

Collections were made on Good Friday for our Holy Father the Pope as follow:—Dunedin £35, Taieri £6, Wellington £21, Blenheim and Picton £10, Napier £7 10s. Some smaller sums were collected in other places. We have not been as yet able to ascertain the amounts of the collections in all the congregations.

Bedford House has been taken down, the adjoining houses on Corporation property are being removed, and soon the sole remaining part of the crown of Bell Hill will be a thing of the past. The sections that will be reclaimed with the material from the hill and the silt raised by the dredges, will in the keen competition for business sites without question realise enormous prices—probably such as land has never yet brought in Dunedin.

BUILDING SOCIETIES.—The sixth annual meeting of the Otago Standard Investment Society was held on the 22nd instant—Mr Thomas Dick, the President, in the chair. Mr Dick said that it was again the pleasing duty of the Directors to inform the shareholders of the prosperous and satisfactory condition of the Society. Ever since the Society was first started, the profits had been fully as much as was anticipated, and the Directors had always been able to declare a dividend of 10 per cent. and something more. In the report there would be seen a proposal for the reduction of the rate of interest chargeable to borrowers, and perhaps the best way in which this question might be brought to a satisfactory adjustment would be to appoint a committee of shareholders to act in conjunction with the Directors, or a committee of shareholders alone, to report to a special meeting to be thereafter convened for such purpose. Messrs Hislop and Bagley, the retiring directors, and Mr A. H. Shury, the retiring auditor, were unanimously re-elected. In bringing forward the matter of the reduction of the rate of interest chargeable by the Society to borrowers, Mr Dick said he wished it to be understood that the alteration would not affect those shareholders who had joined previously, but only those who might hereafter join the Society. It was his opinion, and that of the Directors, that such a change was necessary, as money had greatly decreased in value of late, and if such reductions were made it would greatly increase and enlarge the transactions of the Society; but, if they meant to do anything in the matter at all, they should do it immediately, so as to reap all the advantages of being first in the field. It was resolved, on the motion of Mr Johnstone, that a committee of four shareholders be appointed to consult with the directors and report to a future meeting; the committee to consist of Messrs N. Y. A. Wales, J. M. Brown, A. Thomson, and ——— Johnstone.

Some idea may be formed of the social importance of Mutual Investment Societies, the Wellington 'Independent' observes, when it is learned that Class No. 1, the business of which will be finally closed in a few weeks, will have to pay something like £100,000 to the shareholders.

A special artist from the 'Illustrated London News' is to visit New Zealand during the year.

Lottie takes her flying leap at Christchurch nightly.

Canon O'Reilly is appointed Bishop of Liverpool, in place of the late Right Rev. Dr Goss. Dr Bede Vaughan is selected as coadjutor, with the right of succession to the Archbishopric of Sydney.

"The only one-legged trapezian in the world" is announced to be performing "his daring Niagara leap" at Christchurch.

An entertainment was given at Christchurch on the evening of the 21st instant by the members of the Gt Dramatic Society in aid of the funds of the church. We learn from the 'Press' that the entertainment was very successful. The programme comprised several vocal and instrumental pieces, and concluded with the farce of 'Bombastes Furioso, a piece which from time immemorial has been looked upon as the exclusive property of amateurs. The characters were sustained by the members of the society very creditably.

The following important commercial telegram has been received from the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency of London by the Manager at Christchurch:—"London, April 5th, 1873. Wool.—Next sales will commence on 24th inst. Up to date 133,000 bales have arrived; greasy, market firmer. Tallow, there is a fair trade demand; mutton, £44; beef, £42. Leather.—Since last report 27,000 sides Australian have been sold. Best sides showed a decline ½d on previous sales; others in proportion. New Zealand hemp.—Market flat, and prices have fallen £4 per ton since last report.

There are no candidates for the Colonial Scholarships from Otago this year. Significant that. Where are our highly-subsidised educational institutions? and where our perfect system?

The Canterbury members of the Assembly have had made for presentation to Lady Bowen a handsome and costly gift, consisting of a silver casket containing a diamond and sapphire cross of great beauty, in recognition of the kindly and grateful hospitality so freely accorded to them while her ladyship presided at Government House.

On the congregation assembling at St. Michael's Church, Waimsea West, on Sunday, March 30th, it was found that six of the windows of the building, including a large stained glass window over the altar piece, had been smashed during the preceding night. The scoundrel who committed the outrage must have wounded himself, as marks of blood were discovered on the broken windows. A reward of £30 is offered for the discovery of the culprit.

The New Zealand Shipping Co.'s London Agent has commenced operations by entering into an arrangement with the Agent-General for the conveyance of immigrants and cargo to Lyttelton. The first ship is to be despatched in May. The 'Press' congratulates the company upon their very promising beginning.

No less than three sudden deaths occurred at Christchurch on the 21st inst.

A grand concert in aid of the funds of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society is to be given at the Head Quarters Drill Shed, Octagon, on the 26th inst. There is to be a brilliant and varied programme for the occasion.

Operatic and ballad concerts are being given in the Masonic Hall by Miss Carrie Emanuel and Mr Alfred Anderson, who are very highly spoken of. Miss Emanuel and Mr Anderson will be assisted by Mr M. Winter, a tenor singer, whose efforts are also very favorably spoken of. In next week's number we hope to be able to give a critique on their concerts.

EDUCATION BOARD.—An adjourned meeting of the Education Board was held on Tuesday. The Board having considered those portions of the Inspector's report, which relate to school reading books and to Bible reading and religious instruction in schools, resolve that the schoolmasters and other teachers in the public schools be enjoined to adhere strictly to the following regulations—(1.) The use of the following mentioned school books shall be discontinued in the public schools of the Province, as soon as a sufficient supply of the books mentioned in regulation No. 2 can be obtained to replace them, viz., the "Progressive Lessons," the "Advanced Reader," and the "History of the British Empire" of the "Progressive Series," published by Messrs W. Collins, Sons, and Co.; Cuntie's "Word Expositor;" and White's "History of Great Britain and Ireland." (2.) The following mentioned books only shall be used as English reading books in the public schools after the first day of April, 1874, viz.:—"The Royal School Primer," and numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the "Royal Readers," published by Messrs T. Nelson and Sons; the illustrated editions of "My First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Books," published by Messrs W. Collins Sons, and Co.; and Dr Collier's histories of the "British Empire;" but a teacher desirous of introducing any reading book or books, in addition to the books above mentioned may obtain permission to do so on satisfying the Board that the use of such book or books in the school is desirable and proper. (3.) The teacher (or the head master, if there be more than one teacher) of every public school shall be at liberty to use in his school such of the reading books and histories specified in Regulation No. 2, and such text-books of arithmetic, grammar, geography, and other secular subjects as he shall think most advisable, provided that such text-books shall contain no lessons or expressions calculated to give reasonable ground of offence to the members of any religious denomination; but, while taking care not to deprive his pupils of any of the advantages which a judicious use of suitable text-books is calculated to yield, the teacher shall take all possible care, consistently with the efficiency of his school, that the purchase of lesson-books do not become too burdensome to parents of moderate means. He shall also avoid as much as possible the unnecessary change of text-books, and especially the introduction, without good cause, of such as are not in common use in the Province. (4.) Schoolmasters and other teachers employed under the Board shall adhere strictly to the terms of the Education Ordinance, 1864, in regard to the reading of the Bible and religious instruction; they shall take care that both parents and children be informed that attendance at such reading or instruction is optional, and they shall avoid, in the course of the ordinary school instruction, the use of any words or expressions calculated to give reasonable ground of offence to the members of any religious denomination. (5.) The time for the reading of the Bible shall be positively fixed to take place at the opening or the closing of the school; the time so fixed shall be rigidly adhered to, and a notice of the time for such reading shall be conspicuously put up in every classroom. (6.) No religious catechism or religious formulary, which is distinctive of any particular denomination or sect, shall be taught during the school hours in any school connected with the Board.—It was further resolved that a copy of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to the school committees and school teachers.

Pere Hyacinthe, according to last accounts, has been figuring among the French Evangelicals in Paris.