

CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART, NORTH-EAST VALLEY, DUNEDIN.

THE opening of this church took place on Sunday, but under rather unfavourable circumstances, owing to the setting in the evening before of an obstinate and heavy down-pour—which only now, on Monday afternoon, shows some faint but possibly deceptive signs of clearing up. The attendance, however, to all appearances was not interfered with, as many people being present as the church could conveniently accommodate. Among them we noticed his Worship the Mayor and Mrs Chapman, and several members of the congregations of St Joseph's Cathedral and St Patrick's, South Dunedin. The ceremonies commenced at 11 a.m., the Bishop of Dunedin acting as celebrant of the Pontifical High Mass. The Very Rev Father Vaughan, C.S.S.B., was assistant priest, and the Very Rev Fathers Plunkett, C.S.S.B., and O'Leary were deacons at the throne. The Very Rev Father Mackay officiated as deacon of the Mass, and the Rev Father Hunt as subdeacon. The Rev Father Newport was master of ceremonies, and the Rev Fathers Donnelly, Murphy, and Lynch were also present. The sermon was preached to the following effect by the Bishop of Christchurch. The most rev preacher took for his text the Third Book of Kings, chap. ix., verse 3—"And the Lord said to him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, which thou hast made before me. I have sanctified this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always." He said he knew no more appropriate words in which to address the congregation on that solemn occasion. The words were those of the Almighty Himself. They had been addressed by Him to His anointed, and, through him, to his people. That great King had long prayed and uttered supplications that he might be permitted to build a temple worthy of Divine worship. At length his prayer had been heard, and he had not only been allowed to build a temple, but to dedicate it in triumph. God deigned to appear to him. He said, "I have sanctified this house which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever, and My eyes and My heart shall be there always." For many long years their devoted Bishop had prayed and made fervent supplication to the throne of grace that he might be permitted to build another temple, in that part of his episcopal city. He had seen wondrous things accomplished since his advent to Dunedin. Little more than 40 years ago a pioneer missionary wended his way from the diocese of Christchurch Southward. He made his journey partly on foot, and very near that spot he had offered the Divine Sacrifice. How he had yearned to see there a temple like that which was dedicated that day. Father Seon was the missionary, and in that place where he first offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, their devoted Bishop had prayed that he might build a church, and to-day his prayers had been heard. Almighty God to-day addressed their beloved pontiff in these words, "I have sanctified this house which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever, and My eyes and My heart shall be there always." These words alone ought to be enough to fill their hearts with love and gratitude. They were no human words but those of the Almighty Himself. He (the most rev preacher) had been asked to say a few words to-day, and he had thought he could not do better than inspire himself with what these words contained. Three questions were to be asked: First, was it right and necessary to build material temples; second, what was the origin of such erections, and third, what was a Catholic church more than any other material temple? Was it right to build temples? The earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the heavens showed forth the glory of God. Why was it not sufficient to pray on the mountain top, or on the hill side, or by the running brook? No matter where it was uttered, a fervent prayer would always be heard. It was objected that the Lord of heaven and earth would not dwell in temples made by hands. He was everywhere, yet it had pleased Him to appoint certain places where he made His presence known. It had been thus with regard to Jacob and Moses, and other chosen persons. Men were human beings, hence a material temple was necessary to them. God required that human beings should form a society, and be bound together by social ties. The strongest of those ties was religion. Men needed a place to meet together in worship. By a strong religious instinct they felt themselves children of one family united by the ties of religion. Man was of a twofold nature, and God dealt with him according to the necessities of that nature. If he were of the nature of the angels God would manifest Himself to him as to a spirit only. Almighty God made known His truth, His light and grace, as to a being of a twofold nature. That men might hear an expression of God's truth a pulpit was necessary; an altar was necessary for the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass; a confessional was also necessary, and for the pulpit, and altar, and confessional a priesthood was necessary. For all these a material church was needed. God did not manifest Himself to individuals. He could do so if it pleased Him, but He did not ordinarily depart from the appointed order. A priesthood was necessary. The priest was the ambassador, and, as he might be called, the mediator. It might shock some people to hear him so

named, but the term was not to be understood in the sense in which it was applied to the one true Mediator Christ Jesus, through Whom alone eternal life was to be gained. To Christ it was said that He was a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech. But He had chosen others, that what was written might be fulfilled, "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation, for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." Each priest was to be accounted a Melchisedech. In performing the acts of his ministry he acted as Almighty God's deputy. His power was from God, but in giving absolution in the confessional, and in speaking at the altar the awful words of consecration he acted as the minister of Almighty God. Hence a material temple was necessary. What was the origin of a material temple. At the creation, no special place was appointed, the vast universe formed one temple, and man was its fitting priest and pontiff in offering to God the first fruits of his labour and his life. Every home was God's sanctuary. But faith diminished as men increased in number. Almighty God commanded that a special place should be set apart. He ordered the construction of the Tabernacle in the deserts of Arabia, and Himself deigned to describe how it should be made. It was to be made of choice woods, and Egyptian linen, and the skins of animals, and lined with gold and silver and precious stones, and when it had been set up, God came in a mysterious cloud to receive the homage of the people. Five hundred years later, the great king yearned to build a temple, and when he had obtained an answer, preparations were made for long years, and never did mortal eye gaze on so splendid a building. Eight days were spent in the dedication, and Almighty God spoke and said:—"I have sanctified this house which thou hast built to put my name there for ever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always." Two men, Beseleel and Ooliab, had been endowed with wisdom as architects of the Tabernacle, and after Almighty God had commanded that victims should be offered, more than 20,000 beasts were sacrificed. The Tabernacle was as worthy of its object as anything on earth could be. Yet all its wonders were but figures and shadows of the church now erected and dedicated by their venerable pontiff. These were the words of Holy Writ. The Apostle declared that all these things were figures and types of the Catholic church. When their Blessed Lord was about to fulfil His promise of dwelling with His people, He sent two of His Apostles to choose a large place, well furnished. Why did He deviate from His usual custom? He had said that He had not where He might lay His head. Yet He now ordered a large place to be fitted up. It was because He was going to give an example. When there was question of a church of God, no means should be spared of making it worthy of the presence of their Divine Lord. The early Christians for 300 years offered the sacrifice in the catacombs, but, when persecution ceased, the promptings of the Catholic faith led to the erection of grand and glorious churches. As if by magic the towers of grand cathedrals arose. In the land from which they came the ruins of these churches were solemn but speaking witnesses to the Catholic faith.—Every village and every hamlet had its church towering above all other buildings. The most rev speaker went on to describe St John's vision, related in the Apocalypse, of the New Jerusalem. The Catholic church, he continued, was not in the ordinary acceptation of the words a mere house of prayer. It was something more—it was the place in which the King of Kings resided. He was present there in the Blessed Sacrament. Many miracles were worked there. They who ministered in the confessional, the pulpit, and at the altar were witnesses of many marvels. The Samaritan woman came there; the Magdalen came there, and the poor woman condemned by Pharisaical accusers, the paralytic came, and those suffering from every infirmity. Was it not rightly called a royal residence? It was also a house of refuge, where the sin-laden soul came to find rest. The Catholic knew how he could find in the King of Kings a father and a friend. He knew how the weight of his sin was loosed in the confessional. The foul fiend, if he could, would prevent his entering the church, but he gave no heed to his temptations. He entered there and he came forth forgiven. He found comfort there, amid joys too great to be uttered, at the door of the tabernacle. There he ate of the bread of life, which would raise him up on the last day. Was it not, then, a house of refuge, a home, and did not the Catholic feel himself at home there? In the world outside there were distinctions in rank. The rich despised the poor, and the learned despised the ignorant. But in the church all such distinctions were forgotten. There was neither high nor low, rich nor poor, but all were equal—all were the children of God. All were united in the faith—all felt the meaning of the *Credo*. In former days all united in the work of building a Catholic Church, the prince laboured by the side of the peasant, the learned beside the unlearned. The priests, as generals, encouraged the people—there was no hurry among them, they worked for God, and felt the time was sufficient, and they handed on their task to their children. Faith inspired men of genius to guide them. They gave freely, and the children finished the work that their fathers had begun. This alone could explain the completion of those magnificent cathedrals. The