

choice made at a previous meeting of lay chairman, and congratulated Mr. W. Hobbs in his possession of the unanimous confidence of the executive committee, and also on the requisite tact, energy, and ability to worthily fill the position. The various sub-committees then met and elected their respective chairman and secretaries. The executive committee met, when it was announced that his Excellency the Governor had, in a very gracious communication, extended his patronage. His Lordship the Bishop stated that when recently going south he had met Sir J. G. Ward who was very pleased to give his patronage as did also his Worship the Mayor, Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes. Canterbury Hall has been secured for the concert, and, as previously stated, Lancaster Park for the sports meeting. Donations to the celebration were acknowledged from the Very Rev Vicar-General, £1; Mr. John Barrett, £2 2s; and Mr. M. Kavanagh, £2.

DIocese OF AUCKLAND.

(From our own correspondent.)

December 17.

Our schools break up this week. Several of them intend to mark the occasion by an entertainment.

Rev. Father Gillan, of St. Benedict's, is, I regret to say, temporarily confined to his room through illness. To one of Father Gillan's energy this enforced retirement is most galling.

'Loyal Colonial' pens a most bitter letter in yesterday's *Herald* against Mr. William O'Brien and what he dubs his 'mission'. A contemporary and celebrated writer has recently said that 'political life is an eternal crucifixion,' which aptly fits the present case.

Rev. Father Moore has resigned his curacy at St. Patrick's, and early in the new year purposes returning to Victoria. It is with deep and genuine regret that the parishioners of St. Patrick's part with Father Moore, and all unite in wishing him long life and happiness to labor in God's cause, which is so dear to his heart.

By the Mararoa which arrived from Sydney on Sunday two priests for the Maori mission from Mill Hill College, London—Rev. Fathers Langerwert and Wentzies—came to join their confreres of the Order of St. Joseph who have for many years ministered so faithfully to the natives under the care of Very Rev. Dean Lighthart.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration Committee met last Sunday afternoon in the Mariast Brothers' School, Rev. Father Patterson in the chair. It was decided to hold the sports and children's treat in the Domain, and a national concert on the evening of Irish National Festival. Through the efforts of Father Patterson an art union will be added to the programme.

The scholastic year at St. Mary's Convent High School, Ponsonby, was fittingly brought to a close last evening by a concert and presentation of prizes to the successful candidates. There was a very large attendance, and every item was well rendered and drew forth loud plaudits from the delighted listeners. The following excellent programme was given: 'March from Etti,' orchestra; chorus, pupils; piano solo, Miss Cronin; dialogue, Misses Ella Brom and A. Ralph; chorus, pupils; vocal solo, 'Sleep,' Miss Ralph; piano solo, Miss E. Brown; recitation, Miss Scully; chorus, pupils; March, 'Athalie,' orchestra; vocal solo, 'The dawn,' Miss Nazer; chorus, pupils; duet (piano), Misses Ruthven and Jones; recitation, Miss Ansley; vocal duet, Misses B. Jones and E. Brown; piano solo, Miss Mathias; chorus, pupils; mandolin solo, Miss Bray; recitation, Miss Dempsey; chorus, pupils. The certificates won at the theory examinations in music under Trinity College, London, were presented by the Very Rev. Dr. Egan, O.S.B.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday evening last his Lordship Dr. Lenihan administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 127 candidates, among whom were several adults. The church was crowded. There was also in the sanctuary Very Rev. Father Benedict, O.P.; Rev. Father Colgan, S.J. (Sydney), Rev. Fathers Patterson, Adm.; Purton, O.S.B.; Buckley, and Rev. Fathers Langerwert and Wentzies, of the Order of St. Joseph. Rev. Father Colgan, S.J., delivered an eloquent and convincing sermon on the gospel of the day. At the conclusion of the ceremony the Bishop addressed the children, and said: 'To-night you have been enrolled under the great Captain as soldiers of the Cross, and, my dear children, in the course of your lives many temptations and trials may cross your paths, but if you will recall the great event of this night and recollect the promises made and the good resolutions formed, you will successfully fight them. I look forward to the time when you will take your share in the work of the Church, in the choir, in the ranks of the collectors, and in various other ways. Never neglect to say your morning and night prayers, never miss Mass on Sundays. Be obedient to your parents and superiors, and avoid, above all, bad company; and if you do this, depend upon it you will become good Catholics and good citizens, and your reward shall be everlasting happiness in Heaven.' The choir, under Mr. P. F. Hiscocks, rendered valuable assistance. The church was crowded, and the proceedings were of the most impressive character.

Now that the wool season is at hand Messrs. Donald Reid and Co., the well-known Dunedin merchants, proffer their services to wool growers, either as brokers for sale of their clip in the local market, or for shipment to the firm's London agents. Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. are noted for their promptness in rendering account sales and paying over proceeds, whilst their charges are on the lowest scale. A matter of importance to sellers is that the firm's wool exchange is centrally situated so that their consignments are delivered direct into store, thus saving any expense on that score. The show room is commodious and well-lighted, so that the wool is shown to the best advantage. The following dates for sales have been arranged: January 9 and 30, February 27...

Friends at Court

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

- December 29, Sunday.—Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity St. Thomas, Bishop and Martyr.
- " 30, Monday.—St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow.
- " 31, Tuesday.—St. Sylvester, Pope and Confessor.
- January 1, Wednesday.—Feast of the Circumcision.
- " 2, Thursday.—Octave of the Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr.
- " 3, Friday.—Octave of the Feast of St. John, Apostle.
- " 4, Saturday.—Octave of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs.

ST. THOMAS, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

St. Thomas à Becket was born in London in 1118, his father being a wealthy merchant. He was introduced at an early age into the household of Archbishop Theobald, whose favorite he soon became. To improve himself in every knowledge, especially in civil and ecclesiastical law, Thomas, with the permission of his patron, frequented the University of Paris, and then went to Bologna, where he attended the lectures of the celebrated Gratian. On his return to England he was employed in some important negotiations, and gradually rose to the archdeaconry of Canterbury. When Theobald died, in 1161, King Henry II. resolved to raise his esteemed chancellor to the vacant see. Only at the instance of the Legate, Cardinal Henry of Pisa, Thomas at last yielded in accepting the dignity, and was consecrated in 1162. From that time he became a strong advocate of the Church's rights, defending her against the king, who aimed at the complete subjection of the hierarchy to the Crown. He refused to consent to the constitutions of the Councils of Clarendon, which restrained the jurisdiction of the bishops and attempted to bring the clergy under secular jurisdiction. After a fruitless resistance, Thomas was persuaded to sign the constitutions. Soon after, however, he repented of his concession and withdrew his assent. Henry cited him before a Council at Northampton to answer for the charge of high treason. In this struggle for the liberties of the Church Thomas stood alone; he was deserted even by his brother bishops. Seeing that the king was determined to crush him, he appealed to the Pope, and then, secretly leaving the kingdom, fled to France for shelter. Henry confiscated the property, and banished all the kindred of the fugitive Archbishop.

From France Thomas went to Rome, where Pope Alexander III. received the saint with every mark of respect and veneration. Anxious to end the quarrel, Pope Alexander made every possible effort to accomplish a reconciliation between the English king and the Primate. King Louis of France did the same. Finding all efforts fruitless, the Pope at last gave permission to employ the weapon of ecclesiastical censures against his persecutors. Accordingly, at Vezelay, in 1166, the Primate solemnly condemned the constitutions of Clarendon, and excommunicated all advisers and supporters thereof, and all invaders of Church property. Fearing that the Primate would lay the kingdom under an interdict, Henry began, at last, to show a sudden desire for peace. Thomas returned to England, where he was greeted by the people with transports of joy. He had received letters from the Pope, suspending and excommunicating three prelates. The conduct of these bishops obliged the Primate to carry out the Pope's intentions. When Henry heard of this he broke out into one of his usual fits saying: 'Is there no one to rid me of that troublesome priest?' Four knights, acting on these words immediately set out for England, and murdered the holy Archbishop, December 29, 1170. Thomas was canonized in 1172, and in 1:20 his remains were removed to Trinity Chapel, where they were for several centuries, the object of pilgrimages. Henry VIII. destroyed the chapel and burned and scattered his bones.

ST. SYLVESTER I., POPE AND CONFESSOR.

St. Sylvester, a native of Rome, was called to rule the Church during the twenty-one years which followed the accession of Constantine. One of his principal cares was to provide churches for the faithful, who were now, for the first time, allowed perfect liberty in the exercise of their religion. The most important event in the Pontificate of St. Sylvester was the celebration of the First General Council, which was presided over by the papal legates, and in which the heresy of Arius was condemned. St. Sylvester died in 335.

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

This is a festival celebrated on January 1 to remind us of the humility of our Lord in allowing Himself to be seemingly numbered among sinners, by submitting to the law of the Jews. Circumcision was a religious practice among the Jews in the observance of which a distinctive mark was placed on male children the eighth day after their birth, and on all adults who embraced their religion. It was established as a distinctive sign of the people of God, a sign of the covenant made by God with Abraham, and as the figure of baptism in the New Law. The feast of Circumcision is very ancient in the Church, as is proved by the homilies and sermons of the Fathers of the Church.

Residents in Ashburton are recommended to patronise Messrs Hardley Brothers, for plumbing, and ironmongery of all kinds....