

## R E E F T O N .

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

February 21, 1894.

EVENTS have been the reverse of interesting here during the past few months. The epidemics—influenza and impunctuousness—have made the residents of Reefton low in health and low in spirits. Christmas and New Year have passed away like a tale that is told—and not a very pleasant tale either. People seem to have exhausted all their energy in one supreme and spasmodic effort during the late electoral contest, and when the campaign was over and victory assured a reaction set in, a collapse took place, and everybody has remained in a state of comatose limpress ever since.

The Sisters of Mercy seem to be proof against the contagion of sloth and apathy that affects the rest of the population. Actuated ever by an unflagging energy, always zealous for the advancement of religion, and for increasing, extending, and multiplying their communities, they have now succeeded in establishing a branch of their Order in Westport. The superioress of the Reefton convent, accompanied by six Sisters, left for Westport about the end of January, and the new convent, a commodious and comfortable building, was formally opened at the latter place under the most encouraging auspices, the first week in February.

Rev Father Galerne, a young French priest newly ordained, has been appointed to the curacy of Reefton, and entered on his new duties about a fortnight ago—diligent, pious, meditative, and retiring, it requires no seer to prophesy that the young curate will soon become a favourite.

Quite a sensation was created here recently, by the arrival of the Rev Father Briand, who had come to pay a farewell visit, being on his way to Sydney, where he is to remain for 12 months for the benefit of his health. When it became known that Father Briand was to arrive by the evening train, the members of the choir, accompanied by several of the leading Catholics repaired to the railway station in a special conveyance to meet him. Father Briand was then driven to the presbytery, which, during his stay was literally besieged with visitors. In fact, so cordial and warm was the reception generally accorded the rev gentleman, that one would imagine he had been absent from Reefton for 11 years instead of 11 months; it speaks volumes for his personal popularity. Prior to Father Briand's departure, he was entertained at a social by the Rev Father Rolland, who did the honours in a most suave and hospitable manner. There were about 30 guests present, including choir members (past and present), and other privileged friends. Rev Father Rolland, who as host occupied the chair, proposed "Our Guest," which toast was drunk with musical honours, Rev Father Briand appropriately replying. Several songs and choruses were given during the evening, and altogether a most enjoyable time was spent, the party breaking up about half-past 11 p.m.

The Altar Society have a big undertaking on hand now—to defray the cost and erection of a statue of the Sacred Heart, which has been newly imported from France. The statue is a beautiful one, life size, and of choice, and exquisite design. It has been placed in a niche of Gothic shape, over the high altar, where it appeals to the devotion of every Catholic, and certainly adds greatly to the interior embellishment of the church, or rather of the sanctuary. This parish being specially dedicated to the Sacred Heart, last Sunday week, February 11th, was set apart for the ceremony of the benediction of the statue. Advantage was taken of the Rev Father Briand's presence in our midst to invest the occasion with all the solemnity possible. Special music had been assiduously practiced by the choir, under the leadership of Mr Lynch, with the most satisfactory results. In the morning at half-past eleven Farmer's Mass was sung, the various solos being excellently rendered, Miss Shanks particularly distinguishing herself. This young lady possesses a voice of considerable compass, flexibility and sweetness, which, with practice and cultivation will need only to be heard in order to be appreciated. It being the first Sunday in Lent, Rev Father Briand preached on the Gospel of the day—"The Temptation in the Wilderness"—that Gospel which, perhaps, more than all the others, admits of such grand and realistic elaboration, such vivid word painting. Needless to say that the subject was skilfully treated, although time permitted but a mere shadowy outline of the sublime theme. At Vespers, in spite of the inclement weather, an unusually large congregation assembled to witness the benediction of the Sacred Heart statue. The high altar and niche were profusely decorated with flowers and candles and the dazzling glow of light and colour, softened by the haze of the ascending incense—(through the mist of which the statue seemed to be animated with life) produced a strange and impressive effect. The ceremony of the benediction was performed by Rev Father Rolland, assisted by Rev Father Briand whose discourse on this occasion was delivered with a characteristic verve and earnestness indicative of deep feeling. The subject was "Charity," that true charity, which, emanating solely and entirely from the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be found only in the Catholic Church, of which Jesus Christ is the founder, and which, through that Church, and through

her only, is shed abroad over all the world. Many people, outside the one true Church have charity—that could not be denied—but if it is the real divine charity, it must proceed from only one divine source, from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as long as that Heart beats within the bosom of God's Church, so long will the burning fire of charity cast forth its rays therefrom, revivifying and regenerating mankind, and permeating through all the grades of society, through all the nations of the earth. In conclusion Rev Father Briand exhorted the congregation to act always in conformity with the teachings of their Church as propounded to them by its pastors, and besought them also to co-operate especially in every possible way with their own venerable pastor, the Rev Father Rolland, who had made so many sacrifices for them, and who had done so much to propagate amongst them a sincere and deep-rooted devotion to the Sacred Heart.

## FOUR HOURS TOO LATE.

"Oh, God! if I could recall the past three or four hours. See what trouble a man may bring upon himself all in a moment."

Mr. James Curtis and Mr. C. S. Bennet, both of San Francisco, had been intimate friends for years. Last summer they quarrelled for the first time, each accusing the other of wrong. Better thoughts prevailed and they were reconciled. But you can't undo what is once done. Memory kept the record on her slate. They avoided each other as much as possible. Still, living as neighbours, men must meet sometime. These two met in the street. The quarrel was renewed. Bitter words flew fast and thick, and Curtis, beside himself with rage, drew his pistol and shot Bennet dead on the spot. Later in the day he used the above language—so laden with self-reproach and sorrow. Yet how useless, how hopeless, how vain.

But was Curtis right in saying that trouble may come all in a moment? True, it often seems so, but is there not a deeper fact which we don't see? It matters nothing what the nature of the trouble is. Therefore let us consider a different case on the same principle.

An intelligent woman says:—"In October 1890, I had an attack of illness from which I never expected to recover. I had aching pains all over me, and a cough that nearly shook me to pieces. I obtained no good sleep night or day, and had to take to my bed. I was fed with liquid food from an invalid's cup, for I could not raise myself in bed. My heart fluttered so you could hear it beat on the pillow, and often pains struck through it as though somebody had stabbed me. I lay perfectly helpless, and could scarcely breathe. A doctor attended me over a month, but I grew weaker and weaker. Sometimes at night I was so bad he feared I would not live till morning. He called in a consulting physician, and both agreed that my condition was critical. I was fed with brandy to keep me alive. My husband and daughter stayed with me almost constantly. None of the medicines administered had any effect. I was almost at death's door.

"At this time Mrs Keeling, of Mulley, near Plymouth, a friend of mine, urged me to try a medicine called Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I procured a bottle, and after a few days I was able to take and digest sufficient food to give me some strength, and the worst symptoms were greatly abated. After having used six bottles of the Syrup my health was completely restored, and I have since felt better than for the previous thirty years. My two daughters have also been cured of indigestion by it. I will gladly answer any enquiries."

(Signed) Mrs Louise Jackson, Builders' Arms Hotel, Bridge Road, Hammersmith, London, January 11, 1892.

In the letter from which the above is an extract, Mrs Jackson further says that for over twenty years before the attack of October 1890, she had suffered from a disordered stomach and liver. She had a bad taste in the mouth, a poor appetite, and what little she ate gave her pain. She felt dull, languid, and tired, and had a miserable sinking feeling in the stomach, great pain in the chest and sides, palpitation, giddiness, and frequently fell in the street and had to be assisted home.

So we perceive that in her case a cause, long in operation, at last produced the crisis which came near ending her life. It is always thus, whether we recognise the cause or not. The crime committed by Curtis was the sudden passionate act of a man who allowed thoughts of hate and vengeance to take possession of his mind and breed the condition which made murder possible. In the very different case of this lady's illness it was an enemy of her body, indigestion and dyspepsia, which at length broke out into violence.

The lesson is the same. Watch the beginning of evil and check it while yet it may be easily controlled.

Mr W. T. Stead finds some means of making a sensation wherever he goes. In Chicago he addressed the members of the Woman's Club and denounced them as "the most disreputable women in the city," because having been favoured by Providence with all his bounteous gifts, they lived entirely for themselves. Such women, he said, were worse than the most abandoned creatures on the streets. The ladies indignantly protested, and during his subsequent stay in Chicago Mr Stead has had a lively time.

According to the *Gazetta di Venezia*, published in Venice, the commander of the forces in Liguria and Piedmont has received orders to immediately complete arming the forts on the French frontier and the batteries on the Tyrrhenian Sea. The same paper alleges that several other army corps have been ordered to be in readiness for an outbreak of war. This report has caused great excitement in Venice, where it is believed the Government has sufficient evidence to prove that France has been aiding and abetting the revolutionary movement in Sicily.