

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

THAT "all is quiet on the Potomac" is about all that can be said concerning affairs in our staid little city at present. This winter has brought more than ordinary wintry stagnation to all classes of business. The effects of the last bad season and of the strike at the beginning of the summer are being severely felt. When the farmers in Canterbury suffer, trade in Christchurch almost dies. However, people are looking hopefully forward for better times when the winter will be over, though, indeed, while the Colony continues to become daily more and more depopulated it is difficult to see how any great change in regard to existing depression can take place. In some parts of the world all the social troubles arise from a superfluity of population. In this Colony the majority of our troubles, social and financial, is due to a deficiency of population. In some of the big cities of the Old world, in dirty slums and stifling lanes, there are human beings who never saw a green field or smelled fresh country air in the whole course of their lives. There is no room for them in the country. They must herd in the towns. Here we have miles and miles of magnificent untilled land, which, properly utilised, would grow sheep and wheat enough to feed the surplus population of Europe, and there are no people to put a spade or a plough into it. The spare land is at this side of the world. The natural heirs, according to socialist ethics, to it are at the other. To get matters straight some kind of barter, with human beings and acres as the exchangeable commodities, should be arranged between the Old World the New. There is no use in our growing sheep and wheat, tinning rabbits, and making Kaiapoi and Moesiel suits, when we have no one to eat the one species of goods or to wear the other.

But though the times are bad there has been sufficient money forthcoming to restore the top of the Cathedral spire. The work is going on apace, and in a short time our great architectural glory will have assumed its former graceful appearance. While the men are at work, as they ascend and descend the long ladders which are suspended around the tower they seem to be about the size of children.

The Theatre has been closed for months. There has been no dramatic company here for a long time. The visit of Madame Patey has been the only rift in our cloudy theatrical firmament for many months. We shall soon forget what a drop scene is like.

Among the names in the death list last week there is that of Mr. Harold Hassal, a young gentleman who was well known in athletic circles. He was employed in one of the banks here, and was, I think, well known down south. He caught typhoid fever in Wellington, and returned home only to die. He expired on Saturday morning. In Mr. Hassal there has died a manly man and a thorough gentleman.

If there are scattered anywhere throughout New Zealand just now a few millionaires who are anxious to leave several hundreds of thousands of pounds to charitable institutions, and are in search of needy and deserving recipients upon whom to bestow their bounty, I can supply them with the necessary information. Right here in Christchurch, as a Yankee would say, is just the place to dispose of a couple of sackfuls of sovereigns. The main outlets for practical charity in Catholic religious matters just now are a collection for the Brothers' house, an art-union for the Brothers' house, and a bazaar for St. Mary's. All philanthropists who are interested in the proper housing of the poor, should forward at once a handsome donation for the Brothers' house. The Brothers are certainly poor, and they have unquestionably been very badly housed. The kind-hearted Christians who intend to forward their cheques for the Brothers' house, cannot do better than trump one good act with another and enclose a second donation for St. Mary's. Father Lemanant has had up-hill work in his new parish. It is a poor and scattered parish, and he has many difficulties to contend with. Ladies in Canterbury or beyond it who have leisure to do either plain or fancy needle work, could not do better in their spare time than to utilise a portion of it in making some small thing as a gift to this poor little hard-up church of Our Lady. On Sunday morning Father Marone acknowledged the receipt of donations in money and work from various Convents. Among these were mentioned parcels from the Dominican nuns, Convents on the West Coast, the Barbadoes street nuns, and the nuns at Lyttelton.

At eleven o'clock Mass at the pro-Cathedral Father Aubrey announced that the Bishop would shortly return to his diocese, and that it would be desirable to make him a presentation upon his arrival. He hoped that the project would be taken up warmly throughout the diocese. I heartily echo Father Aubrey's wish. If the matter be taken up in the manner in which it deserves to be, a very substantial proof of his people's affection should await the Bishop upon his return. During his residence here, short though it was, Bishop Grimes made himself thoroughly loved by his people, and most loved by those who knew him best. He is as cultured and as true-hearted a gentleman as any who ever wore the mitre, and has completely won, and well merits, the esteem and affection of his flock. Any thing which can be done to make him feel upon his return that he is heartily welcomed home again should not be left undone. The

Bishop's health has been completely restored, and it is anticipated that he will arrive here in August or early in September.

Mr John Joyce is trying his best to increase the facilities for untying the matrimonial knot. Most people who know much about the minor workings of society in our little colony, will, I fancy, conclude that the matrimonial bond does not require to be further weakened.

Dublin Notes.

(From the National Papers.)

MR PINKERTON, M. P., speaking at a "National Federation" meeting at Omagh said "he would tell them, as a Protestant, that he would rather see Ireland handed over to the control of the bishops and priests of Ireland than given over to Mr Parnell and his followers.

The selection of a candidate for East Belfast is causing much excitement in Conservative circles in Belfast. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Belfast Conservative Association the following names were selected—Sir William Charly, Q. C., Colonel Calmont, the Solicitor-General, Messrs G. W. Wolfe, and James Henderson. A sub-committee of the Association has been appointed in order to select a candidate from the above list, so as to prevent the possibility of a contest.

"Sir Peter O'Brien, Bart," is now the title of the Castle official so widely known as "Pether the Packer." The time must soon come when we shall see an end of this rotten system of measuring the bestowal of "honours" by the unpopularity of the recipients. The system of making the Bench the reward of political unscrupulousness has rendered the Irish judiciary an object of laughter and contempt to the outside world. There are, no doubt, some Irish judges who, by their knowledge of the law and their ability, are entitled to the position they occupy, and to these the promotion of political adventurers is an insult and a degradation. The Castle may call Mr. O'Brien "Sir Peter," or "My Lord Chief Justice," but to the country he remains the Packer and the Benegade, while his colleagues on the Bench will never regard him as anything but a legal failure.

His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, in a letter published in the *National Press*, proposes that the Catholic clergy shall take up the work advocated by the Papal Encyclical in establishing boards of arbitration for the settlement of trade disputes. As we are threatened with another season of strikes, his Grace's letter comes most opportunely to point the way of peaceful settlement. Much has been accomplished in the past by the mediation and judgment of eminent men to put an end to the fierce labour battles that so constantly arise; but time, and often opportunity, is lost in the appointment and selection of mediators acceptable to both masters and men. We hope, therefore, that the proposal by the Archbishop will be heartily taken up and will result in the establishment of a representative tribunal that may be effective in saving our towns from the paralysis occasioned by social strife.

Judging by his Glasgow speech, Lord Salisbury is already more than half a convert to Home Rule. He was once, we believe, described as a lab painted to look like iron. Despite an appearance of firmness, he is undoubtedly a very pliable politician, and it is not improbable that, finding the Home Rule current to be too strong for the Conservatives throughout the country, he is thinking of yielding to it. He told his Glasgow auditors that he should like to give to the municipal authorities the very utmost powers—accompanying them with certain precautions in Ireland—to deal with all legislation that is of a businesslike character. Does his Lordship intend to dish the Liberals? If he adopts a Home Rule programme we shall see some strange and sudden conversions. Gentlemen such as Lord Fielding who are now proclaiming that Home Rule would mean the destruction of the empire, will then discover that it could not fail to prove an eternal blessing.

Mr Foreman, secretary for Ireland to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, was examined lately before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the hours of labour of railway servants. Mr Foreman, in reply to a member of the committee, gave several instances where the Irish railway servants have worked for fourteen hours per day consecutively for six days. He further stated that in one case an engine-driver and fireman worked for twenty hours at one time in driving from Letterkenny to Enniskillen and back. In Drogheda a night watchman worked for thirteen hours every day for the 365 days of the year, and had to perform the duties of a stationmaster, booking-clerk, watchman, and signalman during that time. In reply to a member of the Committee, he said the railway workers of Ireland whom he represented were unanimous for a uniform ten hours' day; and, in answer to a further question, he stated, in reference to overtime, that payment, therefore, would tend largely to check the practice of overtime.

"Whatever else these returns may or may not prove," says the *Northern Whig*, referring to the Irish Census returns, "they show at least that rebellion, or disloyalty, or even Nationalism, does not