

Altogether the new schoolrooms look so palatial in comparison to the Brothers' wretched old dwelling house, that I think the Brothers would act wisely during the coming winter nights to take up their beds and walk from the old house into the schoolroom. There with a good fire on, they might hope to evade attacks of rheumatism, influenza, etc., but they can have no such hope in the old tumble-down rookery in which they live. In summer time it is the dustiest old place in Christchurch, and the shingles almost crackle in the sun. In winter the same shingles are moist and mossy, and all around the house little lakes of water lie under the trees. On the whole, I think my suggestion about a change of quarters at night, at least, is not a bad one. The Brothers should consider it.

Appropos of schools, I see that there is to be a further effort to rob Catholics in order to improve the free, secular, and compulsory system. In view of the manner in which Catholics have been treated over the education question, I suppose we should be surprised at nothing. But though that is the case, I must confess I do feel astonished at an agitation that is now going on in Wellington for the purpose of establishing a university college there. The college is not wanted. There are three institutions of the same kind in New Zealand, and these are enough, and more than enough, for supplying all the education that we require. Even now in the Christchurch papers one frequently notices advertisements from graduates offering their services on terms that would be considered low even for a junior clerk. If things go on as they are, and money continues to be spent so lavishly, we shall soon find that M.A.s and B.A.s of both sexes will be as big a drug in the market as governesses are in the old country. In any case the State has a right to be just before it is generous, and I think that Catholic claims should be recognised before any more squandering of public money takes place on higher education.

When the Midland railway starts Father O'Donnell's parish should improve. I think Springston, the point at which operations are to begin, is in the Darfield parish. If it is, I shall be very glad indeed. A little more grist to the Darfield parochial mill could scarcely be regarded as a misfortune either by the priest or the people, who, though they are very generous, are very few. No priest in Canterbury better deserves that the tide of prosperity should turn a little in the direction of his parish than Father O'Donnell, who has worked most perseveringly and patiently among the people in the scattered districts of Darfield.

Father Doyle, I believe, keeps time from hanging heavily on his hands at Lyttelton by teaching the young idea how to shoot. This, I think most people will admit, is a most laudable and profitable method of occupying spare time.

Mr. Sweeney, who for many years was landlord of the Carlton Hotel at the junction of the Papanui Road and the North Belt, has apparently grown tired of the aristocratic suburb, and has removed to town to the corner of Armagh and Colombo streets. Mr. Sweeney's friends will be pleased to hear that the change of venue promises to shorten the road to fortune.

We are to have a real musical festival next week. Both "Iolanthe" and the "Mikado" are to be revived by the amateurs for the benefit of Mr. Benson, who contemplates going Home to join the theatrical profession. Mr. Benson's abilities as a singer are not very great, but his histrionic talent is undoubtedly of a very high order. No comic actor who has been here except Howard Vernon is anything like his equal in such parts as Buntborne or Koko.

The Spanish Students have quite hit the popular taste at the Art Gallery. Every evening and afternoon during the week the little hall has been crowded. A number of the pictures, I notice, have been sold. The small ones have gone off best, possibly because people want quality and not quantity when they buy a picture.

I see by the TABLET that some of the collections in aid of the Parnell Defence Fund are to be sent home through Dr. Moran, to be presented by him to the secretary of the League in Dublin. This will be a pleasing duty to his lordship, who, more than any ecclesiastic in the colonies, scarcely, indeed, excepting Cardinal Moran, has always upheld the cause and the men who have lately so signally triumphed over their slanderers. Even when things looked black for the Irish leaders, and when many professed friends of the Irish cause were inclined to look coldly upon Parnell and to freezingly speak his name, Bishop Moran's faith in the "uncrowned king" never wavered. He believed in the man, in his integrity, and his honour, and it must be a source of great pleasure to him now to find how thoroughly his faith in his great countryman has been justified. Thrice welcome to the leaders of the League—Parnell and his associates—should be money coming to them from Bishop Moran's hands, for in no man on the face of the earth have they and Ireland and the Irish people had a truer friend than Bishop Moran, whose heart and pen were ever at their service. When the news of the breakdown of the *Times*' charges came, many persons regretted that the intelligence did not come a little sooner, as it would have been a great pleasure and a great consolation to the Bishop before his departure to know that his country had achieved so magnificent a victory over her enemies. However, he knows it now, and his pleasure will have been none the less keen because the news was kept waiting for a little while. Another pleasure must have been his, too, upon revisiting the old country. When his foot touched Irish ground, and his hand clasped an Irish hand, and he saw around him once more the green hills of Ireland, he must have felt happy in the consciousness that though he had been an exile in a distant land where he had hard work and much anxiety, yet he never failed to do as much as any man could do to make the name of his country remembered by her own children and respected by others.

The intelligence that the Irish delegates intend visiting New Zealand will afford widespread satisfaction. It is to be hoped that they will visit the Coast. The West Coast people have always been unwavering in their loyalty to Ireland.

On Saturday night quite a phenomenal storm suddenly arose in the city. The sky was clear, the stars bright, and the air exceptionally mild. It was an ideal night. It was so warm and fine that upon going out no one would have dreamed of taking an umbrella or a macintosh. Suddenly great flashes of pale blue lightning

appeared followed by crashes of thunder, and the rain began to pour in torrents. The flashes of blue light had a most peculiar effect in the darkness. Half the street which one moment lay in deepest shadow, was the next instant lit up as if the electric light had been turned on. It flashed and darted in at windows until nervous people, unaccustomed to such pyrotechnic exhibitions on the part of nature, were absolutely terrified. The electric display was not confined to sheet lightning but also took the more dangerous zig-zag form. The storm expended itself in the night, and in the morning the sun shone out brightly, and children, who in accordance with the old poetic fancy, got up to see the sun dance on Easter Sunday morning, were at least rewarded by seeing a very cloudless sky and a brilliant sun.

Before writing my next letter I shall have an opportunity of judging of how the Brothers' young band of dramatic stars will acquit themselves. Under the able tuition which they have been receiving I have no doubt whatever that they have improved.

This evening (Sunday), the sky is becoming overcast, and the prospect for the Literary Society's picnic is not promising. However, I hope that appearances are deceptive. The arrangements for the picnic are all completed, and a disappointment would be very unpleasant indeed.

W A I T A H U N A.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

April 10.

THE mission held here recently by the Rev. Father Daly S.J., has been eminently successful. At each of the services held the church was crowded, and the rev. gentleman's earnest eloquent sermons were received with much appreciation. A couple of hours was set apart daily for the instruction of the children, with a view to their receiving first Communion on the occasion of the mission. So well and thoroughly had they been previously taught by the Rev. Father O'Leary, that very little was required in the form of instruction to satisfy the scruples of Father Daly in conferring on them the glorious privilege of receiving the Blessed Sacrament on such short notice; so that quite a large number received on the last day of the mission. Since then I have to record the death of Mr. Kane, an old and respected resident, who had been ailing for a considerable time and who received the Blessed Sacrament for the last time from the hands of Father Daly, his death following some few days' afterwards. Deceased was eighty years of age, and his remains were followed to the grave by a large number of relatives and friends.

The Sunday School recently established here has been as regards numbers a success. More teachers are however urgently required, the number attending being too many for the united efforts of Messrs. Kirby and Ward to keep in proper subjection. The hour 11 a.m. is a most inconvenient one for all concerned. Should the teachers think fit to alter it to a more convenient one in the afternoon, doubtless the want of teachers would be soon remedied. It is scarcely fair to leave the brunt of the work on the shoulders of Messrs. Ward and Kirby, assisted as they occasionally are by Miss Cutler.

The weather is very cold and wet. Threshing in the immediate vicinity is almost over, the yield not being up to the average. In mining everything is quiet, nothing of any note occurring, except the sale of a one-fourth share in Waitahuna Gully, Mr. Michael Carmody being the purchaser, and £161 the figure.

HOW PIGOTT CONFESSED.

IN a column and a half letter in the London *Daily Telegraph* George Augustus Sala tells the part he played in that act in the great drama in which Pigott made his latest and fullest confession. Sala says:—"Last Saturday, between 1 and 2 p.m., a knock came at my study door, and I was handed a letter from my old friend and near neighbour, Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P., whose house is at 24 Grosvenor Gardens, within pistol shot of my flat. The note ran thus:—"Can you leave everything and come here at once? Most important business.—H.L." I told the servant that I would be in Grosvenor Gardens within a quarter of an hour, and ere that time had expired I was ushered into a large library on the ground floor, where I found the senior member for Northampton smoking his sumptuous cigarette." Another, too, was there, "poring over a copy of that morning's issue of the *Times*, going right down one column and apparently up the other, taking column after column in succession, then barking back as though he had omitted some choice paragraph, and then resuming the sequence of his lecture, ever and anon tapping that broad frontal bone of his, as though to evoke memories of the past, with a little silver pencil case. The hand which held the copy of the *Times* never ceased to shake." Sala recognised the individual as corresponding precisely with a sketch he had seen "in an evening paper," and when Mr. Labouchere, in his most courteous manner and blandest tone, said—"Allow me to introduce you to a gentleman of whom you must have heard a great deal," Mr. Sala replied "There is not the slightest necessity for naming him. I know him well enough; that is Mr. Pigott." Mr. Labouchere, in a dulcet voice, continued—"The fact is that Mr. Pigott has come here, quite unsolicited, to make a full confession. I told him that I would listen to nothing that he had to say save in the presence of a witness, and remembering that you lived close by, I thought you would not mind coming here and witnessing to what Mr. Pigott had to confess, which will be taken down word for word from his dictation in writing. Mr. Pigott, although he screwed his courage to the sticking place of saying that he was going to confess, showed considerable tardiness in orally "owning up." So we let him be for about ten minutes, writes Sala. "Mr. Labouchere kindled another cigarette. I lit a cigar and—excuse the vulgarity of the phrase—continued to take stock of the man in the easy chair, still poring over the *Times*—still tapping from time to time his forehead with the pencil-case, and still wriggling his one foot and then the other. Perhaps, conscience was growing like gout in his toes. At length he stood up, and came forward into the light