

DIocese OF AUCKLAND

(By telegraph, from our own correspondent.)

April 12.

The winter socials, which were eminently successful last year in St. Benedict's, are to be again inaugurated this season. Rev. Father Forde has called a meeting this week with that object.

News by mail brought the sad news of the death of Mrs. Noyle, sister of the Very Rev. Chancellor Holbrook. The deceased lady, her husband, and family, came out to Auckland some time ago, but later on returned to Ireland. The deceased leaves five young children. Much sympathy is felt for Father Holbrook.—R.I.P.

The news of the elevation to the rank of Monsignor of the Ven. Archpriest Walshe, Westport, gave genuine pleasure to many old residents here, because it was to Auckland diocese Monsignor Walshe first came, and here he was ordained priest by Auckland's first Bishop (Right Rev. Dr. Pompallier), the late Monsignor O'Reilly being ordained at the same time. Monsignor Walshe may rest assured his old Auckland friends join with his own faithful parishioners in heartily congratulating him on his deserved distinction.

Three Redemptorist Missioners (Very Rev. Father Roche, Rev. Father O'Sullivan, and Rev. Father Kelly) arrived from Wellington on Saturday morning, and commenced a three weeks' mission at the Cathedral on Sunday after the eleven o'clock Mass. The opening sermon was preached by Father Roche, who dealt with the great spiritual benefits and lasting good which would result from the mission. In the evening the Cathedral was crowded, when Father O'Sullivan preached, and in the course of his discourse impressed on his hearers the importance of saving their souls. There will be Masses every morning and short instructions at six and nine o'clock, and devotions and sermon each week night at half-past seven o'clock. The members of the Confraternity of the Holy Family received Holy Communion on Sunday at the Cathedral at the early Mass, celebrated by Very Rev. Father Roche.

CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED STATES

There are 16,309,310 Catholics in the United States, according to the *Catholic Directory*. The increase in the number of Catholics during the year 1914 amounts to 241,325. Forty-four dioceses report increases in the Catholic population, forty archdioceses and dioceses made no change in the population figure, and fifteen dioceses show decreases, although three of the fifteen showing decreases have given up territory for the establishment of the two new dioceses of El Paso and Spokane.

Some authorities quoting Catholic statistics usually deduct 15 per cent. for children and infants, claiming that only communicants should be counted. The impression is created, therefore, that Catholic statistics are exaggerated. The editor of the *Directory* claims that instead of being over-estimated, the Catholic statistics are under-estimated, and that the figures 16,309,310 are very conservative. According to the editor, at least 10 per cent. ought to be added for 'floating' Catholic population of which no record can be kept.

The population statistics are always the most important feature, showing as they do the strides made by the Catholic Church in the United States. Looking back ten years, it is found by comparing the *Directory* of 1905 with the issue for 1915 that there has been an increase of 3,846,517 in the number of Catholics. Going back twenty years, it is seen that there has been an increase of 7,231,445 during the past two decades. There are 18,994 Catholic clergy in the United States. Of these 14,008 are secular and 4986 are priests of religious Orders. The increase in the number of priests during the past year is shown to be 426.

Looking over the list of churches, one finds that there have been 310 Catholic churches established dur-

ing the past year. There are 9883 churches with resident priests and 5078 churches without resident priests, or, in other words, mission churches attended by a neighboring pastor. The *Directory* further shows that there are 85 ecclesiastical seminaries, with 6770 young men studying for the priesthood. There are 229 colleges for boys and 680 academies for girls. Furthermore, there are 284 Catholic orphan asylums, with 45,742 orphans therein.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MONSIGNOR BENSON

The *Cornhill* for February has an interesting article on some early memories of the late Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson by Mr. Archibald Marshall, an intimate friend and fellow-student at Trinity College, Cambridge (writes the London correspondent of the *Melbourne Advocate*). On his first appearance at Cambridge, Monsignor Benson looked like a schoolboy, with a tangled mop of fair hair, quick, stammering speech, and a shy but attractive manner. But even at this very early period his thoughts were turned towards Rome, for Mr. Marshall remembers hearing him say one day, when they were discussing their future:—'I would like to be a Cardinal.' It was a very ambitious aspiration, but had he been spared, he might have realised it. When he was so sadly and prematurely cut off in the prime of his powers a few weeks ago, Monsignor Benson was certainly one of the most prominent and picturesque figures in English Catholicism, and his boyish dream of a red hat really looked like an intelligent anticipation, and approaching actuality on the ecclesiastical horizon. While still an undergraduate at Cambridge, Monsignor Benson wrote a couple of novels, one in collaboration with Mr. Marshall and the other entirely by himself. Neither of them has so far appeared in print, but Mr. Marshall still possesses the manuscript of the first. He does not think much of this early juvenile experiment in fiction, although he allows that it

'Contains a Few Gleams of Observation.'

Mr. Marshall says young Benson always felt under a sort of imperious necessity 'to be doing something with a pen. Later on he plunged deeply into life, and his craftsmanship fitted itself to his knowledge.' One very clever thing young Benson wrote at Cambridge was a poem in the style of Pope entitled 'A Scandal in High Life,' and published in one of the University comic papers. It satirised a prank played by a group of noble and aristocratic undergraduates, which got them into trouble with both the academic and civic authorities. Young Benson's poem aroused considerable interest and amusement. 'It was,' says Mr. Marshall, 'remarkably well written, and its thinly-veiled points were so sharp that they aroused the ire of one of the gentlemen concerned, who made determined efforts to discover the author, but without success.' In due course young Benson received ordination as an Anglican minister at the hands of his father, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and proceeded to work as a missionary in the densely-populated East End of London. Afterwards he became a curate at Kensing, a picturesque Kentish village, where Mr. Marshall was also living, and so they renewed their old University acquaintanceship. It was at Kensing that Father Maturin, then a famous High Church preacher, now a well-known London Catholic priest, conducted a retreat that proved

A Turning-point in the Spiritual Life of Benson.

'Of all the preachers I have ever heard,' says Mr. Marshall, 'Father Maturin was at his best the most capable of holding his hearers' attention, and he was at his very best then. He sat in a chair on the chancel steps and talked, and I for one hardly took my eyes off him. Hugh Benson was just as deeply impressed. But he was not at all prepared to accept the advanced doctrine that was uncompromisingly put before us.' Of course, he did eventually, but at this time he had not lost faith in the Church of England as 'keeping her authoritative course, as far removed from Romanism on the