

WANGANUI.

(From a Correspondent.)

OUR Catholic children here have been enjoying great treats lately. On the 30th November the children and their teachers presented the Rev. Father Kirk with a beautiful dressing case, and a lot of fancy work made in the school; and, in the address read to him, all wished their kind Father many happy returns of his natal day. After the reading of the address, Father Kirk replied, expressing himself, as very much pleased as he was surprised at the touching way in which they had given expression to their affection for him. He knew they would like to please him, and he would tell them how to do it. "Attend to three things," said he, and you will please me very much. 1st. Be very fond of your teachers, who are so painstaking. 2nd. Be proud of your school, and prove you love it by working well. 3rd. Let every child hate lying, which is so mean a thing." And now began the real day. In singing and playing the time was spent, until the entertainment began at 3 o'clock; then came the feast at 5 o'clock, and the happy day finished up with the exhibition of a fine magic lantern at 7 o'clock. On the following Monday morning, at half-past six o'clock, the children preparing for First Communion, and the Children of Mary received the first instruction of their Retreat, and afterwards assisted at High Mass. Catechetical instruction was imparted at half-past three o'clock, and in the evening at seven the Rosary was recited, and a little sermon was delivered. The same order was followed until Friday. Confessions were heard during the week. On the 8th, the beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception, twenty-five received their First Communion, after listening to a very simple and touching discourse.

On the evening of the 9th, these children renewed their Baptismal vows, and made their consecration. Then the Children of Mary read their renewal of their consecration; and afterwards, all took part in the procession through the church. Benediction of the M. H. Sacrament followed.

On Monday, 17th, the examinations of the school began, but I must refer you to the very fair report of the *Herald* for interesting particulars about these:—

It was already known that the examination of St Mary's Schools, which commenced on Monday morning in the presence of the Rev. Father Kirk and a few more gentlemen, were to be concluded on Tuesday evening, and were to be followed by recitations, &c. Hence at about 7 o'clock in the evening a large crowd, consisting of the children attending the schools and their parents, assembled in the fine hall presented by the three schoolrooms when the separating partitions are removed. At half-past seven the curtain, in front of the simple yet appropriate platform or stage was drawn, and a number of girls of the senior and junior schools delighted the audience with a beautiful chorus. The touching and difficult selection from Byron, "The Prisoner of Chillon," was then recited in stanzas, by the girls of the first class. No sooner had they bowed themselves off the platform, than Master James McKittrick sent the audience into fits of laughter with his well delivered piece "I'm a Merry Little Squirrel." And then Miss Jane Lough as "Sarah," and Miss Effie Gerse as "Mary," would give a practical lesson to everybody—Sarah had lost her trinket, and came as usual to borrow the one used by Mary; but whilst giving a reason for asking the loan, Sarah had administered to her by her young friend, in an imitably sage tone of voice and with capital gestures, an excellent rebuke. Sarah promised an entire change of conduct, and all present were very seriously informed that "there is a place for everything, and everything ought to be in its proper place." A manly little fellow, Master W. Comery, succeeded to the little wisecracks, and no sooner had he done his nice piece than the two Birdies, Misses Polly Turner and Teresa Hartnett, entered into a disquisition as to whether they should fly away or not. Little Sissy Reid chased them away, however, that she might have a word with the audience, until Master Grogan, as "Rolla," stepped forward with his "Address to the Peruvians." The chorus which followed enchanted the audience. The music was faultless, the different voices blending in delightful harmony, and the time being well kept. This was a fitting prelude to the little drama, "Who is to Inherit," one of those excellent home plays now used in the best convents,—indeed, it is to the good Superioress of the Dominican Convent, which ranks second to no educational establishment in the colony, that St. Mary's is indebted for its copy of the present play. These plays are intended to develop the powers of head and heart, to exercise the memory and cultivate man's nobler feelings, and to give facility in conversation and grace of movement. The various parts were well sustained by the Misses Agnes Leydon, Ferdinonda Gerse, Mary Cronin, Mary Comery, Lina Gerse, Amelia Neill, Ellen Cullum, and Jane Sweeney. Each of the girls rendered the part assigned her faultlessly; and it must be admitted that for the pitch of voice, distinctness of utterance, and naturalness of action the Christmas play of 1877 was far superior to the best efforts of the children hitherto. With the distribution of prizes, and the crowning of best children and a beautiful chorus, the happy evening was brought to a close.

According to one of the Italian papers, as soon as the death of M. Thiers was known here, some prelates hastened to carry the news to the Holy Father, who merely remarked, "Let us respect the decrees of Providence!" The next day His Holiness, talking of the sudden death with various persons around him, said, "It is assuredly an event of great importance for France, and which may have serious consequences; but I do not share the opinion of those who rejoice at that loss, as if it would be an embarrassment the less for the men in power. That idea is, in my opinion, an error. I do not desire to specify the qualities and the defects of M. Thiers, but I say that his presence might have been more useful than injurious to the cause of order. What will happen? Parties will be more ardent than ever, and I should not be surprised if that unfortunate country should yet have to pass through some terrible trials. May God grant that my provisions are erroneous!" The persons present looked at each other, and a long silence followed those words of the Pope.

HOW THEY PUT DOWN THE INDIAN MUTINY.

In the October supplement to the *Popular Science Monthly* there is an article by Prof. Goldwin Smith on "The Policy of Aggrandizement," in which the writer calls attention to the dreadful atrocities perpetrated by the English soldiers in stamping out the Indian Mutiny. Prof. Smith, himself an Englishman, says:—"The wholesale slaughter of these wretched men, in cold blood, when they had laid down their arms, and in some cases when they had apparently been guilty of little more than being carried away like animals by a stampede, may have been a political necessity of conquest, but it will never be described by impartial history as an act of moral justice, and participation in it, and in the hideous scenes of that period generally, could hardly fail to affect the character of the Englishmen engaged. The work of Dr. Russell is well known. Lieutenant Majendie's 'Up among the Pandies' is not so well known, but it is a vivid, simple, and apparently truthful photograph of scenes which that officer himself witnessed. We give a couple of extracts:—

"I have before adverted to the hardness of heart which in some cases was shown by our men, and to the careless and callous indifference with which they took away human life; and I will here relate one of the several instances which came under my notice in illustration of this fact. After we had occupied the Iron Bridge for some days, and when we supposed that the houses in the neighbourhood were quite clear of the enemy, we were astonished one evening by hearing a shot in one of the many buildings which we occupied, and, directly after, some of the soldiers rushing in dragged out a decrepit old man, severely wounded in the thigh. It seems that the sentry, having heard somebody moving about the house, had challenged, and, receiving no answer, fired, and hit the poor old wretch in question in the leg. He was brought out, and soon surrounded by a noisy, gaping crowd of soldiers, who clamoured loudly for his immediate execution, expressing themselves in language more remarkable by its vigour than either its elegance or its humanity. "Ave his nut off," said one; "Hang the brute," cried another: "Put him out of mess," said a third; "Give him a Cawnpore dinner" (six inches of steel), cried a fourth; but the burden of all their cries was the same, and they meant death. The only person in the group who appeared unmoved and indifferent to what was going on was he who certainly had every right to be the most interested. I mean the old man himself, whose stoicism one could not but admire. He must have read his fate a hundred times over in the angry gestures and looks of his captors, but never once did he open his lips to supplicate for mercy, or betray either agitation or emotion, giving out the idea of a man bored by the noise and the proceedings generally, but not otherwise affected. His was a case which hardly demanded a long or elaborate trial. He was a native—he could give no account of himself—he had been found prowling about our position at night; stealthily moving among houses, every one of which contained a quantity of gunpowder, and where, for aught we knew, and as was more than probable, mines may have existed, which a spark dropped from his hand would have ignited—or he was a spy, or—but what need of more? In this time of stern and summary justice (!) such evidence was more than ample; he was given over to two men, who received orders to 'destroy him' (the expression usually employed on these occasions, and implying in itself how dreadfully common such executions had become), and they led him away. This point being settled, the soldiers returned to their games of cards and their pipes, and seemed to feel no further interest in the matter, except when the two executioners returned, and one of their comrades carelessly asked, "Well, Bill, what did yer do to him?" "Oh," said the man as he wiped the blood off an old tulwar, with an air of cool and horrible indifference which no words can convey—"oh, sliced his 'ed off, resuming his rubber, and dropping the subject much as a man might who had drowned a litter of puppies." This old man, it will be observed, was not a Sepoy, he was only a native, and not the slightest attempt appears to have been made to verify the suspicion as to a mine of gunpowder. In the next case the victim was a Sepoy, taken in a skirmish, in which a British officer of a Sikh regiment had fallen:—

"Inturated beyond measure by the death of their officer, the Sikhs (assisted, I regret to say, by some Englishmen) proceeded to take their revenge on this one wretched man. Seizing him by the two legs, they attempted to tear him in two. Failing in this, they dragged him along by the legs, stabbing him in the face with their bayonets as they went. I could see the poor wretch writhing as the blows fell upon him, and could hear his moans as his captors dug the sharp bayonets into his lacerated and trampled body, while his blood, trickling down, dyed the white sand over which he was being dragged. But the worst was yet to come: while still alive, though faint and feeble from his many wounds, he was deliberately placed upon a small pile of dry sticks, which had been improvised for the purpose, and there held down, in spite of his dying struggles, which, becoming weaker and more feeble every moment, were, from their very faintness and futile desperation, cruel to behold. Once, during this frightful operation, the wretched victim, maddened by pain, managed to break away from his tormentors, and already horribly burnt, fled a short distance, but he was immediately brought back and placed upon the fire, and there held till life was extinct."

THE London correspondent of the *Dublin Freeman* says:—"I have been informed that Dr. Newman and several other eminent divines have been asked to undertake a new English translation of the Holy Scriptures to replace the Douay version, which is couched in an excessively Latinized style. Dr. Newman is widely known as an incomparable master of pure English, and to no better hands could the most important work be entrusted.

M. THIERS has left an unpublished work in which he attempts to refute, on the authority of history, the doctrines of Darwin, Comte, Littré, Renan, and Spinoza. M. Thiers was, in his last days, eminently religious in his principles. He is reported to have said, in one of his latest conversations, "The fundamental truths on the existence of God and the soul are not only incontestable from the point of view or reason, but also indispensable in social life;" and he added, "I have abdicated philosophical pride."