

THE MONTH OF MARY IN CHRISTCHURCH.

MAY 21st, 1878.

THE month of May devotions at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament have been most edifyingly observed under the direction of the indefatigable pastors, Fathers Ginnaty and McNamara. On Sunday last there was a special demonstration in honour of the Queen of Heaven, which deserves to be recorded in the columns of the TABLET. This was a grand procession in the Church grounds of the Sunday school children and others. At three o'clock the boys from the Sunday school, each wearing a blue rosette, entered the church and were arrayed by their teachers on the epistle side of the nave. Next entered the girls of the Sunday school each wearing a red scarf, who in like manner were arrayed on the gospel side, following these came the young ladies who are enrolled as Children of Mary, each wearing a blue mantle and a bridal wreath and veil. The Rev. Father McNamara, after a brief prayer at the high altar, ascended the pulpit and addressed those who were about to take part in the procession, of which he explained the meaning. They were assembled for the first time under the banner of the Blessed Virgin to show their respect and veneration for the Queen of Heaven who alone is worthy of the title as the Mother of our Divine Lord. They would never forget that day; for his own part he rejoiced and felt proud to see so many assembled. They must pray that the love of God, of His Blessed Mother and of His saints, might never be eradicated from their hearts. They were all, in a broad sense, children of Mary, though some were specially so named. As her children they should imitate her example and cultivate her virtues; humility, love of God, and resignation to His will. He called upon them to recognise the duty they owed to those of either sex who taught them the Christian doctrine. He concluded by exhorting them to be obedient to their parents and teachers, to pray for them, to attend Mass every Sunday, to keep the commandments, and, above all things, to avoid bad companions. After the address was concluded the procession left the church in the following order: the cross-bearer with two acolytes, girls of the Sunday school, young ladies of the Christian doctrine, Children of Mary, boys of the Sunday school, young men of the Christian doctrine, altar boys, and lastly the officiating priest. Many of the girls carried blue bannerets inscribed with the monogram of Our Lady, and many of the boys carried small pink flags. The Children of Mary walked immediately in front of a banner of the Blessed Virgin borne by one of their number, and in the rear of the procession, just in front of the priest, four young men bore upon their shoulders a statue of her in whose honour the demonstration was made. During the procession the Children of Mary sang several hymns, and the Litany of Loretto. After the procession had returned to the church, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given. This terminated a ceremony which must have given the greatest pleasure and edification to all who witnessed it. The number of children who took part in it has been estimated at 500. It may be added that though there was a cold wind blowing the sun shone brightly during the whole time.

CHRISTCHURCH CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY.

Christchurch, May 25, 1878.

SOME of the young men here, seeing the advantages derived by their co-religionists of Wellington and Dunedin from the establishment of Catholic Literary Societies in these towns, have not been slow in following the excellent examples shown them by these energetic young men, but have inaugurated a society that bids fair to become an honour to its projectors, and a source of interest and usefulness to all connected with it.

Though still in what may be termed society infancy, and subject to the infirmities of that tender period of existence, it may be said to be a nursling of wonderful strength and growth, seeing that it already numbers forty-six members, officers included; and, as long as instruction or intellectual amusement are desired by the Catholics of Christchurch, so long may the well-wishers of the society confidently expect to see a steady increase in the list of members' names.

Already the Society has received its first instalment of books for the formation of a circulating library, and, if these be a fair sample of the works it is intended to fill the shelves with, it is evident from the choiceness of selection that the Society purpose having a really good and useful library, one that will be an immense boon to the members, and, I fancy, a great inducement to reading men to join the Society and participate in its pleasures and advantages.

Classes for the acquirement of various branches of knowledge will be formed as soon as convenient, and as education is of the utmost necessity in the present age, we, as Catholics, cannot afford to neglect any of those means within our reach that will assist in rendering us more competent, not only to maintain, but to improve our position as Catholics, and worthy members of the community. As the value of education appears to be thoroughly appreciated by many of the members of the Society, it may be fully expected ere long to see large and well attended evening classes, where the members will have the advantage of enjoying the teaching of gentlemen willing and able to instruct them.

The Society has also the good fortune to enjoy the services of the Rev. Father McNamara as Spiritual Director, who is ever ready with his counsel and advice, and who, from the long experience he has had in the working of societies, and the interest he takes in this may be considered a host in himself.

The last meeting, which took place on the 22nd ult., was numerously attended; a debate arising out of the all-important question of the day (the disagreements of England and Russia) forming the subject of attraction. This, with a capably delivered recitation by one of the members, and a short but very instructive address from the Spiritual Director, in which he exhorted the members to be assiduous in their efforts to improve their minds, and on no account to lose the opportunity offered them, brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

And now when the Society is fairly started, and with such fair prospects before it, it cannot but be a success if it only receives the encouragement and support such an undertaking deserves. And certain it is, if the Catholic youth of Christchurch are animated by a spirit of enterprise and a manly desire for improvement and advancement, they will come forward in still greater numbers to join an institution where they will have the power of mutually conferring such benefits on each other. If they have only their own interests at heart, there is no fear but that the Society will soon attain its manhood, and come a noble memorial of Catholic energy.

In the meantime its admirers can wish it all success, a long and useful career, and that it may always use its utmost endeavours towards promoting those noble ends for which it was formed; the increase and extension of a spirit of brotherhood, piety, and pure morality; and to facilitate by mutual instruction, the educational improvement of its members.

THE DUNEDIN CATHEDRAL.

ON Sunday last, in St. Joseph's Church, Dunedin, his Lordship the Bishop, prior to reading the Epistle and Gospel and preaching at the 11 a.m. Mass, said that he wished to say a few words to the congregation relating to the building of the new cathedral. He had decided on having it erected on the site between Smith-street and Rattray-street, because land sufficient for the purpose,—an acre at least would be needed, was not to be had in any central position, or if it were to be found it would be sold only at a price that would place it far beyond the reach of the Catholic congregation. The cathedral could not be placed upon the site of the present church because there would not be room there for it. The ground required for it must be 260 feet long and 120 feet broad, and it would interfere with the schools, which of the two were, his Lordship believed, even more necessary than the cathedral itself. In order to build it on this site, moreover, the earth should be removed to the level of the street, which would require a great outlay, it would also be necessary to surround the present church with the new building which would occasion endless confusion and inconvenience, and finally they could not afford to pull down the present church which would be needed for schools, as it has always been intended. It was found necessary on the chosen site to sink the foundations very deep, but this must be done in any case, so as to prevent the recurrence here of the hardship experienced by a certain Bishop in America, who had erected a cathedral at a cost of £50,000, but was obliged after a little time to pull it down by an order of the Corporation, who had sunk a street below the level of its foundations, and in consequence pronounced it dangerous. The foundations here would be laid upon arches built upon pillars of concrete which would rise from the rock beneath, they would not be much more expensive, his Lordship considered, than foundations laid on the ground itself. The style of the building would be Gothic, it would be in the form of a cross, of which the nave and aisles would make the stem: the transept the short arms, and the chancel the head. The length of the nave and aisles would be 80 feet, and their breadth 55 feet; the length of the transept 100 feet, and the total length of the church 193 feet. The height of the building to the ridge would be 65 feet, and that of the interior to the groined ceiling 44 feet. Over the transept would be a central tower which, with its spire, would rise to a height of 193 feet. The main entrance would be from Smith street, where there would be two towers 80 feet in height. The cost might be infinitely increased by ornamentation, but the estimated sum was £26,000. For the present, however, it was only contemplated to build the nave and aisles; the aisles would be separated from the nave by pillars and arches, and the whole would accommodate 800 persons. The cost of this part of the building, which although not completed, would have a good appearance, would, perhaps, be about £6000; of this the congregation had promised £3000, and His Lordship had undertaken himself to be responsible for £500. He was not afraid to enter upon the enterprise with such a small sum in hand. He knew the congregation, and judging by what they had done in the past, he felt persuaded they would enable him to accomplish the present undertaking. When the Bishop's house was bought there were no funds in hand, but the people promised to pay for it and they did so within the specified time, and not only this, but they even gave some hundreds more than were required, so that His Lordship had been able, with the surplus, to begin the Christian Brothers' Schools. He and his people would begin the work; they could not tell who might finish it, but they would do their part, and leave those who came after them to do theirs also. Many of the great cathedrals of Europe had been built in this way. There were some which had been commenced centuries ago, and were not yet completed. The Bishop, in conclusion, particularly requested all those who had not already done so, to pay the first instalment of the sum promised by them towards building the Cathedral.

In his sermon before the Episcopal Convention in Boston, on the 9th October, Bishop Cox, of Western New York, said:—"We are told that the Church has always been the enemy of learning, but can there be a more stupid slander? This argument is always backed up by the story of the persecution of Galileo. I will not deny that Galileo was persecuted, but he was persecuted by the court of Rome, not by the Church of Rome. The Church has always been the advocate of knowledge. The court of Rome, in its persecution of Galileo, was on the side of the scientists, for the scientists of that day were all against Galileo. It was the scientists, and not the Church, that imposed upon the world the blundering Ptolemaic system. If men will look into the matter they will see that science changes; the Church never. It seems to be demonstrated that in the days of Job the true system of the universe was known, for the Pyramids, in their records, tell this story, but the men of science, for sixteen hundred years taught otherwise, and because the Church took them at their word the Church is blamed for it. Who broke the bonds laid by them upon men? Bacon, a monk, seems to have anticipated all the truths of modern science, and Copernicus, a Latin priest, threw off the chains which had so long fettered the minds of men.