to defray the missionary's expenses while here. There is to be one collection made for the purpose of defraying the good Father's travelling expenses before he leaves, and I am sure that the people of Christchurch will be glad to have this opportunity afforded them of testifying their gratitude and their esteem for such inestimable services.

When the Duke of Wellington, the hero of a "hundred fights," saw the first London Exhibition in 1851, with all its magnificence, collected from every clime under the sun, he exclaimed, "I can now die happy; this is something worth living for, and having seen it I am now content to die." He did die in about two years afterwards, but it is to be feared that the Great Exhibition did not make his way to eternity any smoother. The people of Christchurch may say of the mission, with a greater show of reason, This is something to live for, and having gained its benefits and shared in the rich harvests of its fruits, we may be contented to die, and the people of New Zealand have great reason to be thankful to Dr. Redwood, the Bishop, of Wellington, for introducing so holy a man amongst them.

Christchurch, November 19, 1877.

RATHKEALENSIS.

### GRAPHIC SKETCH OF AN IRISH PRELATE.

THE *Water Examiner* of Aug. 18 says:—After the Gospel the Most Rev. Dr. Croke, the Archbishop of Cashel, appeared on the altar in a purple soutane and lace and lawn episcopal surplice. His archiepiscopal cross glittered upon his breast, and as he stood he leaned backwards against the epistle side of the altar. Dr. Croke is a tall, well-knit man, still in the prime of life and strength. His dark hair clusters with almost youthful crispness around his forehead and adown his neck. The poet might sing of him as of the Scottish king—

On his bold visage middle age  
Has slightly pressed its signet sage,

His Irish gray eye conceals not the intellectual fire that glows within; his nervous hand seems, when he gesticulates, which he does with a frequency that is almost foreign, like that of one who might wield a falchion as fitly as a crozier. He is, in fine, the beau-ideal of a prelate not afraid to boast that he owes his blood to gallant Tipperary. Thomas W. Croke is a young Archbishop, but a man of vast experience as well as natural vigour, ability, and studiousness. While yet priest in the fine Diocesan College of Fermoy, which owes so much to the fostering care of the late Rt. Rev. Dr. Keane, the sainted Bishop of Cloyne, he won golden opinions from those placed above him as well as from those who were intrusted to his care. When selected by Cardinal Cullen to fill the Bishopric of Auckland in distant New Zealand, Father Croke accepted the onerous charge with the spirit of a Christian missionary. He has travelled in America, where any one who knows him will not be surprised to hear him tell of the cordial reception which he met with, as well as on the European Continent and in the distant sea-girt lands of wide-spread Oceania. A man of splendid talents, of untiring energy and industry, of great attainments, of winning manners, and fine presence, is it any wonder that, placed on the archiepiscopal throne of Cashel of the Kings, he should soon make himself, both at home and abroad, one of the most popular and powerful of Irish prelates? His tongue is, of a verity, touched with the divine fire of oratory. With one spring he vaulted into the highest rank of preachers, and those who heard His Grace on the memorable occasion of the O'Connell Centenary celebration in the Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street, or recently in St. Patrick's, Belfast, will understand the feelings of the English correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* accustomed to the read discourses of the Protestant pulpits, who could do nothing but wonder at the flow and the polish, the learning and the rhetoric of the Archbishop of Munster. The sermon of Sunday can only be described as a tornado of eloquence, sweeping all before it, giving no time to question or to weigh, demanding unconditional surrender, and making the hesitating reasoner rejoice in his captivity and subjection. This power is all the more astonishing when we come to criticise the orator analytically. It may not be the proper disposition with which to enter a church, but it would be affectation to disguise the fact that interest in and curiosity regarding the archiepiscopal orator largely leavened the motives of many in the church on Sunday. If they did not go to criticise, at least being there, they were prepared to canvass and compare the preacher's merits. In the beginning it was disappointment. The Archbishop labours under a similar disadvantage to that with which, like his Grace, the great lay orator Shiel contended, and successfully. He has not a good voice. It is not round and full-toned. It is sharp and thin. There is none of that sonorousness to which the Galway Dominican has attained us. His Grace's accent has rather the shrillness of West Kerry. But hear on! Your sympathy soon becomes awakened. The orator is stealing on your heart—he is preparing for the grand rush with which he will storm your stronghold in a twinkling, and sure as ever issues forth that whirlwind of sparkling sentences, in which ally the music of the polished period, the riches of the mind full of scriptural and historical illustration, the keenness of the polished logician, the word-painting of the imagination of the South, and all the dulcet aptness of the honied Southern tongue, down you go before the never faltering, never hesitating, overwhelming avalanche, and, carried away, you are soon yourself part and parcel of the enthusiasm which has been gathering from all sides and every quarter in the onward and triumphant course of the enchanting conqueror. Even in the unstudied gesture there is the grace begotten of earnestness which art cannot equal, and as we look upon this young Archbishop, standing on that altar step in Belfast, and inspiring the vast congregation before him with his own fervour, we cannot help but think—what could not that man do with a populace, whither could he not lead the ardent Celt, and how could he not sway the passions of a multitude, now touching the finest cords and anon sweeping his hand across the human heart-strings, awaking them to the holdest measure that harpist ever struck or poet sung.