

STONE's testimony as to the non existence of "Russell Ready" is confirmed by a telegram from Sergeant Conn, the police officer resident in Palmerston. Sergeant Conn, in answer to an inquiry, wires as follows:—"No person named Russell Ready living in Palmerston district." The person signing himself "Russell Ready" in a letter to the *Otago Daily Times*, is, therefore, liar as well as coward.

AN OAMARU LETTER.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

December 22, 1890.

AN event that is always looked forward to by the public of Oamaru and district with more than ordinary amount of interest took place here in St. Joseph's schoolroom on Wednesday evening last. When I tell you I refer to the annual entertainment given by the Dominican nuns your readers will not be surprised that such interest as I have mentioned is manifested in what is regarded here as, and what is without doubt always, the musical and dramatic treat of the year of the "White Stone City." Long before the hour appointed for the commencement of the entertainment arrived, the capacious schoolroom was crowded to excess, and when the curtain went up precisely at 8 o'clock there was not even standing-room available. A sparkling operetta, entitled "Dick Whittington," by the pupils of St. Joseph's School, which was acted and staged splendidly, opened a fine programme. Heller's "Tarantelle," as played on three pianos by the Misses Hanning, Dooley, and Proctor, was a real musical treat, the execution being admirable and particularly noticeable. This fine performance served to form an indication of what was to be expected later on, and in this expectation the audience were not destined to disappointment. Miss Haggie deserved the applause which greeted her rendering of Warner's "To the Woods." This young lady sings with an ease and naturalness that many of our local amateur vocalists would do well to imitate. A galop, "Qui Vive," carefully played on three pianos by the Misses E. and L. Grave, de Lambert, Reid, G. Richmond, and B. Davey followed, and was re-demanded. "May Bells," a very pretty but rather difficult vocal duet was sung with finish and expression by the Misses Proctor and Hanning. The next item on the programme was, however, the piece *par excellence* of the evening. I refer to Rossini's overture to "Semiramide" brilliantly played on three pianos by the Misses Dooley, Hanning, L. Grave, and L. and W. de Lambert. These young ladies deserve special mention for their splendid execution and first-class interpretation of the above very difficult composition—which is one that it requires more than the average pianist to play, a fact which but serves to demonstrate the merit of their fine performance, which must have been the result of assiduous practising. Cowen's "The Children's Home" with violin *obligato* by Miss Hanning was sung by Miss Proctor with that young lady's customary ability. Gorla's "March Triumphale" splendidly played on two pianos by Misses Hanning and Proctor brought the musical portion of the entertainment—to the regret of a great many—to a close. However these regrets were quickly dispelled in the amusement which followed. A comedietta in two acts bearing the title of "Miss Carnduff's next of kin" as played by the young ladies whose names are mentioned hereafter was to use a familiar term "an immense success," and would "take" under the same conditions almost anywhere. The principal characters Fanny, Mildred, Sheila and Biddy were entrusted respectively to the Misses Proctor, Hanning, Richmond, and Dooley, who deserve commendation for the able manner in which they, one and all, acquitted themselves. The dramatic ability displayed by those whose names I have mentioned would be no disgrace to the members of any professional troupe, a sentiment which found expression in the mouths of many at the termination of the performance, and justly so. The minor characters were sustained by the Misses Cleland, B. and G. Richmond, and White, who made the most of their respective parts. The singing of "All Hail Zealandia," by the pupils of St. Joseph's brought to a termination one of the most successful entertainments ever given here. The zealous order of St. Dominic are to be congratulated on the success which has rewarded their labours—which could not have been by any means light—in their endeavour to place before the public such an exceedingly high-class entertainment, and the residents of Oamaru, in turn, are to be congratulated on having resident in their midst such exponents of music and the drama as the members of this order undoubtedly are, proofs of which have been afforded on innumerable occasions. I trust the financial result was as satisfactory to the promoters as their entertainment was to the audience. If such were the case, I think they would be by no means disappointed, rather, I should say, their most sanguine expectations would be more than realised.

A supplementary bazaar to liquidate the debt remaining on the Convent buildings here takes place in the Athenaeum Hall on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd January next (when I have no doubt the public will show their gratitude to the nuns for providing them with entertainments such as I have just described, and their children with education that will fit them to take honourable positions in life), by coming to the bazaar in numbers, each giving his or her mite towards reducing the debt on such a deserving institution, and thereby relieving the nuns of what must be to them a serious encumbrance.

The harvest this year promises to be a very poor one here. What with hot, scorching winds, and no rain worth mention for months, the outlook is a very poor one. The local papers are at the present time crowded with letters from correspondents, each one suggesting a different method by which rain may be obtained: Some evidently of a religious turn of mind suggests recourse to prayer in the various churches, whilst others apparently devoid of religion scout this idea as ridiculous, and suggest the firing of cannons, guns, and, in fact, anything that will create a noise. I think some of them would have the hardihood to suggest letting off a packet of crackers. All I say is let us hope for the best.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

(Nelson Colonist, December 13.)

BENEVOLENT theorists and official busybodies for some time past devoted themselves to running down the system, and consequently the services to humanity rendered under it, in accordance with which our Orphanages and Industrial Schools have been conducted. The cry of both was, that neglected and orphan children ought on no account mingle in the same institution with those convicted of any crime. At the first blush there seems to be something so fair and just in the proposition that many a sensible man has been hurried into assenting to it without enquiry. To many it presented itself as a self-evident proposition, which to question or deny implied defective reasoning faculties. In the course of the discussion in the Legislative Council on a Bill dealing with Industrial Schools, it was proposed to add a clause that would have made it necessary to provide new institutions to receive the one class or the other, as it was intended to make their continuance under the same roof unlawful. Fortunately there were present some who were not prepared to surrender their judgments at the bidding of either enthusiasts or officials, so a Committee was appointed to enquire fully into what is now done, and as to the need, or otherwise of the changes demanded. A great mass of evidence was taken, and it is nothing more than the bare truth to say, that by far the most important witness, the only one, in fact, who spoke on every branch of the question with the authority and weight of personal experience, was our much respected fellow citizen, the Very R.-v. Father Mahoney. On the surface there was the difficulty of drawing the line between the neglected and the criminal; and next of dealing with the still more intricate problem of the circumstances under which, and the probabilities of the reformation of infants condemned as wicked because they had been before a Court. No one denied or could deny that, except in rare instances, the pure babes, as they were styled, who had not been found guilty of a criminal act, were living in precisely the same state, with the same evil surroundings and examples as those it was thoughtlessly, yet cruelly, sought to stamp with the infamy of a repulsive name. These dreadful offenders were guilty of the unpardonable sin of being caught. It was proved that, as a rule, the great majority of both classes were from dwellings—homes they could seldom be truly called—of the same description. Their associates were the same; they revelled in the same gutters; and their petty pilferings were shared. Father Mahoney, by his plain, direct statement, upset the proposals of those as ignorant of the management of Industrial Schools as of all else pertaining to reformation in preference to punishment. His long experience and sympathetic observation showed him that separation from vicious surroundings is as effectual for good where a child happens to have been before a Magistrate as with one whose fortune it is to have escaped detection. In no true sense can children of tender years, who have broken a law whose very existence was unknown to them, be called criminals. When admitted to that noble institution so long under Father Mahoney's fostering care, those who have been convicted are informed that all knowledge of their misconduct will be confined to those in charge. Thus all are on the same footing at entry as to character, and in their subsequent conduct no difference is to be discovered. The neglected are in no way injured, while the criminal emerges without taint, and conducts himself as well as those it was alleged he would certainly corrupt. A practical refutation of the speculative doctrine of the necessity of separation is found in the fact, that the applicants for boys trained at Stoke are always in excess of the number whose time has expired. The Committee was convinced how excellent a work was being done, and in their report approved the methods now in force as tending to good.

THE WAREROOMS OF MESSRS. A. & T. INGLIS.

MESSRS. A. & T. INGLIS, George street, Dunedin, have recently completed alterations and improvements by means of which their establishment has been placed in a position hardly to be surpassed by that occupied by any house of business in the colonies. The warerooms cover a vast space of ground, and are fitted up in a style that may defy rivalry. Provision, also, has been made for abundance of light, and intending purchasers need be under no apprehension respecting the facilities given for judging of the things offered for sale. The principal warerooms are on the ground floor, where goods to suit all possible requirements are shown in almost endless variety. There are, besides, two galleries, one on the first and another on the second story, both of unusual size, and also filled with the excellent stock of the firm. These galleries, which, indeed, may be looked upon more as large and roomy apartments than galleries properly so called, owing their claim to be galleries only to the wide opening in the middle, by which the rooms on the ground floor are lighted from the skylights above, are reached by broad and convenient flights of stairs. A similar flight we may add, leads from the upper gallery on to the roof, which is flat and leaded—and whence a fine view is obtained of the city and the surrounding scenery. The sky-lights which are extensive, are on the plan of those by which the saloon of a ship is lighted. The manner also in which the building is finished on the inside does infinite credit to all those who had any part in it. Both the design and workmanship are admirable. As to the stock by which the establishment is filled it is almost sufficient of itself to furnish an exhibition. The question, in fact, is not what does it, but what does it not, contain? Drapery and millinery; clothing of all kinds; furniture from the most luxurious articles that can grace a drawing-room, to the ordinary necessities of the kitchen; bedding and bedsteads; delft and china; the useful and the ornamental; pictures, nick-nacks—everything in short. The need must be unique and the taste whimsical which cannot be satisfied by what is to be found here. The establishment, indeed, is worth a visit, even if the only object be to witness the wonders that enterprise is capable of performing.