

HIBERNIAN AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC BENEFIT SOCIETY.

(Oamaru Times.)

THE St. John's Branch, being No. 76 of this Society, was opened in the Volunteer Hall on Tuesday evening last, by Mr M. C. Joice, the delegate from the Chief Branch, Victoria. At 8 p.m. the members to be initiated, forty-three in number, took their places at the head of the table, and Mr Joice, wearing the gold-fringed collar and scarf of the office, addressed them, explaining the objects of the Society, and urging upon all the necessity of making provision for the future. None could count on a day, and all were exposed to many accidents. Such a Society offered great advantages to its members, and had an influence for good on the outside public. He urged upon the members the necessity of guarding against anything that would cause scandal, and to see to it that the promises which they had made, in public, were fulfilled. They had no secret signs or passwords, all their proceedings were open to the light of day, as in the light of day their conduct would be judged. He wished to mention that at all their meetings—whatever business they had to transact, there was always a chair for a reporter for the Press. This was the 76th Lodge which was now open, and he could say with pleasure that it had as fair a prospect before it as any Lodge which he had had the pleasure of opening. He wished them every success. The collective strength of the Society now amounted to about 4000. None but practical members of the Roman Catholic Church were admitted to membership.

He then called the President (Mr M. Grant) to stand forward, and having given him the necessary instructions for the conduct of his duties as head of the Lodge, invested him with the collar of his order.

The Vice-President, Mr Jeremiah Markham; the Secretary, Mr J. Joice; the Treasurer, Mr James Markham; the Guardian, Mr James Hannan; and the Warden, Mr J. Cahill, were also invested in due form, and three cheers having been given for the delegate, this part of the proceedings terminated.

THE DINNER.

The approaches to the Hall and the Hall itself were decorated with evergreens and flags, among the latter being a banner cleverly painted by Mr Kennedy, on a green ground, with the Harp of Erin and the letters H.A.C.B.S., displayed thereon. The tables were liberally spread—poultry, and the more substantial refreshments still, in the shape of rounds and sirloins of beef, tastefully garnished, being in abundance sufficient for a host. Certainly the caterer (Mr Hanley) was determined that there should be nothing wanting on his part to secure the enjoyment of all present, and undoubtedly all did enjoy themselves. Nearly 150 persons sat down to the dinner, which was in all respects the most successful which has taken place in Oamaru for years.

Full justice having been done to the liberal repast provided,

The Chairman, before giving the first toast, read an apology from His Worship the Mayor, stating that he was unavoidably prevented from being present. He then briefly addressed the company, stating that he was pleased to see so large a gathering; not only because it showed the progress which the Catholic Church had made in the district, but because there were present members of many different denominations. A few years ago the Catholics in the district were but a handful, they might be counted by tens; now they were to be counted by hundreds. Some 13 or 14 years ago he remembered Father Moreau—who was one of the best men who ever trod New Zealand soil—(hear, hear,) visiting Mr Filleu's station, Papakaio, and that at that time there was only one Catholic to be found among all the hands, and he was almost ashamed to be in a minority of one, and travelled to Dunedin. (Laughter.) Times were changed now; the Catholics were numerous in the Province, and had now a complete Church organisation, and he was glad to say that he was one of the principal movers in the effort which had resulted in the founding of a Catholic See in Otago. However, he did not intend to make a speech, but would call upon them to respond to a toast which would be honored by all, whether Catholics or Protestants—"Her Majesty the Queen."

This toast having been duly honored,

Mr Joice sang the "The Irishman" in excellent voice, and being encored, gave "Rich and rare were the gems she wore."

"The Prince of Wales and Royal Family" was the next toast, and was heartily received.

Song—Mr Corrigan—"Pat Molloy."

"The Governor and Parliament of New Zealand," coupled with the name of Mr Steward, M.H.R., was drunk with musical honors.

Mr Steward, in replying, said that he did not believe in making an occasion of this sort a peg whereon to hang a political speech, and therefore should inflict no politics upon them. There was a time for everything, a time to speak and a time to keep silence, and he might add, a time to dance; and as they were all (himself included) looking forward to the pleasure of a dance that evening, he should not be the "jolly good fellow" they said he was if he took up the time by talking. He would, therefore, merely thank them, on the behalf of the Parliament of the Colony for the toast, and on behalf of himself for the manner in which his name had been received.

"The Army, Navy, and Volunteers," proposed by the chair, and coupled with the name of Major Steward, was duly honored and replied to.

The toast "The Land of our Birth," was given by the Vice-Chairman, and drunk with cheers.

The toast of the evening, "Success to the St. John's Branch of the H.A.C.B.S.," was proposed by Dr. Gleeson, and received with three times three.

The hour being now advanced, the remainder of the programme was cut out, and three cheers having been given for the Chair, the room was quickly cleared for the Ball.

Dancing commenced about half-past eleven, and was kept up with spirit till about 5.30 a.m., there being nearly 200 persons present.

All seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves, and the whole proceedings passed off without a hitch. The H.A.C.B.S. must be congratulated upon the success which has attended their initial celebration, and when they hold an anniversary "May I be there to see."

BISHOP VIARD.

OUR Wellington correspondent supplies us with the subjoined sketch of the life of Bishop Viard:—The anniversary of the death of the good Bishop Viard being so near at hand, it may be interesting to many to read a short account of the venerable prelate's life. Mgr. Phillip Joseph Viard was born at Lyons on October 11th, 1809. He was curate at St Louis de la Guillotiere, in the town of Lyons; and, being seized with an ardent desire to preach the gospel to the savage tribes in the Pacific Ocean, he solicited admission into the Society of Mary. He pronounced his vows on May 19th, 1839, the Feast of Pentecost. In the following June he set out from Lyon for the Pacific Ocean, accompanied by the Rev. Fathers J. B. Petit-Jean, of the Diocese of Lyons, A. J. Chevrons, of the Diocese of Belley, and J. B. Comte, of the Diocese of Puy, and a brother coadjutor. Of these, the Rev. Father Petit-Jean is the only one still laboring amongst us. The Rev. Father Viard preached the Gospel successive to the large tribe of Tauranga, in the Bay of Plenty, to the natives of the islands of Wallis, and to the natives of New Caledonia. Called to Sydney by his superiors, he found a pontifical bull waiting for him, which nominated him Bishop of Orthoss, *in partibus*, and coadjutor to the Apostolic Vicar of the Pacific Ocean. He was consecrated Bishop by the Right Rev. Dr Polding, Bishop of Sydney, on January 6th, 1846, and he returned to his Maoris in New Zealand. He was not long coadjutor, the Holy See having divided the diocese into two. Mgr Viard was designated Administrator to the new Diocese of Wellington on June 20th, 1848, and on July 30th, 1860, he became titular Bishop. The discovery, in 1861, of the Otago gold fields drew a large European population into the Diocese of Wellington. Important towns arose in the place of the Maori villages, and it soon became necessary to build churches, and to establish schools. The priests of the diocese were not sufficiently numerous to supply the wants of the Colony. Mgr. Viard resolved upon going to Europe to seek for more aid. This was in 1868. To Bishop Viard's great satisfaction, the two southern Provinces of New Zealand, Otago and Southland, were formed into a Bishopric, and the new See was established at Dunedin. After the suspension of the Vatican Council, Mgr. Viard, taking advantage of the liberty which sad events gave him, again set forth for New Zealand, where he arrived in good health on March 19, 1872, accompanied by Rev. Father O'Reilly, M. L. Cummins, and J. M. Tressalet. The health of Bishop Viard seemed to us so good that we thought he would be spared to us a long while; but we soon perceived that his energy was not what it used to be—insensibly his strength failed. In March, 1872, illusion was no longer possible, and on the 2nd June, 1872, he breathed his last. The funeral took place on the 9th, and will not soon be forgotten. So large an assembly of people had never before been seen in Wellington, and Bishop Viard, first Bishop of Wellington, was buried in the Cathedral of this City, at the foot of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his patroness.

THE VICTORIAN PRESS ON MR DUFFY'S KNIGHTHOOD.

(Bendigo Independent.)

The telegraphic news from England confirms the report that the Queen had been graciously pleased to confer a knighthood on Mr Duffy, in recognition of his character as a man, and of his zeal and ability as a politician. A certain journal, which never misses an opportunity to defame and traduce Mr Duffy's character, both public and private, indulged in the wildest burst of disapproval when the dignity was first hinted at, but since the news has been confirmed it has maintained a prudent reticence upon the subject. The whirligig of time brings forth its revenges, and in this instance the operation has been one of a very swift character. We hear it stated that some countrymen of Mr Duffy, whose conduct cannot be looked upon in any other light than as judicious, have seen Mr Duffy upon the subject of his knighthood, deeming, if we understand their action aright, that Mr Duffy's connection with Irish politics would suffer if he accepted the honor held forth. But we submit that Mr Duffy can accept it without derogating in any way from principles which have always animated him—a desire to see his native land happy and great. He has lived to see great changes since the existence of the Young Ireland party, and having served so long as a statesman and a prominent colonist, the distinction might be accepted by him as a well-earned reward for work faithfully and earnestly performed. For his own sake, as a means, and the surest means, of silencing for ever the mouths of his cowardly detractors, he should accept it; and in justice to those who have been his warm supporters, who have struck by him through good report and evil report, he should permit this practical refutation of the slanders which have been hurled at him to take effect. Now that they see the politician in whom they have reposed confidence receive the highest mark of consideration and approval, it will never do for Mr Duffy to decline an honor which is equally shared by them.

(Geelong Advertiser.)

The Queen has determined to confer on Mr Duffy an honor which has been bestowed upon other colonists; infinitely less capable, and assuredly not more worthy of it. An able statesman, an accomplished man, a fine speaker, the foremost exponent of that Federation of the Colonies which the Imperial Government so much desire, the British Cabinet has thought fit to recommend him for this honor. Who is to decide his title to it. His enemies who denied him every virtue; his friends who exaggerate his merits; more dispassionate persons, who admit his faults but recognise also his great talents and lofty aims; or the Imperial Government, which, uninfluenced by dislikes or proclivities, swayed by no local or political antipathies, is able to form a judgement more just than friends or enemies? The 'Argus' is an admirer.