

## CANTERBURY CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

At the weekly meeting held on Monday evening, the 19th inst., there was a good attendance. The business of the evening was a debate on the subject of theatres. The method of drawing the members names out of a hat, which has now become so popular with the members, was again adopted. Mr. Milner led off, and laid down the proposition—that theatres are injurious to the well-being of society. The speakers that followed, treated the question from a historical, literary, and moral standpoint, and some excellent speeches were delivered, notably those of the Rev. Father O'Donnell and Mr. H. H. Loughnan. Opinions seemed very equally divided, and at the close of an animated debate the proposition was only saved by the casting vote of the President.

On last Thursday evening a concert was given under the auspices of this Society in aid of the parish funds of Lyttelton. A very varied and attractive programme was presented, and we are pleased to state that the laudable efforts of the secretary in assisting the Rev. Father Tracey to pay off the debt with which he found his parish saddled on his recent arrival in Canterbury, was a success from a financial point of view.

On Monday, the 18th inst., there was the usual weekly meeting. After sundry resolutions, having reference to the recent entertainment given on behalf of the parish of Lyttelton, the programme of the evening was called on, which was a lecture by Mr. J. C. Carr. That gentleman, however, failed to put in an appearance, owing to a misunderstanding as to the evening upon which his lecture was to be given, and various proposals were made as to the best method of filling up the evening. Ultimately, a fertile imagination suggested that each member should secretly write down on a piece of paper the subject matter for a speech, and that these pieces of paper should be put into a hat and drawn in turn, each member rising to speak on the subject as he drew from the hat. This proposal found favour with the meeting, and great was the merriment which ensued. Most learned disquisitions were given on Robert Burns and the Lime Light, while such momentous issues as whether a Chinaman should wear his pigtail behind or before, or whether red or black hair was the more preferable, were treated with the gravity the importance of the questions deserved.

The weekly meeting of Monday, the 23rd inst., opened to a good average attendance of members. A motion, of which previous notice had been given, was proposed by Mr. Kennedy, rescinding a previous resolution, that all original papers read before the Society should be handed to the secretary for safe custody, and become the property of the Society. After discussion the resolution was lost. The rest of the evening was taken up with a dramatic performance, which, judging by the laughter and applause it produced, gave great satisfaction. On next Monday evening the Rev. Father O'Donnell has promised to deliver an address.

## PROPOSED NEW CHURCH FOR CHRISTCHURCH.

A PROPOSAL has for some time been in consideration to construct a new church in Christchurch, and as the plans, etc., are now sufficiently matured to enable a judgment of the building to be formed, I take this opportunity of giving the readers of the TABLET as clear a description of the various features of the church as space and present data will admit.

The period of Gothic architecture selected is that known as the Early Decorated, which belongs more especially to the later portion of the 14th century. This style has been chosen as best adapted to the requirements and materials at hand, not forgetting an occasional shock of earthquake to be provided against, and although it is not quite so rich in effect as the later Continental style chosen for the Dunedin cathedral, yet the general impression is, if anything, more majestic, and it is certainly more suitable for a flat site.

The whole church will stand on a platform in the shape of a parallelogram, with an octagonal end, and accessible by means of stone-faced steps on all its sides. This platform will have an entire length of 240 feet, with a breadth of 150 feet, and a height from the street level of 4 feet, constructed almost entirely of concrete, with stone facings to the steps. The object of this system of construction is not only to raise the entire building well above the street level, but also to give the foundations an additional means of strength.

The east end of the nave will face the street line at a sufficient distance back to give a clear view of the nave gable from the main entrance gates.

The general dimensions and form of the church will be as follows:—Nave divided into seven bays of a total length of 105 feet, with two aisles, each 15 feet wide. The height of the nave to the top of the clerestory walls will be 60 feet from the street level, and to the point of the gable will be 80 feet. The aisle walls will have a clear height of 26 feet; there will be two transepts, each 32 feet long, and of similar height and breadth to the nave, and in their centre will rise, on four piers of clustered columns, spanned by moulded arches, a tower 28 feet square, with a height from the street level to the spring of the spire of 132 feet. The spire will be four-sided, constructed of strong timber framing, and covered with lead, decorated with bands of embossed and gilt copper, making the whole height of tower and spire together from street level 222 feet. The sanctuary will be constructed with an octagonal apse, having a total length of 40 feet, and a breadth of 30 feet, and of equal height with the nave. At either side of the sanctuary, and immediately facing the aisles, will be two side-chapels, each 15 feet by 20 feet.

The west end of the nave will be crossed by two wings, or lesser transepts, projecting 15 feet beyond the aisle walls on either side. This portion of the building will contain, on the level of the nave floor, two internal entrance porches, 15 feet by 20 feet, the baptistery 20 feet by 30 feet, cloak-room and a registration office, each 15 by 20 feet. On a floor, 24 feet from nave floor, will be the organ loft, 20 feet by 60 feet, choir library, 20 feet by 15 feet, and archives room, 20 feet by 15 feet.

The exact position and dimensions of the sacristies, etc., are not yet determined on.

The general external view of the church from the street may be described as follows: The nave gable which will be brought over the organ loft will form the central feature, and the wall supporting it will be strengthened on either side by an octagonal turret, strongly buttressed, richly decorated, and terminating with crocketed and moulded pinnacles. Within each of these turrets will be a bell for minor purposes. Between the two turrets will be constructed a richly-moulded and carved pointed arch rising well into the gable and carried on capped and clustered columnar jambs. The entire height from point of arch to street level, will be 68 feet, and about one half of this height within the arch will be occupied by the great east window, consisting of a stone tracery rose, developed in quatrefoil and trefoil, from hexagonal base, and carried on six tracery headed lancets.

(Concluded in our next.)

## SCENE OF THE OUTRAGES.

TANTAH, the scene of the latest Egyptian massacres, scarcely less fiendish in their cruelty than those of Alexandria, is the capital of the Gorbdeyeh province in the Delta. The city is fifty-four miles north of Cairo, on the Cairo and Alexandria railroad, and is the third city in Egypt. Its population is variously estimated at from 60,000 to 100,000 souls. In the military operations doubtless soon to follow, Tantah will become an important strategical point, and a rallying centre for the adherents of Arabi, for this unique city is the capital of religious fanaticism in Lower Egypt. Its situation, in about the middle of the Delta, renders it easily accessible to those who go there on the triennial religious pilgrimages to celebrate the birthplace of a great Moslem saint, the Seyid Ahmad El-Redawec. The greatest of these festivals, which is near the end of the Christian year, attracts more pilgrims than any other in Egypt, and in this respect is second only to the pilgrimage to Mecca. They are characterised by debauchery, crime and riot, and exceed in this respect the revelries of Bubastis and Canopus. Few Christians ever attend the mammoth gathering known among the Franks as the "Tantah Fair" because of the danger attending intercourse with fanatics maddened with the potent araki, a beverage brewed from rice. The *Herald* correspondent visited one of these great religious mobs, which, in fine, is nothing more than a Mohammedan camp meeting, and being in Christian garb, without even the fez, he was everywhere regarded with scowls of hatred, gestures of defiance and words of menace. It was a singular spectacle to be in the midst of one of these huge assemblies, numbering as high as 300,000 souls, coming from every part of Syria, Arabia, even India and Northern Africa, and particularly at night by their rude camp fires, beating on the tom-tom, singing rude negro and Egyptian chants, telling fortunes, with the howling dervishes sending forth the most hideous and ear-rending howls while whirling in their maddening testimony of fealty to the Moslem God. It can be imagined that when sometimes 500,000 strangers have thus gathered on the plain of Tantah, with water by no means plenty and with the modern Egyptian by no means disposed to use it, that cleanliness would not be a prevailing virtue. In fact, it is doubtful if any camp city was ever the theatre of so much general and personal filth, with all of its consequences, as the chief pilgrimage in honor of the patron saint of Tantah.

As a consequence, epidemic and contagious fevers spread all over the Delta provinces are carried by the rail to Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and a large mortality ensues, for the modern Egyptian and the Bedouin are the most helpless of mortals when sick. Members of their medical profession would scarcely be allowed to treat swine in America; and the natives have a great reluctance, on account of religious scruples, to being treated by a Christian. The *Herald* correspondent, however, on the occasion of one of the great feasts, was careful to have with him his medicine chest—not an insignificant affair either, for it was prepared by Dr. Grant, the English physician to the Khedive, with elaborate instructions. This was a companion in travel as much for self-protection as it was to obtain a useful popularity among the natives for medical science—a very easily acquired reputation in Egypt. It was discovered in endeavouring to treat many of the ordinary afflictions engendered by such close and filthy communion that they were temporarily cured only to recur. It is this Mohammedan business of pilgrimages which gives rise and has caused time out of mind, the great pestilences sweeping over the earth from the neighbourhoods of Medina, Mecca, Tantah and other holy cities, eventually following the water courses and routes of travel and sending the messenger of death to the capitals of Western Europe as in the "Black Death" which made so much havoc in Paris in 1348.

Messrs. Walters and Co., 47 Victoria street, Christchurch, furnish all funeral requisites and conduct funerals at extremely moderate rates, and in a very satisfactory manner generally to those who employ them.

The private reflections of the "educated native" upon the proposal to throw part of the cost of the Egyptian expedition upon the Indian finances are probably of a somewhat bitter and sarcastic kind. The contribution of this country to the Afghan War Bill may seem to him dearly bought if it involves the implication of India in the European quarrels of the Empire. It must be confessed that there is a peculiar infelicity about the arrangement now proposed. We are now proposing to saddle India with part of the cost of a war in which no native can feel himself directly interested, except by going through a circuitous process of reasoning, involving some propositions not entirely self-evident. This is one of the consequences of governing by sentiment. Neither England nor India, but Egypt, ought to pay the expenses of restoring to Egypt the incalculable blessings of settled government and honest administration.—*Statist*