

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

February 28, 1887.

THE news of Mr. Macandrew's death was received here with general regret. He was known among us chiefly for two things—his habit of looking ahead and predicting Colonial greatness, and his constant efforts to serve his Province. Speaking of the simple-hearted old man, men acknowledge that in many things he was a true prophet, and it is common to hear the exclamation, "If we had only had such a Superintendent here in Canterbury!" Many of our leading politicians testified their respect by going down to Dunedin to attend his funeral.

The harvest accounts from the country districts are glowing, both as to the quantity and quality of the yield now nearly all gathered in. There are only a few laggards to be heard from, men who are called in some quarters "afternoon farmers." An "afternoon farmer" I heard defined the other day as a man who regards it as his duty to keep up the supply of chick weed and cheap pig-food. So even carelessness appears to have its beneficial uses in this world. One feature in these crop accounts is the chorus of description of how the large owners have got in their crops—how one of these reaped his 4000 acres in twenty days, how another disposed of his 3500 at a similar rate, and so forth. The reaper and binder, of course, played the lion's part in the work, which explains how it is that there is not such a demand for labour as one would suppose at such a time.

The doings of Mr. Shirley Baker in distant Tonga interest us all in a mild way. We are wondering how it has come to pass that a pious Dissenter can have got into such hot water. But, then, we do not all understand the ways of the apostles of religious liberty.

A remarkably clever, well-to-do, and successful "Cheap Jack" has succeeded the Rev. Mr. Dowie as the popular attraction, and he is very much more of an attraction than the renowned healer. That he is a greater humbug, I should be sorry to say. His ways are certainly more pleasant, and his life is more easy. He never abuses any man's religion, and he is not the victim of malicious plots against his life. Without such plots it is obviously impossible to have narrow escapes. So the Cheap Jack has not the advantage of being able to chronicle daily some wonderful deliverance. Nevertheless he contrives to get people to believe in him expensively. For example, he asked his audience for a remarkable proof of confidence in him the other night, and got it. "Who will give me five pounds for this empty bucket?" The faith was forthcoming, and so was the five pounds, and the faith was richly rewarded, for the lucky devotee was at once presented by the smiling Cheap John with a tray full of jewellery, and a silver watch, and *mirabile dictu*, with his own five pound note. I have not heard that Mr. Dowie is prepared to take lessons from this great artist who has succeeded him, but he might do worse. There was one gentleman who tried very hard to believe in him—a blind gen leman, who persisted in declaring that owing to contact with the holy man he was blind no more. Mr. Dowie was as much touched as the Cheap Jack who got the five for the empty bucket. But alas! one of these wicked newspaper people saw the happy ex-blind man, and reported that the ex-blind man could not see him, that he was not even qualified to reign in the kingdom of the blind. Mr. Dowie was really very much scandalised. That anybody should grudge this poor inoffensive old man the great blessing of sight, gave him a shudder. But what can you expect from unprincipled scribblers? Having vented his wrath—a pretty hot blaze it was too—on the scribbler, he sent for his faithful disciple, and showed him to the faithful congregation. Had he but stopped there! But in a moment of weakness he held up two fingers and asked "How many fingers do I hold up?" "One," was the prompt reply; another trial, for the poor man was not yet accustomed to the great blessing of sight. He held up a rose, "What is this in my hand?" the faithful disciple stretched forth his hand and groped, and having groped, he came in contact with the object, and declared it to be a flower. It was very sad. The healer was obliged to pronounce the faithful disciple too weak in the matter of faith. If he had only been like Cheap John's friend of the five pound note!

Mr. Blair, formerly of your city, gave us the other night his very exhaustive and excellent lecture on the industries of the colony, past present, and prospective, whereby he increased the sum of useful knowledge among us, and added something to the funds of the Industrial Association. If there were more Blairs in the community, if people who have special opportunities for studying our resources were to contrive more opportunities for giving the public the results of their studies, there would be more knowledge. As knowledge is power, there would be more self-reliance and less dependence on Government for everything. We should no longer, in short, aspire to be a champion spoon-fed people.

The Rifle Association meeting has just closed its first day (a fine day after the rain), and the Association has found all things in trim, and to its satisfaction so far.

The interprovincial cricket match was rather a hollow business, and fell flat; not because it was hollow, for that is a matter of after knowledge, but because interprovincial cricket does not draw as it used to.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bagshawe, Bishop of Nottingham, England, in his Advent Pastoral, encourages Catholics to resist the monstrous tyranny of the exactions of tithes for the support of the Anglican Church. He asks:—"Why should Catholics and nonconformists have to pay a heavy annual tax for the maintenance of Church of England parsons? Let them be maintained as all other ministers of religion now are, by the voluntary offerings of their own congregations. These are rich enough, in all conscience, to keep them if they like them, without burdening us for their support. We think, then, that this most unjust annual tax of tithes, which is levied upon the whole country for the benefit of one Protestant sect only, ought to be at once abolished. And we can see no reason why Catholics should not strive for its abolition with all their might and main."

CANTERBURY CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

Christchurch, February 26, 1887.

THE usual weekly meeting of the above Society took place on Tuesday evening, February 22. In the absence of the President the chair was taken by Mr. W. O'Shaughnessy, Vice-President. There was only a moderate attendance, about twenty-five members being present. The Rev. Father Moore, who was present, gave some interesting details regarding the working of the Wellington Society, from which it appears the Christchurch people are very far behind the former numerically and otherwise. This is, no doubt, due in a great measure to the energetic action of the clergy, assisted by the able efforts of our late President and founder, we might add, of the present Christchurch Society, Mr. Maskell.

The programme for the evening was a debate for junior members, as to "Whether it was better for a Boy to learn a trade or profession."

Mr. Courtney opened the debate in favour of trades, and in the course of a very well reasoned argument, contended that in a great measure the taste and inclinations of a boy should be consulted.

Mr. Joyce in a very humorous speech contrasted the life of a mechanic who has to turn out at 6 a.m., snatch a hasty breakfast in order to get to his work at 8 o'clock, and then have a bit of cold lunch under the shade of a friendly tree at noon; with that of the professional man, who manages by an effort to have breakfast at 9 and get to his office at 10, looks over his correspondence, and directs his business until he goes to one o'clock lunch at his club, and winds up the afternoon with a match at lawn tennis.

Mr. Kearney also spoke in favour of learning a trade as likely to be of more benefit to a youth in after life, and instanced the good wags earned by competent mechanics of all kinds, who had far less difficulty in getting work than professional men.

After the juniors had their say some of the seniors took up the debate, those who engaged in it were Messrs. Milner, Crooke, McKay, and Kennedy. On a vote being taken it was found the tradesmen had a majority. Mr. Courtney was adjudged to have made the best speech amongst the juniors. The meeting then terminated with prayer in the usual manner.

The story is old, but it has not been in print before. It was at the time of the removal of the remains of Dr. Cahill to Ireland, over a year ago. The occasion was solemn enough and fittingly observed; but one official mourner overdid the gravity of the case by remarking to another, with a sorrowful shake of the head: "This is a very, very melancholy event;" and the propeties were wholly destroyed by the unseemly mirth which followed the dry answer: "It is indeed—and so sudden, too!" The reverend Doctor had been dead 20 years — *Pilot*.

Three robbers stopped a train on the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad, one day last week, and while one of them kept guard over the engineer and fireman, the other two went through the train, over-awing half a hundred passengers, and coolly robbing them of their money and valuables. Among the passengers were an officer and five men of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, colored. At the solicitations of the other passengers, they made no resistance, but delivered up their arms and money to the two robbers. The Boston *Record* ironically nominates the commander of these warriors for promotion under the civil service rules, because: "There was certainly nothing military in his conduct, while his civility is beyond question."

A pitman and his wife, a short time ago, left Newcastle on a visit to the Isle of Man, and while parading on the landing stage at Liverpool espied the Manx steamer with the usual three legs on the paddle-box, which is the coat-of-arms of the island. Geordie was heard to exclaim to his better half, "An' aa tell ye agyen thor the Manx arms," when the wife indignantly replied, "An' aa tell ye agyen, ye fyuel, them's no arms—them's legs!"

The Catholics in Prussia form no less than 40 per cent of the entire population. On December 31, there were 18,243,578 Evangelicals, as against 9,621,624 Catholics. Not only that, but during the years between 1880 and last year, the Catholic population augmented by no less than 4½ per cent, whilst the rate of increase of Evangelicals was on 3½ per cent. Lastly, the Catholics are also ahead in the proportion of school children, that is, 189 per thousand, as against 182 of the Evangelicals, and 178 of other Christians, and 175 of the Jews.

Some statistical particulars have lately been published concerning the Italian Universities which present some items of general interest. There are 21 Universities altogether in the Kingdom of Italy, 17 of which are "royal"—that is, maintained out of the funds of the State; and four "free" Universities (Camerino, Macerata Ferrara, and Perugia) are maintained out of the local funds. There is only one University for Piedmont, at Turin; one for Liguria, at Genoa; one for Lombardy, at Pavia; one for the old Venetian territories at Padua; two for the island of Sardinia, at Cagliari and Sassari; Bologna, Modena, Ferrara lie near each other; Tuscany has Pisa and Siena; Rome is for Central Italy; Naples is the only University for Southern Italy; while Sicily has three—Palermo, Messina, Catania. Naples is attended by 3,900 students—an attendance which in Central Europe is only surpassed at Berlin and Vienna. Turin has an attendance of 2,100; Rome, 1,200; Bologna, 1,160; Padua, 1,000; Pavia, 1,000; Palermo, 950; Genoa, about 800; Pisa, 600; Catania, 400. Of the others, Modena is at the head with 270, and Ferrara at the foot with 39. Surely nothing would be lost by the amalgamation of these miniature Universities. Ferrara only professes to teach medicine, mathematics, and jurisprudence; Macerata jurisprudence only. *Per contra*, the great Milan Academy—where Ascoli teaches (one of the greatest philologists in Europe) and the Abate Ceriani is librarian of the Ambrosia—has not the rank of a University, although it does more genuine University work than a dozen of the nominal Universities. The same is to be said of the Institute of Higher Studies at Florence, where the teaching staff includes the historian Villari, the great Hellenist Comparetti, and De Gubernatis, Bartoli, and Rajna—names famous all over Europe.