

We have said that statesmen are slow to learn the lesson that a holy and indissoluble monogamy is the firm foundation of the family and of the State. Others have, however, learned the lesson—to wit, those who would upset Christian civilisation and the present social order. They fully recognise the fact that to strike effectively at the structure of our present civilisation, they must begin by destroying the Christian conception of the family. Thus, in the French Revolution the National Convention revived the pagan idea of marriage, reduced it to a purely civil contract, terminable by the decree of a secular court. This was in Year I. of the Republic. In Year II. they placed illegitimate children upon a footing of almost complete equality with those born in lawful wedlock. And their *doctrinaires*—such as ROUSSEAU and CAMBACERES—by speech and writing did what lay in their power to crush out of the hearts of the people every sentiment of religion which made for self-restraint, domestic morality, and a true home life. Christianity ennobled marriage into a sacred and sacramental contract, elevated woman, and made her the queen of the household. The Revolution sought to degrade woman to the position she held under paganism. Here is what ROUSSEAU says :

Women are specially made to please men. . . All their education should be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to bring them up when young, to take care of them when grown up, to counsel, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and pleasant—these, in all ages, have been the duties of women, and it is for these duties that they should be educated from infancy.

ROUSSEAU would, in addition, permit woman no religious freedom or rights of conscience. In a word, he would make her the slave and plaything of man. In the circumstances, there is a wondrous appositeness in the words of MERIVALE in his *Conversion of the Northern Nations* :—

If a man denies Christianity, he will straightway deny the spiritual claims of woman. So threaten all modern unbelief and scepticism. To the woman, the denial of the Gospel would be at once a fall from the consideration she now holds among us. She would descend again to be the mere plaything of man, the transient companion of his leisure hour, to be held loosely as the chance gift of a capricious fortune.

There is much in the intellectual and moral condition of our time which recalls, by no undue stretch of fancy, the decadent state of Rome before its fall. We have around us a like decay of supernatural belief ; a contempt for authority in religion ; a similar doubt or denial of the bases of the moral order ; a similar disregard of the unity and sanctity of the marriage bond : an even more portentous rebellion against the most sacred duties and responsibilities of wedlock. If the family is the foundation and morality the strength of a nation, those are, collectively, the symptoms which might lead us to not unreasonably anticipate a great social upheaval. If it comes, it will be complete and terrible. For—in the words of LILLY—‘the destroyers would not be simple and uncorrupted races, with strong, broad notions of right and wrong, with keen susceptibility to the influences of religion, but decivilised men, emancipated from moral and spiritual restraints, and ruled solely by brute instincts and passions :

Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes.’

DIocese of DUNEDIN.

Arrangements have been made by the Rev. Father McMullen Port Chalmers, to give a social to the committee and stallholders at the recent bazaar, in recognition of the good work performed by them.

The Christian Brothers' School breaking-up ceremony will take place in St. Joseph's Hall on the evening of Friday, December 15. A competitive programme is being prepared. The items will include contests in solo singing, elocution, and gymnastics.

The devotion of the Forty Hours' Adoration will begin at St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, on Friday morning, when Solemn High Mass will be celebrated at nine o'clock. There will be special sermons on Friday and Sunday evenings, and on Sunday at 11 o'clock Solemn High Mass. The devotion will be brought to a close at Vespers on Sunday evening.

A well attended meeting was held in St. Joseph's Hall on Friday night for the purpose of making arrangements for the annual picnic in connection with the parish schools. The Rev. Father Murphy presided, Rev. Father O'Donnell being also present. After a general discussion it was decided to hold a combined school picnic at an early date, the spot selected being the Seminary grounds at Mosgiel. A strong committee was formed for the purpose of arranging details, preparing a sports programme and other matters.

A Palmerston South correspondent writes : One of the best entertainments given for years in Palmerston was witnessed in the Town Hall on Wednesday evening, November 29, by a very large audience. The object of the entertainment was to raise funds to renovate the local Catholic Church. The performers, who were all local people, acquitted themselves in a very creditable manner. Most of the items were deservedly encored. During the interval the Rev. Father Lynch thanked the performers for their services so kindly, and so admirably rendered. Financially the entertainment was a very great success, the sum of £20 being realised.

The Tasmanian *Monitor* of November 17 publishes another letter from the Rev. Father Kelsh descriptive of various portions of the Dunedin diocese, which he visited whilst here some weeks ago. Of his visit to Queenstown he says :—Though Queenstown on Lake Wakatipu has only a population of a few hundreds and the Catholic quota is small in consequence, the household of the faith deserves great credit for the energy shown in the cause of religion and education. A very handsome and substantial stone church, the finest building in the town, has been erected within the last few years on a commanding site through the exertions of the worthy pastor, Father O'Donnell and his generous flock. To raise £2,300 among so quiet and scant a population speaks well for priest and people, and the building is one of which they are justly proud. Adjoining the Church is a Convent of Dominican nuns with boarding and primary schools. The number of non-Catholic pupils attending proves how well every class and creed prize the education imparted by the Sisters.

St. Mary's Convent School, East Gore, was examined on November 16, by Inspector Braik (says the *Southern Standard*). The following is the Inspector's report :—Class Subjects.—Grammar, satisfactory. History, fair. Geography (of Standard II.), very good indeed. Elementary science and object lessons, fair. Mental arithmetic, good. Additional Subjects.—Repetition and recitation, very good indeed. Drill and exercises, excellent. Needlework—the garments made by the pupils make an excellent display. Comprehension of the language of reading lessons, satisfactory in the lower and good in the upper classes. Singing, excellent. The pupils of Standards IV., V., and VI. are more or less weak in arithmetic, but in other respects they have passed a very satisfactory examination in the standard subjects. Writing, drawing, and composition may be singled out as being very good indeed. The weakness shown in arithmetic is, no doubt, due to the unsatisfactory nature of the attendance of the majority of the pupils. The additional subjects have been taught with pre-eminent success, while the class subjects have received a satisfactory amount of attention. The infants have made good progress. The pupils promoted in Standards I. and II. have passed a satisfactory examination. Conduct and manners are very good.

WEDDING BELLS.

CASSIN—THORNE

A marriage ceremony took place at St. Patrick's Cathedral last Tuesday morning (says our Auckland correspondent), the contracting parties being Mr. Wm. Cassin and Miss M. Thorne. The Rev. Father Buckley performed the ceremony in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends of the young couple. Father Buckley celebrated the Nuptial Mass. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. Arthur Thorne, her father through illness being unavoidably absent. Mr. F. Cassin was best man, and Mr. C. Thorne groomsmen. The bridesmaids were Misses Teresa and Rose Thorne. The bride was neatly attired in a grey costume with hat to match, the bridesmaids in pink muslin. The wedding breakfast was served at the residence of the bride's parents. The party subsequently accompanied the happy couple to Onehunga whence the latter left for Waikuku, where they spend the honeymoon.

OBITUARY.

MR. JOHN MULVIHILL, KUMARA.

An old and respected resident of Kumara passed away on Saturday week, in the person of Mr. John Mulvihill. The deceased (reports the local *Times*) was a native of Listowel, County Kerry, Ireland, and was 67 years of age. He arrived in Victoria in 1854, and worked as a miner on the Woolshed, Ovens district, Victoria, and was one of the first pioneers of the Otago goldfield. He arrived in Hokitika early in 1864. The deceased was amongst those who established the Hibernian Society in Kumara. Mr. Mulvihill took an active part in local affairs, and was for a number of years member of the Borough Council and the Hospital Board. The deceased leaves a wife and grown up family—a son and daughter—to mourn their loss.

THE GENERAL ELECTION.

As we go to press the General Election is proceeding throughout the Colony. As we said last week the event is not creating that amount of interest which would be expected, the cause being no doubt due to no well-defined programme being put forward by either side. A large number of electors look upon the contest as a struggle between parties for possession of the Treasury benches. Three members have already been elected unopposed—namely, the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, the Hon. Captain Russell, and the Hon. John McKenzie.