

WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

May 26.

THE Rev. Father T. G. Dawson, a new priest at this mission, and at present resident at the Hill street presbytery, preached at eleven o'clock Mass at St. Mary of the Angels yesterday. The rev. preacher took for his text the words of St. Peter in the Epistle of the day—"Be prudent, and watch in prayer." He graphically described the expulsion of Satan and the other angels from Paradise for their pride and refusal to serve God, who then, in their hatred to God, tempted man, whom they knew to be God's creature, and destined to fill their lost place in heaven. It was not God that tempted us, He but allowed us to be tempted. He permitted us to be tried, for, as gold is tried by fire, so are we tried in the fire of temptation and tribulation. But though God did not prevent us from being tempted by the evil one, he ordained, that the powers of darkness were not to prevail against us; strength was given us to resist—that strength lay in prayer. Prayer was the weapon by which we were enabled, with the Divine assistance, to resist the machinations of Satan, his works and pomps. Jesus Christ, by his own life on this earth, exemplified that our life was to be one of struggle and suffering if we would win the great reward of a crown in his heavenly kingdom. The crown had to be well and lawfully won. St. Peter, when he wrote the words of the text, spoke sadly from experience. He and the other disciples had been admonished by our Divine Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane in similar terms. Temptation proved our fidelity to God. It was better to be tempted and saved than not tempted and lost. In graceful and eloquent terms he pointed out the efficacy of prayer, and concluded by exhorting all to rely on the Divine aid in their hours of temptation and trial.

A retreat for the clergy of the Wellington district was held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Hill street, commencing on the 7th instant, at which a large number of the priests of the Diocese were present.

We have got rather mixed up in our Queen's Birthday holiday here. A few weeks ago it was pointed out that, as the Frisco mail left here on Saturday, the 24th, it would be very inconvenient for business people to observe that day as the holiday, and it was suggested that the holiday should be kept on Monday, the 26th instead. The City Council fell in with this suggestion, and the citizens were invited by that body to observe the 26th as the annual holiday. The Harbour Board, on the other hand, determined to observe the 24th. It was endeavoured to reconcile these august bodies, so that a general holiday might be observed on the same day, i.e. the 26th, but the Harbour Board declined to give way. The fact that Her Majesty requested the 28th June to be kept in her honor, instead of the 24th May, and that the Banks, Post and Telegraph offices could only keep the original date, caused an amount of uncertainty and confusion as to which day should be observed as the holiday. Eventually it was decided that everyone should keep the holiday as seemed best. Between the diverse arrangements our annual holiday has been a failure.

The *New Zealand Times*, the creation of Sir Julius Vogel, and launched by him to back up his policy and also with the pretensions of becoming a colonial "thunderer," now turns on that astute politician and financier, like the fabred bird that fouls its own nest, and assails him in no unmeasured terms. Sir Julius just now is the *bete noir* of the *Times*. It at first became troubled when it was announced that he was anxious to again enter the political arena; it next became jubilant when it was reported that Sir Julius was not on any electoral roll in the Colony. When this report turned out to be fallacious, it commenced to throw cold water on him and speak in ominous terms of the fate which would befall New Zealand should he again enter Parliament. From passive resistance it turned to attack. The editor, in a recent article on the "situation," says that Sir Julius now shows signs of senility, etc., and that he cannot for long be a power in the Colony, as being over fifty years old and not physically strong, and "an oak does not bear transplanting at fifty." He misquotes the epigram of the illustrious Henry Grattan on the subject. Perhaps it might interest the erudite editor to be informed that it was not of himself, as the editor states, but of his famous rival, the patriotic Henry Flood, that Grattan spoke, when he remarked of that great orator's ill success in the English Parliament, that he was "an oak too great and too old to bear transplanting at fifty." The comparison between Sir Julius and the talented Henry Flood if flattering to the former is a little too far-fetched. The *Times* never justified the high anticipations of its founder and friends; it has not been any more than a mere local organ, of a weak, vacillating tone. It has of late been unfortunate in its choice of editors, and continual change does not seem to be an improvement. Mr. Fitzgerald, M.H.E., is spoken of as the next editor, who is about to supplant Dr. Newman. The *Times* gives birth to a weekly edition except the *New Zealand Mail*, which it cracks up *ad nauseam* and endeavours to make believe is an independent "weekly" of the highest literary calibre in the Colony. *Canterbury Times* and *Otago Witness*, henceforth hide your diminished heads when the *Mail* appears on the scene! Of the treatment of Irish subjects by the *Times* and *Mail* more anon.

We are to have a *cause celebre* hershortly, and already our *quidnuncs* are on the *qui vive* for the development of it, as it is said that many things will come to light as to the manner in which the Government Insurance Department has been managed under the Luckie-cum-Thorne regime. Mr. George Thorne, junr., whose income and perquisites when published last year created such an amount of astonishment throughout the Colony, and no doubt caused the mouths of a good many hard-working pressmen to water and hunger for the flesh-pots of Egypt, has been recently suspended by his *quondam* friend and colleague, the Commissioner, Mr. Luckie, and he is now about bringing an action against that gentleman for \$4000 damages for wrongful dismissal. This is a nice prospect for the policy-holders who have long looked on askance at the tall expendi-

ture of the department in the way of salaries. The affair has created an amount of surprise, as Luckie and Thorne were known to be on the best of terms, and their arrangements mutually satisfactory. The strongest bar, perhaps, that could be got together in New Zealand, is retained on behalf of Thorne.

The political situation is the question of the hour here just now, if one might judge from the amount of correspondence daily appearing in the local Press. The Premier's recent address at the Theatre Royal here opened the political flood-gates, and, since then, every plank of his platform has been in turn assailed or defended by several of our local celebrities, wise-acres, and would-be politicians, each of whom has, of course, a "policy" of his own, and a nostrum to drive away the gaunt figure of deficit. The coming general election is already scented from afar off by these gentlemen as the battle by the war-horse anxious to participate therein. It is remarkable what a host of political teachers arise on the eve of a general election, who strive to show that they see their way to set everything right, to sweep clean the Augean stable of politics.

MISS DARGON'S RECITALS AT OAMARU.

(By one of her Audience.)

THIS distinguished American actress who, by the force of her genius has won for herself a foremost place in the dramatic world, has paid a visit to Oamaru, and by many Oamaruvians this visit will be chronicled as a red-letter event.

One or two others and myself formed a small party for the purpose of attending both her recitals, and our hope was not so much that we might behold her in new scenes and characters in which unquestionably she would charm and delight us, as to renew her acquaintance in the same pieces in which, in other lands, she had drawn us out of ourselves, and moved us alternately to smiles and tears. With feelings akin to rapture, therefore, we observed that she would appear in her wondrous renderings of "Beautiful Snow," "The Raven," "Fontenoy," and the "Charge of the Light Brigade," selections which, to persons who have once heard her read them, must for ever be associated in their minds and hearts with the name of Augusta Dargon.

On Friday night she made her first appearance in Oamaru at the new Public Hall, and commenced the entertainment by giving a couple of scenes from the "School for Scandal." What shall we say of her reading? what of her acting? Shall we attempt a critique? The fates forbid! We are no more fit to criticise Miss Dargon than is a barn-door fowl to mate with an eagle. In our chequered lives we have seen actors and actresses *ad libitum*.—nay more, we have seen many theatrical stars in the same rôles and assisted by powerful companies, and we have freely given our criticisms, adverse or otherwise. But with Miss Dargon it is different. Before the force and fire of her genius we stand silent; we have nothing to say.

During her recital of "Beautiful Snow" we were conscious of but one idea, one almost-prayer arising from our deeply stirred hearts that some kind soul would whisper in the ear of the despairing, crouching, shamed creature, with that fearful look of hunted misery in her eyes, that a full free pardon might still be hers if she would have it. Oh! for some one to tell her about the Naus of the "Good Shepherd," who would shelter her, and pity her, and give her so gladly and lovingly for the sake of their Divine Master that pitiful "morsel of bread" for which she was selling her immortal soul! "God help her, and all poor fallen women" went up from our inmost hearts, and the big tears of compassion rolled down our blanching cheeks. Who amongst us would dare to deny that by her vivid realisation of that one piece Miss Dargon preached a powerful and soul-stirring sermon, and held up a red danger-flag before the eyes of any weaker sisters. In Edgar Allan Poe's "Raven" we were the privileged witnesses of a piece of splendid acting;—gradually, and with consummate skill, this talented lady passed from her impersonation of the melancholic to the frantic state of a diseased mind, sinking back finally into the exhausted and despairing mood, with the mad glitter fading slowly out of her eyes. In a totally different style was "London Assurance," in which piece we were introduced into the home of a fox-hunting squire to be at once fascinated by the joyous and volatile "Lady Gay Spanker." During her ladyship's excited description, to the languid London swell, of a fox-hunt, we were carried in imagination over hedges and ditches, through bush and brake, now half a length ahead, now neck and neck, rushing on in wild enthusiasm, till we suddenly realised that the hunt scene was over, and an appreciative audience rewarding by their hearty plaudits the exertions of the fair artiste. "Fontenoy" was simply inimitable, as was on the following evening "The Charge of the Light Brigade." In these pieces Miss Dargon was absolutely inspired, and with flashing eyes, ringing voice, and figure drawn up to its fullest height, she seemed to lead on the troops to victory or death. And so on throughout the programme. Each effort seemed superior to those which had preceded it, and we were astonished at finding the entertainment over long before we were ready to go. Anyone who misses the opportunity of hearing Miss Dargon will be a great loser. As she is proceeding towards Nelson, Wellington, and Auckland, our advice to fathers and mothers is this, "Take your children to see and hear Miss Dargon by way of a lesson and treat to them and you. A lesson they would undoubtedly receive; and no amount of ordinary school elocution would do half as much for them as one night at Miss Dargon's recitals. They would learn from her to pronounce not only every syllable, but every letter, with clearness, distinctness, and accuracy, and to avoid the common faults of "mouthing," or of muttering their words. They would learn from her also that to do justice to any fine composition, no matter whether it be gay or pathetic, they must first study it carefully and endeavour to grasp the author's ideal, and then, with patience and perseverance, work their way up to it." To the husbands and wives, young men and maidens, our advice is, "Go and hear Miss Dargon and you will join us in sounding her well-merited