

tion-stone of the new buildings was laid. In the Home which they had come to assist at the opening the Sisters would make many old people happy. Since the Little Sisters had come here they had labored untiringly and with great energy and zeal for the inmates. They had provided for every kind of old people, and brought sunshine to the declining years of many who had come through storm and adversity. In the discharge of their self-imposed task they had given an example of the purest charity. Since they came to Dunedin the Little Sisters of the Poor have been treated with unvarying kindness and courtesy by all classes and denominations. The buildings have been erected at a cost of £10,000. They are 170ft in length, 52ft wide, and 68ft in height. The Home is provided with the most up-to-date heating apparatus, electric lighting, and water is laid throughout the building, and everything is done to promote the health and comfort of the old people. The Little Sisters of the Poor depend entirely on charity for the support of their charges. They had not been disappointed in the past, and they look forward with the fullest confidence to the future.

SISTERHOODS AND THE CHURCH.

His Grace the Archbishop of Wellington spoke as follows:—The Catholic Church understands woman's soul, and draws all the energies of that soul into her service as no other religious society, no other institution of any sort, has been able to do. This on the part of the Church is a token of supreme wisdom—wisdom so marvellous and so fruitful that it is a striking manifestation of the Divine guidance under which the Church lives and moves. The Church commits a large part of her works to sisterhoods; and so effectively do they perform their task that they rank among her choicest and most valuable agencies. Were these sisterhoods to disappear, we should miss from the harvest fields legions of workers whose place could never be filled, we should miss from the pages of history marvels and triumphs of religion and charity which have won for the Church the love and admiration of ages, and have most convincingly evidenced her divine life and power. The Church is the visible kingdom of Christ, and her mission is to build up His invisible kingdom in the souls of men. In this great spiritual work how precious to her is the co-operation of the sisterhoods. The potent influence of their example and of the ideals they hold up to the world is invaluable. Our frail humanity, wrapped up as it is in matter, permeated as it is with the atmosphere of passions, finds great difficulty to rise into the pure and serene region of Christian life and Christian virtue. Even the observance of the Commandments, the essential condition of adoption into Christ's kingdom, is hard to flesh and blood, and the incessant struggle which it entails easily ends in discouragement and despair. To the timid and halting the Church points out those who, by God's grace and their own firm will, rise to sublime heights of holiness far above the ordinary standard of Christian life, and says: 'If these, your fellow mortals, do so much for God and His Christ, will you not do at least the little that is required of you?' Humanity is swayed by ideals; and ideals it must have to perform its greatest of tasks, its incorporation into the kingdom of Christ. Such ideals the Church provides in the example of the noble-minded and noble-hearted portion of her children, who embody in their daily life the counsels of the Gospel and show forth in its highest and holiest forms the holiest and highest virtue of Christ and His religion. The timid and irresolute men and women who tremble before the struggle which they must undergo to keep themselves in the service of God hear the voice of the Church crying to them: 'Behold my sisterhoods! See to what sublime heights these daughters of Eve attain! Cannot you at least keep the commandments of God, while they follow out the counsels of the Saviour? Cannot you at least tread the beaten path of Christian duty, while they mount to the very summits of Christian perfection?' And what man acquainted with the sisterhoods of the Church will say that the example given by them does not contribute with supreme efficacy to the work of drawing souls to the love and service of Christ? The convents of the sisterhoods of the Church are sanctuaries of supernal life, centres of hope and inspiration to all humanity. And in creating and fostering them the Catholic Church blesses and enriches all mankind. How much this city of Dunedin is blessed and enriched by its sisterhoods of various religious Orders! First of all, in the matter of Christian education. Never more than in our-day has teaching been an imperative duty in the Church. She must impart a religious knowledge, particularly in the early years of childhood, most thorough and complete, in order to encounter successfully the dangers which beset her children on all sides. Unbelief is rife: a critical spirit is abroad questioning every doctrine of revelation, testing every stone of religion's foundations. Only by

the most careful and exact instruction in religious matters can future generations of Christians face the trials which await their faith. The air we breathe and the conversation we hear are permeated with naturalism. Where God and His Church are not ruthlessly set aside, there reigns a spirit of indifference more deadly, perhaps, than active hatred. To remain unscathed, souls must be saturated with faith; they must be prepared for the coming struggle by a thorough drilling in the principles and in the practice of their religion. Such a training demands the opportunities which are daily given by the schoolroom; it means that religious knowledge must have its place side by side with secular knowledge. And this is of especially urgent necessity in our time, because there is danger that secular instruction, if withdrawn from the influence of religion, will be impregnated with the poison of unbelief or of indifference and become a positive stumbling-block for the faith. To-day, therefore, the Church must of necessity be not only the teacher of religious truths, but also of secular knowledge. She appeals, accordingly, to her devoted sisterhoods. To their hearts and hands, in Orders like the Sisters of St. Dominic and the Sisters of Mercy, she entrusts her children, that while they endure their minds with all the graces of human knowledge, they also build them up into firm and devoted Christians. Go on, therefore, devoted Sisters, with your noble work. Teach our children the truths of earth; but teach them also the truths of heaven; fit them to discharge with credit their duties to their country and society, but also teach them to serve their God and insure their eternal salvation. The little ones of to-day will be the men and women of tomorrow. As they are fashioned now, so will they be in after-life; as they will be, so will the Church be, whose life and destiny are so closely woven with the life and destiny of her members. But the Church is not only the teacher of truth; she is also the dispenser of charity. And here what a glorious vista rises before us! Her Founder, while preaching the kingdom of heaven, went around doing good—healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the afflicted. Accordingly the Church will be a power to brighten earth and to raise humanity to higher levels of comfort and happiness. Her social work throughout the ages was no accident of her history, no assumption of a task foreign to her nature and her mission. The Church is the incarnation of the divine love which reaches every sphere of human life and human activity. Wherever she passes there must be less evil, less misery, more good, and more happiness. Men believe in the promise of bliss in heaven when they are made to feel that an earnest of this promise is given to them on earth. Do good—Christ seems to say to His Church—do good; first win the love and confidence of men by kindness and mercy, then speak to them of the world beyond, and they will hearken to your message and give it credence. Here, again, the Church appeals to her sisterhoods. She bids them open their hearts to every ill, physical and moral, with which poor humanity is smitten. She bids them feed the hungry, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, take care of the aged poor and feeble, be mothers to the motherless, friends to the friendless, consolers to the wayward and erring. She bids them build asylums for the orphaned, hospitals for the infirm, refuges for the outcast, homes for the poor and the aged. She asks them, in the full strength of their faith and love, to venture even further. When war strews the ground with writhing victims she summons them to the battlefield and the ambulance; when pestilence rages and calls for hecatombs, she bids them to be there—there where poverty and misery reign in every shape and form; wherever a hand is stretched out for mercy, there she calls them to be, and there they are, working in God's name and with God's strength—working even unto death, if need be—for suffering and sorrowing humanity. Behold the charity of Catholic sisterhoods in general, and of the Little Sisters of the Poor in particular. Where that charity is God is felt to be near. From God, indeed, must come the spirit of sacrifice, the heroic courage, the enduring patience that make such charity possible. From God come the joyousness, the saintliness which that charity sheds upon poor, forlorn humanity wherever it strokes the brow of suffering or soothes the heart of the afflicted. Yes, the work of the sisterhoods is the work of God. God alone could uplift human nature to such planes of holiness and self-immolation. But it is also the work of human nature co-operating with divine grace, and rising with it to sublime heights of sanctity and sacrifice. The achievements of the sisterhoods are the achievements and the honor of womanhood; the glory of the sisterhoods is the glory of all women. In treating and fostering her religious Orders of women, the Catholic Church has been the greatest benefactor of womankind. She exhibited rarest wisdom in her knowledge of woman—of woman's intuition of high ideals, of her power of self-sacrifice; and by calling into action the qualities of woman's mind and heart she proved her

GEO. T. WHITE
NOVELTIES AT LOWEST PRICES,

Importer, Watchmaker, Manufacturing Jeweller, Medallist
COLOMBO STREET, CHRISTCHURCH.
LAMBTON QUAY, WELLINGTON. Established 1879.