

OMAKAU

A most successful concert in aid of the funds of the Catholic presbytery was held at Ophir on January 1 (writes a correspondent). The concert opened with a pianoforte selection by Mr. McLean. Mr. Lawson contributed 'The Irish emigrant' and other songs, which were given with much taste. Mr. Docherty sang 'Dublin Bay' and was warmly encored. Miss Anderson (Ida Valley) sang 'Mavourneen' in a very sympathetic manner, and Miss G. McBride (Rough Ridge) gave a pleasing rendering of 'The singer was Irish.' Mrs. Murphy sang very sweetly 'Forget thee.' Misses G. McBride and N. McBride contributed a duet which was very warmly applauded. The accompaniments were played by the Misses Frances Parson (Omakau) and G. Taylor (Ophir). Mr. A. Kinney acted as chairman during the evening. The proceeds will amount to about £25.

At the conclusion of the programme Rev. Father O'Dea thanked the performers, and said it was evident from the repeated encores that the performers had acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of everyone present. He also thanked the audience for their attendance. He then announced that the drawing of the art union would take place immediately, and called upon Dr. Beaucoup, Messrs. Peter Flannery, Peter Anderson, and John McLaughlin to supervise the drawing. Rev. Father Hunt (Cromwell) and Rev. Father McMullan (Ranfurly) were present, and rendered valuable assistance. Father O'Dea, before proceeding with the drawing, said that he felt deeply grateful to Catholics and non-Catholics, not only in his own district, but throughout the Colony, who had so generously responded to his appeal and enabled him to make the art union a financial success. He then announced that the money in hand up to date exceeded £400, a statement that was received with warm applause by the meeting.

A list of the winning numbers in the art union appears elsewhere in this issue.

As will be seen on reference to our advertising columns Miss Marie Narelle will commence the Dunedin season at His Majesty's Theatre on Monday evening next. Concerts will also be given on Wednesday, January 16, and Thursday, January 17.

This is what the Sydney 'Freeman's Journal' said of her concerts in the New South Wales capital:—Whether warbling with expressive fidelity to the mood, a humorous love song of an Irish boreen, or summoning with fiery ardour the forces of Tryconnel to the fury of the fray, as in 'O'Donnell Aboo,' Miss Narelle expresses the soul and spirit of her song. Her four years' absence has ripened, so to speak, the rich vocal qualities of her soprano voice, which she uses with all the art and effectiveness of the experienced artiste. As a singer of the ballads beloved of the Celt, she has no compeer, and in this respect she received from her own folk in Sydney a splendid endorsement of the verdict already accorded her in other lands.

A Veteran Missionary

(From our Christchurch correspondent.)

The presence in Christchurch of the cultured and courteous Rev. Father Cognet, S.M., was availed of by your correspondent to glean a little insight, for the benefit of 'Tablet' readers, into the daily life and labors of one who, for the past twenty-one years; has had the spiritual care of Maoris and Europeans alike, in localities now bearing signs of progress and advancement, but which in past times were the scenes of deadly conflict between the two races, the memories of which even to this day are the cause of deep rancor in the heart of the Maori, and a distinct barrier in many instances to his acceptance of the Christian religion. This feeling of antipathy, not to use the harder word—hatred, is deep rooted, especially in these particular parts, among the natives, but which, although the causes are not laid at the door of the Catholic Church, or markedly manifested against her missionaries, is still a real live force, that has to be faced, a species of passive resistance to all creeds, which has to be encountered, and, where possible, overcome. The Natives do not differentiate; they feel convinced that the whites are the cause of all their woes, troubles, and comparative poverty, and so are inclined to discountenance the religion of the Europeans.

It was on January 15, 1886, that Father Cognet first arrived in New Zealand, accompanied by Fathers Regnault (now Dean of Waimate), Marnane, of St. Mary's, Manchester street, Christchurch, and Aubry, of Hokitika, and it is his intention, together with the others, excepting Father Marnane (who is absent in Europe) to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the above event by fore-gathering at Waimate for the occasion. After spending eleven years on the Maori missions on the Upper Wanganui River, in Hawke's Bay, and at Otaki, he has labored during the remaining ten years on the Taranaki coast, his main centres being Okato, Pungarehu, and Opunake. He is within a few miles of historic Parihaka, and has had many interviews with the self-appointed 'prophet,' Te Whiti, also with Tohu, in some respects Te Whiti's rival. The intellectual capacity of the 'prophet' is of a very high order, and the missionary relates many incidents concerning him. Regular visits are made to the Maoris in their own hapus. The Catholics among them number several hundreds, and frequently as many as five to seven addresses in one day are delivered to them. There are many kind and good souls among them, but the 'tohungas' do an amount of mischief.

Father Cognet is an accomplished Maori linguist, and has written several books in the language for their especial use, including a 'History of the Church,' for the printing of which he some years ago went to his native country. He is engaged on other works of a literary nature, which, with his fund of most interesting knowledge of the Maori, his character, habits, and routine of daily life (a subject in which few can excel him) should prove valuable, and secure a wide circle of readers.

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