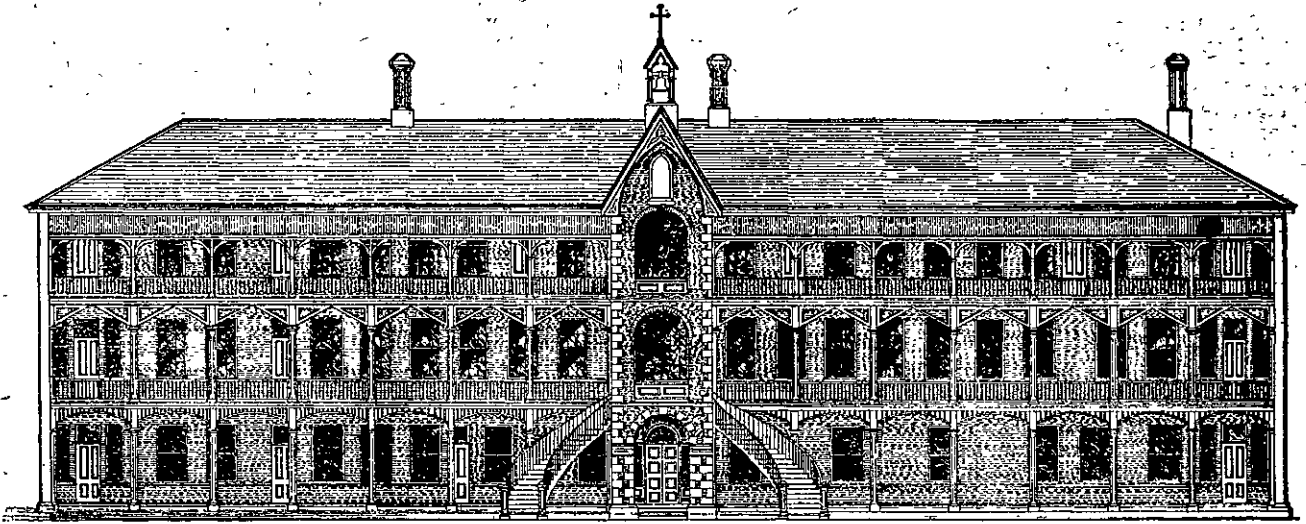


THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

A NEW HOME FOR THE AGED NEEDY

On December 8, 1904, was seen the realisation of a hope that had for a long time engaged the attention of his Lordship the Bishop of Dunedin—the opening of a home for the aged poor under the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor. The site of the home was at Anderson's Bay, and consisted of several acres of land, with a private residence. The residence was old and inconvenient in many respects for the work of the Order, but with some expenditure it was made to serve its purpose, until, as the Right Rev. Dr. Verdon said at the ceremony on Wednesday last of laying the foundation stone of a new home, the Sisters could prudently undertake the work of erecting more suitable premises. If the building was not all that could be desired, the land, on the other hand, was eminently suitable for such an institution. It is well sheltered from the prevailing winds, lies well to the sun, and commands a fine view of the harbor, the city and hills at the back, and of the ocean. The community started with one inmate in their home, now there are nearly twenty, this being the limit number they can accommodate at the present time. As the want of accommodation placed a limit to the usefulness and noble charity of the Sisters, it had been their most ardent wish for some time to commence the erection of a new home. Wednesday of last week—Labor Day—saw the commencement of the work, when the foundation stone of the new building was solemnly blessed and laid by the Right Rev. Dr. Ver-

that the good work would in a short time be brought to a favorable termination. The building would have accommodation for 70 inmates, and here the aged poor would find a happy home, in which, under the care of the good Sisters, they could end their days in peace and obtain that crowning blessing, a happy death. Some might ask who were the Little Sisters of the Poor and what were they doing? Sixty-seven years ago three pious ladies, moved with compassion for the sufferings of the homeless poor, formed the generous resolve to devote their lives to relieving the distressed. These worthy ladies had not worldly wealth to enable them to accomplish their pious design, but they generously resolved to obtain the means by the labor of their own hands, and to trust to the charity of others for the rest. Later on other ladies joined them, and in a short time they formed themselves into a society, which was approved by the Holy See and made a religious congregation. Since then God had blessed their work, and their success had been marvellous. There are at present 5435 Little Sisters of the Poor engaged in their charitable work in every part of the world. Since the establishment of the Order 2304 Sisters had died. The number of homes established up to the present time was 301, and the number of old people being cared for to-day was 44,914. During all these years of noble, glorious work, 228,426 of the aged poor had come under the care of the Sisters, and departed to a better world. The Sisters themselves were devoted to a life of true universal charity, which compassionated suffering humanity without regard to nationality or creed. They were willing to receive into their homes all nationalities, all creeds, and all denominations, and in turn they appealed to all for assist-



Front Elevation of New Home for the Aged and Infirm Poor, Anderson's Bay, Dunedin, in charge of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

don, assisted by the Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., Rev. Fathers Cleary and Corcoran, and in the presence of a large assemblage of people, including all the local and visiting clergy from Mosgiel and Port Chalmers, the Mayor of Dunedin (Mr. J. Loudon), Mr. J. M. Gallaway, the Rev. Mr. Fynes-Clinton (Anglican), and other non-Catholic sympathisers. Accompanying this report is a process book of the design of the central portion of the home; the wings are to be added later on when further accommodation is required.

The Ceremony.

At the conclusion of the blessing of the foundation stone his Lordship the Bishop, addressing those present, said that about three years ago they had welcomed the Little Sisters of the Poor to Dunedin, and established them in their new home at Anderson's Bay. During the short time that they had been here they had won golden opinions, and had gained the sympathy of all classes of the community by their zeal, earnestness, charity, and self-sacrificing devotion to duty. The temporary home then provided gave only limited accommodation, but by careful management they were able to provide for 18 or 20 aged poor. The Little Sisters of the Poor did not wish such limits to be placed to their charity, for they were often pained when obliged to refuse admission to the home of those they would have willingly received if the room had been at their disposal. From the very day the Sisters arrived in Dunedin they had been looking forward to the time when they might prudently commence the work of the new building. To-day they had laid the foundation stone of the new building, and he trusted, with God's help,

ance. Their homes were entirely supported by charity, and that charity had never failed them. It gave him very much pleasure to say that since the Little Sisters of the Poor came to Dunedin they had been treated with the utmost consideration by every class and denomination in the community, and they had received generous offerings from all denominations. They were deeply indebted to all who gave such assistance, and he (his Lordship) was greatly pleased to see members of other denominations present to encourage the Little Sisters of the Poor in their work by their presence and sympathy. He thanked the Mayor and other non-Catholic gentlemen who had come to their assistance on the occasion. His Lordship then called on the Mayor to address the meeting.

His Worship the Mayor said he was proud to be present to witness the laying of the foundation stone for such a noble work as that carried on by the Little Sisters of the Poor. Here his Worship quoted from William Penn and R. L. Stevenson on the merit of doing good to one's neighbor. Continuing, the Mayor said he took it that the object of the Little Sisters in their noble work was to make the aged happy. Sometimes the tragedy of someone being cut off in the bloom of youth was taken too seriously, but there was probably more tragedy in the life that had outgrown its usefulness and was doomed to pass a certain number of years without friends, joy, or consolation. This was the class of people that the Sisters hoped to benefit, and to enable them to pass their few declining years in comparative comfort and happiness. Anyone who was acquainted with the work carried on by the Sisters could not help being struck with

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