

Reformation forefathers. Father GASQUET begins by showing that the whole case in favour of WYCLIF'S direct or indirect authorship of the only two vernacular versions of the Scriptures really rests on the assumption that there was no Catholic version at all. Now in the first place there is nothing whatever in the text to suggest that the translation was made by one holding Lollard views. Nowhere are controversial passages translated so as to favour the well-known tenets of WYCLIF and his followers. Then there is the positive evidence of Sir THOMAS MORE that Catholic versions did in fact exist before WYCLIF'S time "As for old translations, before WYCLIF'S time," he writes, "they remain lawful and be in some folks' hands. Myself have seen and can show you, Bibles, fair and old, in English which have been known and seen by the Bishop of the diocese and left in laymans' hands and women's." "The whole Bible was long before his (*i.e.* WYCLIF'S) days by virtuous and well learned men, translated into the English tongue and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness, well and reverently read." This is at least conclusive evidence that in Sir THOMAS MORE'S day Catholic versions of the Bible in English did exist. The very manuscript now exhibited in the British Museum was the property of THOMAS of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, a firm friend of the Catholic Archbishop ARUNDEL. There are many instances, moreover, in which copies of the English Bible were left by wills publicly proved in the public courts of the Bishop, and others were given to churches and religious houses. Is it likely that good Catholics would make a legacy of an heretical version of the Bible or select it as a suitable gift for a monastery or convent? Further, Bishop PEACOCK, in a work specially written to confute the Lollards, or followers of WYCLIF, in all his quotations from Scripture invariably uses what is now called the WYCLIF Bible, and also takes for granted that the laity read the Scriptures. Can it be supposed that he would himself have systematically used an heretical version or allowed his flock to do so? Father GASQUET sums up the question thus:—"The ecclesiastical authorities in England so far from prohibiting the English Scriptures, most certainly approved of various copies of the actual versions now known as Wyclifite. This official, or quasi-official, approval of the version was given, be it remembered, at a time when there was a distinct prohibition, by ecclesiastical authority, enforced vigorously by the civil power, of *all* Wyclifite literature. Moreover, these copies have, in fact, in many instances come down to us from Catholic sources, whilst in no single case, so far as I can discover, has any copy been traced to a possessor of distinct Lollard opinions. In the face of the evidence the fact that the known versions were regarded as orthodox by pre-Reformation Catholics, ecclesiastical and lay, cannot be questioned. This we have also on the testimony of Sir THOMAS MORE, and to his work as to the circulation of the vernacular Scriptures in pre-Reformation times, we may add that of Archbishop CRANMER himself. The whole force of the Archbishop's argument in favour of allowing the Bible in English rests on the well-known custom of the Church, and the fact that copies were in daily use (Preface to the Bible)." In the face of such facts the truth of the statement quoted by Archbishop CANN from the well-known Anglican writer Dr. BLAUNT, will be quite apparent. "There has been much wild and foolish writing," he says, "about the scarcity of the Bible in the ages preceding the Reformation. It has been taken for granted that the Holy Scripture was almost a sealed book until it was printed in English by TYNDAL and COVERDALE, and that the only real source of knowledge respecting it before then was the translation made by WICKLIFFE. The facts are . . . that all laymen who could read were, as a rule, provided with their Gospels, their Psalter or other devotional portions of the Bible. . . . The clergy studied the Word of God and made it known to the laity; and those few among the laity who could read had abundant opportunity of reading the Bible, either in Latin or English, up to the Reformation period."

At a meeting of St. Joseph's choir on Thursday night a new set of rules, framed by the committee and approved by his Lordship the Bishop, were read by the secretary, and after some discussion formally adopted by the choir.

DURING the past week the following subscriptions to the South Dunedin Catholic Orphanage Fund have been received:—Rev. Father Fauvel (Tomuka), £1; Messrs Hurley Bros. (Wakatu),

£2 2s; Mr. Liston (Dunedin), £2 2s; A. Morrison Esq (Caversham) £1 1s; Mr. Millan, 10s. Contributions towards the erection of the Orphanage will be thankfully received by the Sisters of Mercy of South Dunedin, and by the Catholic clergy of Dunedin, and will be duly acknowledged in the columns of the TABLET.

THERE was a large attendance at the Provincial Hall last evening (says the Nelson *Colonist* of the 29th ult.), when an excellent concert and most enjoyable social, under the management of St. Mary's Church Choir, were held. The Very Rev. Father Mahoney presided, and expressed his pleasure at seeing so many present. He thanked the public for their liberal patronage and expressed a hope that all present would enjoy themselves. Songs were contributed by Mrs. Howe, Miss Larkins, Mrs. A. P. Burns, Mr. A. Light and Mr. Corrigan. The vocalisation was decidedly good, and several of the singers (Mrs. Howe, Miss Larkins and Mr. A. Light) were recalled. A pianoforte duet was well played by the Misses Scott, and Mr. Light gave a cello solo and a mandoline solo, a repetition of the latter being demanded. The selections given by Mr. Martin's orchestra were very enjoyable and the performers well merited the applause accorded. It is a great failing with many persons comprising Nelson audiences as soon as orchestral music is begun for them to start talking as hard as ever they can, consequently the sweetest parts of the music are often marred by the hum of voices. Those who do not care for orchestral music might keep quiet and let those enjoy it who like music, and at the same time show some respect to the players. The orchestral music given last evening was a decided treat. The Very Rev. Father Mahoney thanked those who had contributed to the programme, also to the captain of the barque Brussels for the loan of a large number of flags with which the hall was decorated. The committee of ladies and gentlemen handed round the refreshments and did all they could to add to the enjoyment of the numerous company.

ON Thursday of last week Mr. Thomas Dixon died at his residence, Feilding, in his sixty-seventh year. He bore his last illness with great fortitude and resignation. Despite the closest care and attention by doctor and relatives, and the unremitting attention of his family he succumbed, dying the death of the just soon after he received Holy Viaticum and the last rites of the Church. Everyone brought into contact with him during his last illness was struck by the patience and resignation displayed by the deceased during the whole time of his illness. He served fully 21 years in the Artillery and was one of the first pioneers of the Feilding Block settlers. He was much esteemed and respected by all in Feilding, and all denominations had a kind word for him—all admiring his straightforwardness, honesty and integrity. He passed away calmly and peacefully on Thursday after his spiritual director had attended him.—R.I.P.

A HOME exchange is responsible for the following:—The Earl of Ranfurly, the new Governor of New Zealand, is taking out a large party consisting of 30 people. They sailed from Greenock on July 3, and will travel *via* Canada, Vancouver, Honolulu, Fiji, Sydney, and thence to Wellington. They have an enormous quantity of baggage with them, consisting of four carriages, 600 cases of wines and all kinds of sporting appliances, for there is good fishing, a kind of salmon running up to 30lb. being very abundant. Deer and wild duck and pheasant are also plentiful. Lord and Lady Ranfurly propose camping out a great deal, for which purpose they are taking several tents; altogether they have more than sixty tons of baggage. Lord Ranfurly has been to New Zealand twice and to Australia three times. He was the first to start fruit-farming in Australia. His fruit farm at Mildura on the Murray river is in a very flourishing condition. Lady Ranfurly's two pretty daughters, Lady Constance and Lady Eileen Knox, are going out, but Lord Northland will remain in England to continue his studies at Eton." This little par is simply delightful in the news it conveys. The salmon up to 30lb. is good, but far better and more important is the intelligence we gain that Lord Ranfurly was the "first to start fruit-farming in Australia."

THE announcement that the Assistant-Bishop of Sydney has recovered from his severe illness, says the *Freeman* of July 24, will be welcomed, we are sure, not only in the Sydney diocese, but throughout New South Wales and in the neighbouring colonies. It is, perhaps, not quite correct to use the word recovered. This, however, we are in a position to state, that his Lordship has happily reached a stage of convalescence at which all cause for alarm disappears. On Tuesday Dr. Higgins left by steamer for Northern Queensland. The change to a warmer climate was ordered by his medical attendant. There is every reason to hope that, after a few weeks' rest and "health-making" in Queensland, his Lordship will return to his duties in Sydney with renewed energy and increased strength.

Smoke T. C. Williams' JUNO TOBACCO.
COMPARE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF STICKS.