

make its destruction everybody's business, as it will be the unfortunate taxpayer who will be mulcted in the cost of repairing the damage. The papers here generally unite in saying that somebody is to blame, though there is much general congratulation that the fire occurred in the day time. Had it taken place at night there is only too much reason to fear that the lives of many of the inmates would have been sacrificed. The female patients are all safely housed in the Immigration Barracks at Addington, and their friends at a distance may feel quite satisfied as to their safety and comfort.

Father O'Donnell's many friends in Canterbury and elsewhere will be pleased to hear that there is a very good prospect that this very popular and energetic young priest will soon have a habitation of his own at Darfield. Since Father O'Donnell was appointed to this scattered parish he has had a great many difficulties to contend with and a great many hardships and discomforts to endure. Not the least among these was the lack of a dwelling-place of his own. This defect the Darfield people, with admirable generosity, have, I believe, resolved to remove. To that end a subscription was started at Darfield a week or two ago. The readiness with which the project was taken up by the people of the district, and the amount of the donations afforded excellent testimony to the extent to which Father O'Donnell has succeeded in winning the affection of his parishioners at Darfield. The times are bad there as elsewhere. The returning tide of prosperity has not yet had an appreciable effect upon the pockets of Canterbury farmers, but I believe the Darfield people rose superior to waves of depression, and contributed handsomely towards the fund for the erection of Father O'Donnell's house. Actions like this on the part of the people show that the bond of union between them and their priest is perfect. Where such union exists, devotion on one side and liberality on the other become very easy to priest and people, and religion is sure to flourish. I am pleased to find that the Darfield people so well appreciate the blessing which they possess in having Father O'Donnell for their pastor, and I congratulate them most heartily upon the fact of his having decided to establish his headquarters in their midst.

Mr. Robert Lonargan, upon behalf of the bazaar committee, has concluded arrangements with Mr. Donnelly, for the hire of the Palace Skating Rink for a fortnight in January. The hall has been secured upon very reasonable terms. It is just the place in which to hold a spectacular entertainment. It is large, light, and airy. It is well-appointed, is already very popular with the public, and is most centrally situated. The prospects of the success of the bazaar, or rather the Shakespearean festival, as I believe it is proper to call it, should be materially increased by Mr. Lonargan's enterprise in securing this palatial building. I forget if I said before that the forthcoming bazaar is to be upon a most magnificent scale and that all the stall-holders and attendants are to be arrayed in the costumes of some Shakespearean character.

Mr. R. Lonargan goes to Melbourne next week, but only for a trip. I am glad to say. He will be absent a few weeks.

*Apropos* of Mr. Robert Lonargan, I have heard some rumours during the past week about the Literary Society. I have been told that Mr. Lonargan contemplates resigning his position as President of the Society. I will not at present enter fully into this matter or say what I might about it, because it is Mr. Lonargan's especial wish that I should be charitably silent in regard to the matter, and to certain aspects which it presents to me. This much I will say, that should Mr. Lonargan indeed resign the Presidency, it does not require a prophet to foretell what will be the fate of the Society. Without its present President it would speedily drift back into the half-dead condition in which Mr. Lonargan found it. Mr. Lonargan has been the back-bone of the Society. He has kept it alive. In this opinion the Rev. Father Briand coincides. Persons who were present in the hall on the night of the Bishop's lecture will remember the warm and well-deserved compliments which the rev. chaplain paid to Mr. Lonargan upon the management of the Society. In fact, everybody knows that only for the manner in which Mr. Lonargan has continually poured his spirit into the Society it would have expired long ago, and that it would not have retained a single spark of national feeling in it. Indeed, I have very good grounds for supposing that it has been Mr. Lonargan's efforts to keep alive in the Society some faint flame of nationality which has led to the present complication. However, as I said, I will not now enter into this matter, because I am in hopes that the members of the Society will recognise their error and will have sufficient manliness to go and apologise to their President for their petty conduct.

Presumably in obedience to the new departure which I before intimated that the Society was about to take under the literary and scientific renaissance instituted by the Rev. Father Briand, a debate of a most interesting character is to come off in the Society's rooms on Tuesday night next. The momentous question to be decided is, "Is it desirable that women should be employed as journalists?" A very great friend of mine, a young Irish gentleman, who informed me of the subject for discussion, has just told me that he means to be present and to take part in the debate, and to maintain the affirmative of this proposition. I hope he may be there. He is a very good speaker, and has the reputation of being able to give some very hard knocks to opponents in a debate. Besides, he is always to be relied upon to uphold the honour of his country and of his countrywomen wherever and whenever either is meanly assailed. But in case any accident should prevent him from being present on Tuesday night, in the interests of your readers I have obtained from him a forecast of his speech, which is eminently to the point. I feel sure, whatever may be the verdict given by the Society on Tuesday night, that after reading my young friend's speech the verdict of your readers will be that "the ayes have it." The following is a condensation of the speech:—"Rev. Chaplain, Mr. President, and gentlemen,—Whether or not a woman should be employed as a journalist" is a question which, I maintain, wholly depends for its solution upon the woman who is in question. If, for example, you could find a woman in Christchurch who could write better than—well, say some members of this Society, a woman who is able enough and brave enough to uphold any great cause, for instance the character and independence of that

country which many of us hail as our birthland—should we meanly deny to such a one the right to be employed as a journalist? Surely not. In the darkest and most sorrowful days of our country, when famine and persecution had driven hope from Ireland, when the whole land lay desolate, some of the true-hearted women of Erin, by their journalistic efforts, did much to fan once more into flame the embers of hope and of national life in their suffering country. Who among us, with the memory of the stirring words of 'Speranza' and of 'Eva' and 'Mary' in the *Nation* in their memories will find voice to say 'no' to the proposition before us? Any man here who can utter that negative must have first ungratefully forgotten how much the brave sisters of our Irish leader, Fanny and Anna Parnell, have done in our own day by voice and pen to set Ireland free. The patriotic daughters of Ireland have ever been to the front in advancing the national movement which is now about to result in liberty for our countrymen at home, and in raising the status of Irish people abroad. The latter, is a point of some importance to us in Christchurch, rev. Chaplain and Mr. Chairman. Let us remember what women have done and suffered for our country. Let us remember the honour which they have conferred upon it, for I maintain that the women of Ireland are among the purest and noblest of their sex. Their devoted love for their country has ever been one of the brightest gems in that crown of virtue of which even the calumnious pen of their enemies has never been able to rob them. If in the happier circumstances which exist in this Colony an opening exists for women, and especially for the women of Ireland, to be employed as journalists, or in the higher walks of life, let us hail with delight their ability to adopt such pursuits. Let us assist them if we can, let us be proud of them, but let us not meanly envy them, let us not basely desire to see them remain in inferior positions. Let us not forget that, owing to the terrible injustices which was inflicted upon our country in the past, many of the women of Ireland, alas, like too many of the men of Ireland, in this country and elsewhere, are even at the present day little else than bond slaves and drudges of the hereditary enemies of our country. If in some instances a change is coming over the scene and we find here and there a woman of our country rising superior to the legacy of the penal days, is it our place to challenge her right to do so? Let us not degrade our Society; let us not give the lie to those who have credited Irishmen with the possession of a spirit of chivalry by saying to any of our countrywomen who may succeed in regaining the social status of which the penal laws robbed them, go back to drudgery, go back to the inferior station which English law assigned you; we, your countrymen, like your Saxon oppressors, hate to see you rise. I know quite well that any member of this Society, or of any society, who has had the national spirit squeezed out of him, will not take my view of the question, but such a one I consider to be beyond hope. The opinion of a denationalised Irishman is something about which no brave and honourable Irishwoman need concern herself. She will never have such a one jostling or rivalling her in a journalistic career. There is no fear of that. I hold, rev. chaplain, Mr. President, and gentlemen, that such a question should not have been brought up for discussion in this Society; good taste should have excluded it. We should have remembered what Irish women by their pens have done for our country, and common gratitude should have chained every tongue in this room from speaking one word against the adoption by women of the profession of journalists. We should have remembered the chivalry of our countrymen, and above all we should not have forgotten that we are supposed to be gentlemen. We should have remembered too, that in speaking depreciatingly of women we were insulting the sex of the glorious patroness of the Order of which our rev. Chaplain is a member. For those over whose minds these considerations have no influence, prudence should have had a salutary effect which should have deterred them from entering upon this discussion. It would have been wiser and safer for us to have gone on analysing time, space, the psychology of the soul, the laws of relativity, association of ideas, the theories concerning the *universalia ante rem* and the *universalia in re*, and any other of those points with which our stupendous intellects are able to grapple—to have stuck to abstractions, and to have left the concrete alone, especially the concrete in the form of woman. Women are too subtle for us. They are too sharp-witted for us to hope to come off anything but second best in a discussion of this kind. Some of us have found this out before: some of us are likely to find it out again. No glory will result to us from debates of this kind. Of that, rev. Chaplain, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I am firmly convinced; and I think, upon reflection you will all agree with me.—I think it will be generally admitted that my young friend speaks fairly well, and that he is none the worse as an orator, a logician, and a philosopher because his heart is still true to the brave dear land which all Irishmen ought to love, but which some Irishmen, I am sorry and ashamed to say, seem disposed to forget.

On Sunday, at 11 o'clock Mass, Father Cummings preached a charity sermon on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He briefly sketched the life and work of the great St. Vincent, who so loved mankind, and concluded with an eloquent appeal to all persons to assist in forwarding the noble work to which St. Vincent de Paul devoted his life. The appeal appeared to be fairly responded to, but, considering the excellence of the sermon and the object for which it was given, I was sorry to see so many vacant places in the church.

From Germany come tidings that Prince Lichnowsky, immediately on his return from Rome, had audience of the Emperor, to whom he consigned the autograph letter of the Sovereign Pontiff. It is further declared that the ecclesiastical legislation will continue to undergo modifications in a sense favourable to the Catholic Church; likewise, it is asserted that the late Emperor Frederick III, in recognition of the part taken by Monsignor Galimberti, Apostolic Nuncio at Vienna, in the conciliation between the Roman Curia and the German Government, has bequeathed to him, by will, artistic articles of considerable intrinsic value.