

We have seen some beautiful specimens of the Catholic Christmas cards and small religious pictures provided for the season by the Messrs. Whitaker, of Wellington. The pictures are beautifully executed and embrace every devotion that recommends itself to religious minds. The prices are very cheap. We may add, to the credit of the Catholic community generally, and that of Wellington in particular, that a gentleman who is a competent authority, and who has lately returned from a visit to Sydney, declares that the Messrs. Whitaker's stock is larger and their prices lower than those to be found at any Catholic bookseller's in the city in question.

The usual meeting of the Dunedin Catholic Literary Society was held on the 18th inst., Mr. Callan, the Vice-President, occupying the chair. Mr. R. A. Dunne gave a reading from Sydney Smith, and Mr. W. Hall an interesting paper on "The Pyramids," which was criticised by Messrs. Carolin, Columb, and others. It was resolved that the next meeting after the Christmas vacation be held on 8th January next.

Our Dunedin readers will no doubt remember the Hibernian Sports at Tahuna Park, to-morrow.

The usual Caledonian Sports, will be held on the first days of the New Year at the Society's grounds, at Kensington, Dunedin, the programme is very attractive.

MAJOR ATKINSON, in his speech at Hawera the other evening, showed himself an able hand at pulling down, and if the Colony could only be prevailed upon to believe that the Major is as well capable of building up all that would remain to be done would be to restore him to the management of affairs as quickly as possible. The Major in fact did not leave the present Government a leg to stand on, and if we must judge by his indictment every moment of the present Ministry's existence is a moment of imminent danger and mischief to the commonwealth. It is well that the speaker began his address by professing a great respect for Sir Julius Vogel as a man, although it is the task of a nice mind to distinguish between the man worthy of respect, and the ways of that man that are worthy of contempt and suspicion only. Major Atkinson declares that great as is his respect for Sir Julius Vogel he cannot by any means bear his ways. And indeed if Sir Julius be in any degree like the picture that the Major draws of him, neither the man nor his ways can be any great shakes, and the less any honest man has to do with both together on either separately the better for himself. That the Major should be on his guard as to the nature of the Premier is more easily understood, for the Premier as a philosopher has by the very nature of the animal his dark and unsearchable depths that no one can reasonably fathom—and as a man of a progressive mind must be expected to be continually undergoing a new and more excellent change. That the Premier is a puzzling and mysterious element in the Government we readily admit, but that is not his fault for is he not under hereditary laws, or something equally fateful, that determine all his actions before hand, and lead him by the nose whether he will or no? There is always hope for the Premier to those who do not know an evil history of his grandfathers, and grandmothers too, of course, for let us not attempt to defraud the sex of one tittle of their rights, and at any time we may expect to see some twist of rectitude from the past dragging him into path-ways that are more in conformity with reason, common sense, and Christianity. But this is a digression—Major Atkinson then has given us a most harrowing account of the career run so far by the present Ministry and exposed their failure in a very touching manner, for does it not concern all our pockets when the affairs of the Colony are depressed and what can possibly be more touching for us than that?—The fact, however, remains that, let the faults and failures of the present Government be what they may, at the very worst they have but failed to remedy the state of things that began, and progressed, and reached its height under their predecessors, and any return of the Colony to the control of the continuous Ministry would be like seeking a cure by means of a hair of the dog that had given the bite. It sounds all very fine for the Major to speak of his policy as "to labour and wait," but the waiting of those whose interests and welfare hung upon his labour was quite sufficient to show them that his labour had been thrown away. The worst of all workmen is he who half kills himself and does nothing worth speaking of all the time. We doubt very much as to whether the Colony is prepared to return to such a spell of waiting once more. We differ, moreover, from Major Atkinson in his opinion that the demerits of an Opposition are not a fair plea for a Ministry to urge in their own defence. He was a wise man who said that of two evils we should choose the lesser one and his advice is worth acting upon. We do not believe, nevertheless, that Sir Julius Vogel's policy would prove only a lesser evil. We believe, on the contrary, that it would prove a positive good, and we are convinced that unless it be put into practice and that without delay, nothing but misfortune lies before the country. Major Atkinson is capable of making a very plausible speech in exposing the failures of the Government he opposes, but that he is capable of adopting a better line of policy than theirs, or of rescuing the Colony, or contributing in any marked degree to its progress or prosperity, we may deny from a long and unpleasant experience.

## CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Dec. 21, 1885.

DURING the past week education has gathered up all her bands, and sent them forth to do holiday upon the face of the earth. The schools—primary, secondary, tertiary, and fossil—have all had their examinations, their prize distributions, their speechifying, and their breakings-up. The Government institutions have done according to their usual wont, as have the group of colleges under the wealthy endowments of Canterbury College. All these are they who believe in the omnipotence of secularism. The great college on the borders of the Domain, founded thirty years ago by the Anglican denomination, furnished a contrast by the religious tone which the Anglican Primate imparted to the proceedings at the breaking-up by his speech. If the right rev. gentleman's flock would only adopt his sentiments, and make them a guiding rule—which would be easy enough, provided only they would only believe what their right rev. prelate believes on the subject—there would be a strong majority here for what may be called the denominational ticket. Bishop Harper's speech to the boys of Christ's College was the speech of a man who believes that no education is worthy of the name which is not associated with religion.

Our own schools, I rejoice to say, have not been behind in the general display. Every Catholic parent buying either of the daily papers has had the satisfaction of seeing the record of the school in which he is interested, and the greater satisfaction of perusing the chronicle of the prizes gained by his young people. The arduous work of examination fell principally to Father Bowers, who spared neither time, nor trouble, nor ability in the work. The whole of our Catholic educational establishments passed in review before him—the Sacred Heart High School and Select School, the Girls' Parish School (with its classes of St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, the Holy Angels); St. Joseph's, Papanui (a mixed school); St. Agnes, Halswell (also mixed); the School of the Sacred Heart at Addington (also mixed). All these, with their sum of some 400 scholars, passed before him. There passed also the St. Leo's High School, the School of St. Patrick and the school of St. Aloysius—the two last being the parochial primary schools for boys; they, with the St. Leo's, accounting for another 400 in round numbers. The teachers have all earned the commendation of the examiner, I understand. That is to say, all have done what was expected of them—viz., the nuns of the convent, who have such a large share of the educational burden on their shoulders; Miss Kealy, of Papanui; Miss Liddy, of Addington; Miss Donnelly, whose labours at Halswell are well known; Mr. Dobbin, who is making progress with St. Leo's; Mr. O'Connor, who has served so many years at St. Patrick's; and Miss Carr, who, as the lady principal of St. Aloysius, will be as famous as any in our educational history. The discipline of all these schools is well known—it is, in fact, the talk of the whole town. If their proficiency in their books is equal to it, their education must be at a high level indeed. The opportunities for observing this discipline are numerous. There are the Masses twice a week which the schools attend, and the several holidays besides, on which they are seen filing through the streets to Mass, and attending in their places with a behaviour which betokens the most careful command on the part of their teachers. The average attendance I have not been able to get; but I am assured that since Father Ginaty took the overseeing of this department into his own hands, the attendance is almost equal to the number on the roll. The reverend father manages, in the multiplicity of his business, to find time to visit the schools daily at an early hour and call over the muster roll. The examinations and prize distributions lasted all last week.

We have a first-class mystery on hand here. Some two or three months ago a gentleman named Howarde went to bathe, as he gave out, on the Sumner Beach. His clothes being found some time after, it was conjectured that Mr. Howarde had been drowned. His representatives, finding that he had made certain arrangements for their advantage with certain insurance offices, naturally wanted to wind up that part of the deceased gentleman's business. The insurance managers thought that a sum of between £2000 and £3000 was rather much for the insurance on the life of a mechanic, drawing, as they thought, at the outside ten shillings a day, and without any extra means to speak of, that they knew.—Being, therefore, suspicious they said: "produce the body or satisfactory evidence of death, and we will pay, till then, we wait." The representatives did nothing. After two or three months a gentleman walking in the next bay to that in which the clothes were found, is attracted by a peculiar and repulsive something in the breakers. It is a human hand—a ring is on the finger, attracted by the flash of light upon the trinket the horrified discoverer snatches up the ghastly flotsam and jetsam, and reads the name of Howarde. The next chapter opens with a still incredulous insurance crowd. Medical men and policemen are made to intervene, and where there is even so small a portion of a carcass as a hand there are the eagles of the law gathered together. An inquest is threatened, it is put off for a time, I believe three weeks, and a cast is taken of the hand. There are arrests, there is talk of collusion, and there are indignant denials, tears, protestations, woebegone claims—that is the stage at which we of the printing press must stop. The public, disturbed by no fear of anything, prattle away about the matter in a way eminently worthy of its dear delightful self. When I next write I may have a great deal more to say on this head.

At present I have a great deal to say on many other heads, but feeling that I have already exceeded the bounds of your space and probably of your good nature, I must content myself with the pleasure of wishing yourself and your readers a Merry Christmas.

That indigestion or stomach gas at night, preventing rest and sleep, will disappear by using American Co.'s Hop Bitters.