

## A MELBOURNE LETTER.

(From an Occasional Correspondent.)

NOTWITHSTANDING the baneful influence of our "Education Act," Catholicity continues to make satisfactory progress throughout the Colony, and the doubly-taxed Catholics continue to discharge their duty to the Church by supporting a system of education for themselves. One of the most marked evidences of the progress of Catholicity in Victoria lies in the fact of there being so many churches and Catholic halls erected in the Colony. On last Sunday two churches were opened, one at Essendon (St. Monica's) and the other at Yan Yean (St. Joseph's). St. Monica's Church was opened by His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, assisted by the Very Rev. Dean Donaghy and Fathers Cahill and Moran. The former preached the opening sermon. The church will contain upwards of 500 people, and it will supply the wants of a rapidly-increasing population. The Yan Yean Church occupies a commanding sight on the Plenty road, about 18 miles from Melbourne. It is a pretty little structure of blue stone and slate, with a porch in front and surmounted by two elegant crosses. The total cost of erecting it is £800, and though the Catholic portion of the population are numerically weak and scattered over an extensive district, yet such was the zeal and energy of the committee that but £20 now remain due. A large hall capable of seating upwards of 1000 people, has been completed at Carlton. This hall will be used as a Catholic schoolroom, and it will also be available for concerts, public meetings, etc. At Brunswick tenders have been called for the erection of a similar hall at a cost of upwards of £600, while in about two months a hall equally large will be erected in connection with St. Patrick's Cathedral. The latter hall will be of great importance to the Catholics of Melbourne, as it will contain St. Patrick's splendid circulating library, numbering upwards of 3000 volumes of the best assorted Catholic and standard works. The St. Patrick's Branch of the Victorian Catholic Young Men's Society will also hold their weekly meetings in the hall, and it is expected that with their assistance a series of entertainments will be devised to wipe off the whole of the debt on the new hall—£1300.

The news from the Soudan of the almost utter collapse of the Egyptians before the victorious Mahdi, and the consequent blow to British prestige in that favoured country, has been received with comparative indifference by the people of Melbourne; in fact, the shooting of an Irish landlord or a fiery speech from an Irish national member would be a far more exciting circumstance to us. An article appeared in yesterday's *Age* which had a true "jingo" ring about it, denouncing the Gladstone Government for conceding the title of Sultan to the false prophet of the Soudan, who was only remarkable for his successful opposition to British arms and influence. The article in question, however, fell flat, as the majority of our colonists care but little what becomes of British influence outside the Colony. The action of the Agent-General, though endorsed by our Government in lending our gunboats for service against the insurgent Arabs, is viewed with quiet indifference by the majority of our people, who will not trouble themselves to express disapproval of an act which they consider to be trivial in its consequences.

The vagaries of the captains of the Wairarapa and the Adelaide in racing their respective boats down the bay, along the south channel, has furnished sensational food for the papers during the past week. In fact, the published reports of the occurrence remind one forcibly of the famous Mississippi boat race as narrated in Mark Twain's "Gilded Age." The danger incurred was terrible as, owing to the narrowness of the channel, the steamers were almost side by side, and the enormous pressure of steam in both vessels might culminate in a disastrous explosion at any moment; fortunately, nothing of the kind did occur. It would, of course, be premature to comment on the case, as an inquiry will be instituted, but public interest has been fully aroused by the statement that racing between rival boats is of frequent recurrence and that dangerous accidents have often been narrowly averted.

The weather continues wet and threatening, with intermittent gleams of sunshine, which is quite unprecedented, as even the oldest colonists cannot remember cold wet weather setting in the months of January and February. It is fortunate the wet did not set in a month earlier, as the harvest would have been utterly destroyed; as it is, a great deal of damage was done to the crops.

## DUNEDIN CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

THE fortnightly meeting of this Society was held on last Friday evening—the vice-President (Mr. J. B. Callan) in the chair.

Mr. C. E. Haughton read his paper on "The Poets of the Oxford Catholic Movement, 1827-45, as follows:—

No future historian of England, or even of Europe, can fail to take note of the stirring of religious thought of which Oxford began to be the centre some fifty years ago. It was one of the highest waves of that great tide of Catholic reaction, and of counter reformation which set in over the whole of Europe, and has been naturally the strongest where religion was most disintegrated and faith had most waned. That such a reaction will continue is probable, and many of those even most opposed to Catholic teaching may rejoice that it is so. It is better that the opposing armies of Catholicism and agnosticism or freethought should be drawn up against each other in clear array, and that the skirmishing bands which have so long carried on their own conquests or suffered their own losses between the two should join one army or the other, so that the issue be made plain; and with this desire the Catholic will concur as well as the agnostic. Cardinal Newman has said that there is no logical middle course between the Catholic faith and Atheism; and if for the word Atheism, which is dogmatic, the word agnosticism is substituted, the truth of the proposition must be admitted. If, then, it be allowed that the Oxford movement—though apparently concerned with one sect alone among the many in the land—be of wide and historic importance, it will be seen that the literature of that period must have an interest, as indeed,

has all literary work which colors a time, and is devoted to a definite end. In this paper it is proposed to speak of the poets only of that movement, John Keble and John Henry Newman. We all know the trite saying, "Let who will write the laws of a country, give me the making of its lays." It was the singular good fortune of John Keble to stand to the Oxford movement in the two positions of founder and laureate; he was "the true and primary author" of it, "the great motive power," as Cardinal Newman calls him. The "Christian Year" was published in 1827. In less than twenty-six years 108,000 copies were issued in forty-three editions; in the nine months following the author's death, seven more editions were sold of 11,000 copies, and the sale has never flagged since. Yet the large demand has been mainly confined to the Church of England. It has not been, as in degree it deserves to be, to English religious thought what the "De Imitatione Christi" has been to the religious thought of Europe. But within the sphere of its influence the effect was unbounded. "Keble did," says Dr. Newman, "that for the Church of England which none but a poet could do—he made it poetical. His happy magic made the Anglican Church seem what Catholicism was and is." Keble did all this with the unconscious workings of a poet's fancy. What he deliberately set himself to do was to bring out the sacramental system—the doctrine that matter and material phenomena are the types and the instruments of unseen realities. Laws of nature were to Keble phenomena to be altered and set aside at any moment by the Divine will. These are the two main characteristics of Keble's thoughts—to look at all religious ordinances and all subjective movements of the mind by the light of the Catholic Church, and look on Nature as but the revelation of an unseen God. These are the two great characteristics which made the "Christian Year" the devotional hand-book of the Catholic revival in England. I will read you a few short quotations from those exquisite lyrics which, during the last forty-eight years, have turned the hearts of many to the truth, and through the influence of which thousands in England have returned to the ancient faith of the fathers. Amongst the names of eminent Englishmen of the present day, that of John Henry Cardinal Newman stands admittedly in the foremost rank. He is a man of whom his countrymen are justly proud. It is a remarkable fact that when he was appointed a Cardinal, the leading newspapers in London and throughout the Empire expressed cordial approval of the action of the Pope, and declared that honour had been done to England. His conversion in 1845 dealt a blow to the Anglican Church, under which, to use the language of Dr. Beade, "she still staggers." Cardinal Newman is known throughout the Christian world as an able theologian, an acute philosopher, an eloquent preacher, and a master of English prose, but, possibly, few are aware that he possesses rare poetic gifts. "The Dream of Gerontius," a wonderful poem on the nobler side of the doctrine of purgatory, alone entitles him to a high place among poets. There are passages in it which compare, not unfavourably, with "Paradise Lost." In 1836, three years after the definite foundation of the Oxford School, and when the "Christian Year" had done its work of preparation, appeared the *Lyra Apostolica*, a collection of poems, written, as the preface states, "in the humble hope that they may be instrumental in recalling, or recommending to the reader important Christian truths which are at this day in a way to be forgotten." The poems of Newman stand alone in this collection as worthy of the name, and with many written at a late period are collected in his volume "Verses on Various Occasions." Mr. Haughton here read several poems.

At the close of his paper Mr. Carolin proposed, and Mr. Hayes seconded, a hearty vote of thanks be given Mr. Haughton for his valuable and interesting paper.

Mr. Fitzpatrick then recited Mr. Eagar's original poem, "Thoughts suggested by a Walk by Moonlight at St. Clair," of which we give a few selected lines:—

"From St. Clair's gentle slopes, by Luna's mystic light,  
Nature, clad in her fairest garb, appears before the sight,  
For beautiful are Nature's scenes, around this lovely place,  
And bright, entrancing views, the enraptured can trace.

Peninsula's wooded hills, Mount Cargill's rugged brow,  
And Flagstaff's time-worn face, look strangely to me now,  
Fantastic shadows o'er their heights seem to flit and dance,  
As o'er those awe-inspiring scenes I cast my wandering glance,  
Surrounded by those grand old hills, and nursing in their arms,  
Like some maiden grand and fair, whose fascinating charms  
Growing more beautiful as time its truthful record keeps,  
Dunedin in the distance in calm contentment sleeps.

Tho' far from Erin now I stand, beneath the moon's pale ray,  
I cherish a love for the dear old land, for my kinsmen far away.

Loved Erin, thy sacred memory to my heart is ever dear,  
I breathe a heartfelt prayer for thee, commingled with a tear,  
O! may the hour be not far off, when we shall see once more  
Great freedom's flag o'er thy green hills wave proudly as of yore."

Mr. Lennon promised to give a paper at next meeting, and Messrs. Meade and Drumm to give readings. At the meeting following the next a debate on the French Revolution will take place, the leading speeches to be by Messrs. Jas. Griffen, Hall, C. O'Driscoll, Power, Scanlan, and Carolin.

Mr. James O'Kelly, M.P. for Roscommon, has gone to the Soudan as a special correspondent. He was once an officer in the French Army. Afterward, when correspondent of the *N.Y. Herald*, he was imprisoned as a revolutionist in Cuba.

A clear-sighted Englishman, Col. Barnaby, who knows Asia well, says that "The danger does not consist in the present army of the Mahdi; but in the feeling of the Egyptians, of the Mohammedan world, of men ground down by European usurers in Egypt, ground down by taxes on salt in Hindostan, and who catch at the False Prophet even as a drowning man catches at a straw. Each day this movement is growing throughout the East."—*Pilot*.