

comparison of the family under the Christian and pagan dispensations; very interesting for its historical knowledge. In the evening, the subject, the day being procession Sunday, was the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist—on which theme the treatment was, in its simplicity, lucidity, and logical force. As masterly as it is possible for any treatment to be, as Father Ginaty said, in reminding the congregation not to forget to subscribe for the expenses of the mission, this sermon was worth a good subscription without any other at all. In order to organise the said subscription on a satisfactory footing, our Missionary Rector has applied the envelope system—each subscription to be enclosed in an envelope, with the name and address of the donor.

The attempt to found ragged schools in Auckland reminds me that the idea was mooted here some years ago by a clergyman, a member of the Education Board, since dead. But many of the community thought that in a free system this was rather a strong proposal, and the matter had to be dropped. What the chances would be now, I could not say. Human nature, I suppose, is human nature. The Socialist in Paris, for instance, who wants the State not only to educate his children at the public expense but to feed them as well, is but a man; and the secularist who after taking the money of the poorest of the people to help pay for the education of his children, and for the scholarships and good things which they monopolise, wants to set their children apart as inferior, and brand them as "ragged," and to throw them the bones of the education system in the shape of the cast-off books and the inferior teachers; and that secularist is a man too. There is not less in common between these two than there was in the famous parallel between Mounmouth and Maldon, for both begin with the same letter on the contrary there is a great deal more.

Commercial.

MR. DONALD STRONACH (on behalf of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited) reports for the week ended December 8, as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—249 head were yarded at Burnside for the trade's requirements, nearly all good to prime quality, but this large supply was largely in excess, and, although competition at the commencement of the sales was fairly active, as they progressed the demand became slack and receded considerably from last week's. Best bullocks brought £8 to £14; light and medium, £4 15s to £7 10s; and cows in proportion.

Fat Sheep.—2,342 were penned. Of these about 420 were merino wethers (in the wool), the balance crossbreds (shorn), only a few pens being prime, the greater proportion ordinary to medium. Competition all through was sluggish. Prices receded from last week's fully 1s per head, and more in the case of inferior and ordinary quality. Best crossbred wethers (shorn) brought 7s 9d to 9s 3d—one extra-heavy pen to 11s 9d; medium, 5s 3d to 7s; crossbred ewes, 4s 9d to 8s; merino wethers, in the wool, 5s 3d to 9s. We sold on account of Mr. John Borton (Maerewhenua), crossbred wethers at 8s to 9s; Messrs. J. and T. Kemp (Moeraki), crossbred ewes at 5s 3d; Messrs. T. and A. Paterson (Ngapara), J. C. Buckland (Tumai), crossbred ewes from 5s 6d to 7s.

Fat Lambs.—1,012 were penned, and, as usual with such a large number forward, competition was dull and prices lower, the range to-day being 4s to 8s 3d; one pen extraordinary weights reached 11s 6d. We sold on account of Mr. J. C. Buckland (Tumai), 35 at 6s 9d; Messrs. T. and A. Paterson (Ngapara), 40 at 7s 3d.

Pigs.—234 were penned. These also met a duller market and lower prices. Porkers and baconers were lower by 4s to 5s each; suckers, 2s to 2s 6d. We sold consignments from 28s to 32s.

Flock and Stud Rams.—During the week we placed 53 stud and flock rams, on account of Mr. G. L. Sise, Auckland Farm, Hampden, at satisfactory prices.

Store Cattle.—A very fair demand has been experienced lately. Several sales have been held, and prices realised satisfactory to sellers, good three and four-year-old bullocks bringing £4 to £6 15s; two-year-old do, £2 10 to £3 15s.

Store Sheep.—There is no improvement to note in the demand for these. There is little or no inquiry so far. The market is exceedingly quiet.

Sheepskins.—At our weekly sale on Monday the attendance was up to the average, and competition fairly active, but no doubt owing to the unsatisfactory reports received of the position of the wool market at Home, although biddings were spirited up to certain limits, prices obtained were considerably lower. Country dry cross-breds (low to medium) brought 11d to 3s 6d; full-wool, 3s 9d to 5s 3d; dry merinos (low to medium), 10d to 3s 3d; full-wool, 3s 6d to 4s 9d; dry pelts, 1½d to 5d; green pelts, 8d to 10d; lambskins, 1s 3d to 1s 4d.

Rabbit-skins.—The market is decidedly firmer for all coming to hand. Really good medium are also in better demand, but there is no improvement in suckers and carelessly saved parcels. We offered a moderate catalogue on Tuesday, when all the buyers in the trade were present, and under good competition we disposed of the following lots:—WB, 1 bag spring skins, 7½d; TAIERI LAKE, 1 bale mixed (black, fawn, and spring greys), 6½d; do, 2 bales medium greys, 11½d; J.G. and Co., 1 do low season, 3½d; do, 1 do medium, 9½d; do, 1 do good winter greys, 15½d per lb.

Hides.—We have no alteration to note in the position of the market. Shippers are still unable to operate, local manufacturers being able to take up all offering at prices equal to late quotations—viz., for inferior and bulls, 1½d to 2d; light, 2½d to 2¾; medium, 2½ to 3d; hea y, but free from offal and in good order, 3½ to 3¾d per lb.

Tallow.—Reports from the Home markets continue favourable. Our London circular, per s.s. Aorangi, dated October 22, says that at sales held there on the 15th inst. both Home and export buyers

operated freely at rates in excess of those current in the preceding auctions. The most noteworthy factors in bringing about this improvement have been—first, an increase in the Continental demand; second, an advance in quotations in Paris and the American markets; third, the receipt of advice of limited shipments from Australia; and fourth, a falling-off in the quantity of Home melt offering. The estimated stock in warehouse then was 14,300 casks. In this market there is a very good local demand and a market for all offered at recent quotations; but holders of any suitable parcels fit for shipment are not disposed to quit at late rates.

We quote inferior and mixed, 12s to 15s; medium, 16s to 18s; prime mutton, 19s to 20; rough fat inferior, 6s to 7s, medium, 8s 9d; caul fat, 10s to 11s per cwt.

Grain.—Wheat has been in less demand this week. Millers do not feel disposed to push business, while the few holders continue to ask prices lately current (which are out of proportion to the price obtained for flour), but are cautiously work out their present stock, only purchasing in small lots when really necessary. The market has been fully supplied with inferior and fowls' wheat and as a large number of consumers have gone in for barley, the demand for this kind of wheat has considerably eased off. We quote prime milling 4s 11d to 5s; extra choice, 1d more; good to prime, 4s 9d to 4s 10d; medium to good (nominal), 4s 6d to 4s 8d; inferior and fowls' wheat, 3s to 4s (ex store bags in).—Oats.—The market generally is still inactive, and the little business that has been done during the week has been chiefly confined to the choicest quality; medium qualities, if quite sound, free from mustiness, have been disposed of at reduced rates; while inferior descriptions, if at all musty are practically unsaleable. We quote prime heavy milling, bright, 1s 8d to 1s 9d; short bright feed, 1s 7d to 1s 8d; discoloured and long oats, 1s 6d to 1s 7d; inferior, 1s 3d to 1s 5d (ex store, bags weighed in).—Barley.—The demand for all descriptions shows a considerable falling off as compared with the previous few weeks, whilst values, although generally without material change, occasionally rule in buyers' favour. We quote malting, 2s 9d to 3s; feed and milling, 2s 3d to 2s 8d (ex store).

Rye-grass and Cocksfoot seed.—There is very little demand now but prices are unaltered.

Mr. F. MEENAN, King street, reports—Wholesale prices, including bags: Oats, inferior to prime, 1s 6d to 1s 9d. Wheat: milling, 4s 6d to 5s; fowls' wheat, 3s 6d to 4s. Barley: malting, 2s 9d to 3s 3d; prime milling, 2s 9d; feeding, 2s 3d to 2s 9d. Chaff: straw, £2 15s to £3; sheaf, £3 10s to £4 5s. Straw, £2 per ton; hay oaten, £5 10s; ryegrass (scarce), £4 10s. Bran, £4. Pollard, £4 10s. Potatoes: Derwents, £1 10s. Butter: fresh, 4d to 9d; salt, best, 6d. Flour: £10 10s to £11; roller, £11 10s to £12 5s. Oatmeal, £10 10s. Eggs, 8d. New potatoes (Auckland), 1d per lb; local, 1½d—dull of sale.

A QUEEN AMONG THE POOR.

DURING two whole days of the past week, writes the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, the Queen of Greece was not to be seen. The "Queen of the Poor," as she has been called, devoted these two days to visiting some of the chief charitable institutions of Paris, and it has not been easy to trace her steps during the forty-eight hours thus snatched from amusements and pleasure and bestowed on the afflicted and outcast. Her first visit was to the Asylum St. John de Dieu, in the Rue Lecourbe, for deserted and incurable children. There are about 400 inmates, blind, lame, scrofulous, disabled in every way, beings miserable at the very birth and doomed to be miserable to the grave. Next her Majesty went to Passy, to the "Ouvre des Apprentis," conducted by the Abbe Roussil, who was under his care 400 or 500 boys rescued from idleness and poverty, and mostly deserted by their parents. Then came a visit to the "Ouvre du Calvaire," where young widows of station tend patients suffering from the most revolting and incurable maladies. A more consoling spectacle awaited her next day on visiting the Central Sisterhood of St. Vincent de Paul (the Sisters of Charity). Here *incognito* was impossible, for except crowned heads, no "outsider" ever enters the house. The Queen's visit was expected with the simplicity becoming the spot and the visitor was received by the 400 professed Sisters and 700 Novices, and conducted to the chapel which was lighted up as on a grand festival. Having visited the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Queen concluded her rounds in the realm of charity by visiting the establishment of the Nursing Little Sisters, founded twenty-two years ago, and now numbering eighteen communities. These Sisters, says the *Times* correspondent, go to the dwellings of the poor and carefully nurse them without even accepting a glass of water. The Queen was told that one of them had just died and was still unburied. "I will see her," she said, and went down to a kind of mortuary under the chapel. The Sister, still young, half reclining in an armchair, in her costume, was surrounded with flowers and tapers. Others were watching round the remains calm and composed. The Queen asked what sheet of paper was in her hand. The paper was carefully taken from her, just as though from a living person. It was the paper on which she had signed her vows which had been placed in her hand. The other Sisters spoke of her with the tenderness with which a sleeping child is referred to. "Has she not, madame, the appearance of sleeping the sleep of the happy? Is she not beautiful in her last dress?" They contemplated the corpse with the envious look cast by a labourer on a sleeping comrade who has finished his task. "Behold," said the Queen, "the secret of their unalterable cheerfulness. With us the idea of death is always like a dark veil. With them death has nothing but what is pleasing; they regard it as the end of every ill and the dawn of all felicity. What faith there must be to march thus towards the Infinite!"

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