

Before proceeding to bless and erect the Stations of the Cross, the Bishop explained the nature of the indulgences attached to the pious devotion; and said that these were to be gained by piously praying and meditating, before each Station, upon the represented incident in Our Lord's sad journey. The Disciples and early Christians had made it a habit to visit these sacred spots, and pilgrims had come from the very ends of the earth to visit the scenes of Our Blessed Redeemer's sufferings. But in these favoured ages we could, by piously following the way of the Cross, gain the same indulgences as if we made long and toilsome pilgrimages to the Holy Land. And the plenary indulgences attached to this loving devotion were all the more precious for being applicable to the dear ones gone from us—the holy souls in purgatory.

His Lordship then descended from the throne and proceeded to bless the various Stations of the Cross, after which, with the assistance of Mr. Toohy, Mr. John Ford, and others, each was respectively raised to its assigned position, the choir meanwhile singing the "Stabat Mater" to the well-known grand old Gregorian chant. Prelate and train having arrived back at the altar, the final prayers said, the choir poured forth a psalm of praise to the dear Lord for His goodness and loving kindness to poor humanity, concluding, as beginning with a reverent prayer.

The pictured Stations (though plain) have added greatly to the embellishment of the school-church, which now presents a nicely-furnished appearance; and from this date pious Catholics will have the privilege of following in the suffering Lord's footsteps from tribunal to Calvary. Each Friday throughout the year they will be enabled to join that glorious band of angels and saintly men and women who, in past ages and up till now, have followed in wondering awe, the ruddy footprints of the Man of Sorrows. Very touching to the writer's ear is the short ejaculation uttered just before leaving each Station (surely the broken sob of a penitent child—)

"Oh, my Jesus who goest to death for me,
I wish to live, I wish to die for thee."

In the evening, the Bishop read the epistle and gospel for the day, and in simple, but well-chosen words, addressed the large congregation who had assembled to receive the blessing of the Holy One, and pay the respect due by good Catholics to their Bishop. His first theme was the gospel parable of the sower and the seed. He pointed out that before reading the Scriptures persons should pray for proper dispositions, the grace of God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the effect of the word might not be lost; and having thus prepared themselves, they should read, or hear, the Word of God with loving reverence.

The epistle of the day related to St. Paul's defence of himself by the narration of his sufferings and privileges; and from this subject the main lesson drawn was that of profound humility. A sketch of Paul, the learned and cultivated, the great and daring apostle of the Gentiles and nurse of the infant church, struggling and fighting against a huge enemy, and in human weakness crying out to God to free him from his "sting in the flesh," was powerfully and forcibly placed before the congregation, who were then shown that it was no proof of a man being not right before God because much tempted; but that men in themselves were utterly weak and God's grace alone could successfully combat the evil one.

Then followed the ever beautiful devotion of Benediction; that solemn time when all the faithful, on bended knees, adore their dear Redeemer, and each individually asks for those graces of which he stands in need; those sacred moments when the Creator bestows his actual blessing on his worshipping creatures, and promises renewed grace to all who ask; the joyful time when we, as it were, stand face to face and heart to heart with the beloved Lord who died for our sakes.

Devotions over, the little choir sings out a gladsome hymn, and the people flock out into the night with that holy benediction still fresh in their hearts, mingled with thankfulness to God for having brought to a successful close another happy *fête* day for Oama ru.

THE MISSION IN CHRISTCHURCH.

DURING the nearly nineteen centuries of the Church's history there has not, perhaps, been founded within her bosom any religious Order so thoroughly imbued with the zeal and spirit of its founder—if we except that glorious army of St. Ignatius of Loyola—as the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. From the day that the great St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, filled with the zeal of the Apostle, gave his first mission at Scala, in 1732, until the very last one given by his children in Christchurch, in 1885, the burning desire for the salvation of souls which filled and consumed his pure soul has never died out among his children. It is scarcely ninety-eight years since St. Alphonsus, worn down with the fatigues of over half a century of missionary work, went to reap the reward of his labour, and in that comparatively short space of time his Order has spread itself almost throughout the world; his children have established themselves even on the very confines of the globe. There is no country where there are souls to be saved, where "the harvest is ripe for the sickle," but the Redemptorist Fathers are to be found; and wherever they are found a marked improvement in the religious character, and in the faith and morals of Catholics attests their presence. A deeper and livelier devotion to the affairs of salvation is awakened in them, and the ever-increasing numbers that attend their services and gather round their confessionals is surest evidence of the truth of these remarks. They touch the heart, and it responds to the call; they dig deep, and the ground yields its fruit. The manner in which these good men conduct their missions differs in many respects from that of other missionaries who have visited this diocese, and that they have studied their work as a science is clear to anyone attending their instructions. Everything, during the first week, was done that could be done, and said that could be said to prepare the people for the Sacrament of Penance, and to turn their attention to the consideration of those supremely important truths upon which their salvation hung. As the people sat and listened night after night, and morning after morning, to those instructions, they grew not only to reverence,

but to love the men who had come so far, and worked so hard, to bring them back to the path from which many of them had been straying.

The second week was devoted to the consideration of the decalogue and to the manner in which the commandments might be broken and kept; while the last week was given up to those means by which all the good that had been gained through the mission might be preserved, and how best to attain to the great grace of final perseverance. We had but one sermon from the superior, the Rev. Father Vaughan, on the duties and obligations which we owe to God, as our Creator, as our Redeemer, and as our Father, and that one sermon, be it marked, was one of the most powerful and eloquent discourses that was ever delivered in the Church of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The mission was opened on Sunday, the 18th of January, by the Rev. Father O'Neill in a sermon peculiarly touching and beautiful, in which he explained that the time of a mission was one in which God vouchsafed to bestow special graces and favours on the people, and urged upon them the necessity of attending to the one now opened to them, as it probably would be the last for many of those who were listening to him. Father O'Neill has a peculiarly effective way of arresting the attention of his congregation by the calm, earnest, and dignified manner in which he addresses them, and he naturally became a great favourite with many among the congregation. This, indeed, was evidenced at his farewell sermon on "Perseverance," when both priest and people were visibly affected at the leave-taking; and, Shakspeare notwithstanding, we think that the good he has done will live after him.

The first Thursday night of the mission was consecrated to reparation to the Blessed Sacrament, when the high altar was gorgeously decorated with flowers and wax candles on the occasion. A very powerful doctrinal and devotional sermon on the Real Presence was delivered by the Rev. Father Hegarty, which must have done good to any of the "outsiders" whose minds were open to conviction. On February 3, the Blessed Virgin's altar was similarly decorated, when Father O'Neill solemnly consecrated all the people to the Blessed Virgin.

(I may say here parenthetically that the missionaries have expressed their great admiration of the fittings and altar furniture of our church, which is now the finest in the Colony. A ciborium of very beautiful workmanship and capable of holding about one thousand particles, as also some very fine standards and a richly-toned gong were used for the first time during this mission.)

Father Hegarty is certainly the "Roanerges" of the mission, and many is the poor sinner that he has frightened out of his lethargy, and brought to a sense of his duty. Other priests may preach to you, but Father Hegarty hammers the Eternal Truths right into your very soul. His great sermons on Death, on Hell, and on Intemperance are things never to be forgotten. However, he is another man entirely off the altar; full of tenderest sympathy for the weakness of erring sinners, he is most affable and courteous to all he comes in contact with, and his friends here part with him with a regret which is real.

The mission was somewhat advanced when the Rev. Father Stokes arrived in Christchurch with the Superior, and this gave additional help at the confessionals as well as at the instructions. The preaching of Father Stokes is sublimely simple, appealing to the heart rather than to the understanding, and his sermon on the importance and efficacy of prayer at once endeared him to the people. Other men may have many admirers, but Father Stokes will always have many friends.

On last Sunday at four o'clock, the mission closed for the women of the parish, and at seven o'clock for the men. It was seen by the Fathers that, from the increasing interest displayed by the people in the work of the mission, the whole parish, so to speak, would be present at the closing service. But as the church is not large enough to accommodate more than about fifteen hundred persons, it was resolved to give the final sermon and the Papal Benediction to the women by Father O'Neill at four o'clock in the afternoon, and by Father Hegarty to the men at seven in the evening. There were about eleven hundred women in the church at four o'clock, and the number of men at seven o'clock was between eight and nine hundred, making, at both services, nearly two thousand people. There was never witnessed before in our church so solemn and imposing a ceremony as that which took place on these two occasions. Of Father O'Neill's leave-taking I have said something, but I scarcely know in what language I can tell you about Father Hegarty's. It was hard, indeed, to restrain the tears evoked by the powerful appeal of the preacher to pardon him for his shortcomings, to think of him and to pray for him when he was far away, as he would ever think of and pray for them. And when he blessed all the senses of the body and the faculties of the soul, and when he gave the blessing of our Holy Father the Pope, many a head was bowed down to hide the hot tears that welled up from a softened heart. He thanked the people for their attendance, and their good parish priest and his curates for the valuable assistance they had rendered to him during the mission, but, above all, he thanked the Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Redwood, to whom the missionaries were under special obligations.

After the "Te Deum" was chanted by the choir. His Lordship addressed a few words to the people in answer to this reference to himself, and said that he took that occasion to thank the missionaries who had so generously responded to his invitation to come to New Zealand, more especially their superior and the Very Rev. Father Vaughan, who not only acceded to his request to allow his priests to come but even came with them himself. He hoped the people would persevere in the love and grace of God, and continue to frequent the sacrament, to practice the devotions they had been taught, and above all to be regular in their attendance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Thus closed the third mission in Christchurch within the last seven years.

RATHKEALENSIS.

Mr. W. H. McKeay has removed from his well-known office in Princes st., Dunedin, to more commodious chambers in the same street.