varied sphere of human suffering. It is ever prompt and ready. The wearers of the white cornette or guimp and the black soutane are as much at home attending the wounded on the European battlefields as they are serving the lepers at Molokai and the Seychelles Islands, or bringing joy to the pinched faces that cluster about presbytery and convent or that are dying of typhus in stricken and devastated Serbia. Through all and over all of these is the brooding charity of Christ which 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' It is the gulf that separates Christianity from any and every form of paganism. Pagan Rome knew no such virtue. Lucian ridiculed it. Julian the Apostate tried in vain to establish a counterfeit presentment of it among the pagans of his day and city. The neo-pagans—self-styled philanthropists—of the eighteenth century whipped the Sisters of Charity through the streets of Paris. Their followers of a later day drove them forth from their places at the bedsides of the stricken poor in the hospitals. Charity had no part in ancient paganism. It has no part in the new. The shocking philosophy of the English Hobbes and the German Nietzsche agrees in not recognising the existence of such feelings as unselfish pity, sympathy, or love; and even Mark Twain, in his posthumous work entitled *What is Man?*, makes rank selfishness the whole groundwork of even the sacred love of a mother for her infant child. The Church — as the rationalist Lecky admits — effected a revolution indeed when she regarded the poor as the representatives of Christ, and made the love of Him, and the love of man for His sake, the principle of charity. Charity became her bond of unity. Therein lay her proudest achievements. 'For the first time in the history of mankind,' says Lecky, 'it has inspired many thousands of men and women, at the sacrifice of all worldly interests and often under circumstances of extreme discomfort or danger, to devote their entire lives to the single object of assuaging the sufferings of humanity.'

*

It is a glorious history, that of Catholic charity, with as many branches as there are varied modes of human suffering. Its spirit permeates the whole body of the Church, clergy, laity, religious Orders. It links us, down a long chain of events, with the spirit of the early days of the infant Church, when collections were taken up Sunday after Sunday for the stricken poor, and when fasts and love-feasts were alike turned to their benefit. When the emancipation of numerous slaves created pauperism and famine, the young Church was equal to the need. When Genseric's conquest of Africa deprived Italy of its supply of grain, there ensued long years of appalling famine and pestilence. 'But everywhere,' says Lecky, 'amid the chaos of dissolution we may detect the majestic form of the Christian priest mediating between the hostile forces, straining every nerve to lighten the calamities around him.' In the fifth century a Council of Toledo threatened with excommunication all who robbed the poor, or the patrimony of the poor. 'As time rolled on,' says the same Rationalistic historian, 'charity assumed many forms, and every monastery became a centre from which it radiated.' Other religious bodies may well glory in the individual heroes of charity whom they have produced, such as Elizabeth Fry, Dr. Fothergill, and Susanna Necker. But in the multitude, brilliancy, variety, eager intensity, and organisation of her charitable activities the Catholic Church stands, and has ever stood, alone.

*

The work which she has done all down the course of the centuries, she is still doing; and it is being performed, on such modest scale as is inevitable where a religious body forms only one-seventh of the population, in our own Dominion to-day. A non-Catholic gentleman of Auckland, well known in charitable and philanthropic circles, on being asked last week to give a lecture on 'Christianity and the Poor,' was wise and thoughtful enough to apply to a representative Catholic priest for information as to what the Catholic Church was doing for them in New Zealand. We quote the substance of the Rev. Father's apt and succinct reply:

'As a foreword. It should be noted that as the Church was established by the Divine Master to perpetuate the work He had begun, it follows that the salvation of souls, the reconciliation of sinners to God, is the principal office of the Church. Yet like the Master, the Church, too, 'has compassion on the multitude.'

'Practically 1000 children of the poor are cared for in our orphanages, industrial and preservation schools.

'16,111 children, mostly of the poor, are daily taught in our Catholic parochial schools, in the faith of Christ and in the principles of good citizenship.

'250 aged poor of both sexes are tenderly housed and cared for in the Homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor and Nazareth Home, without respect to creed.

'140 incurables of all ages and creeds are carefully nursed in the Homes of Compassion, Wellington.

'165 penitent women are shielded and protected in the Magdalen Asylum, Christchurch.

'The operations of the St. Vincent de Paul Society are known to you — a voluntary organisation consisting of ordinary Catholic laymen, in all walks of life, who devote their spare time to works of charity for the poor. According to the last report to hand, there are in New Zealand over 440 members in that society who last year assisted 1273 poor and distressed people, and paid 3779 visits to the gaols, hospitals, asylums, and the poor in their own homes. They distributed, in addition to clothing, fuel, etc., assistance, mostly out of their own slender incomes, to the extent of £[illegible].

'If, further, gifts of gold and raiment to the poor be a good work and appreciated by all, if the sacrifice of one's spare time, or even the whole of one's time given to the poor for a year, or the duration of the war, is noble, then we have the noblest sacrifice of all in the entire consecration of one's whole being and the whole of one's life — an offering which we have before our eyes in the great example of the lives of 1076 members of the Catholic Sisterhoods in New Zealand at the present moment to the service of God's poor, without salary, remuneration, or endowment of any kind whatever.

*

The outlines are very roughly rendered and sketchy — a mere list to look entry, as it were — but it is sufficient to show that the charity which 'faileth not' is deep and true in the hearts of the Catholics of New Zealand. We have reason to thank God for it all.

Notes

Bishop Cleary's Illness

As will be seen by the messages which appear elsewhere in this issue, the condition of his Lordship Bishop Cleary is such as to cause very grave anxiety. We are sure that our readers everywhere will offer earnest prayers that, if it be the Divine will, such a valuable and valued life may yet be spared to us.

The New Zealand Hospital Ship

The following particulars, supplied to us by his Excellency the Governor, regarding the movements of the Maheno and the opportunities for sending mails to the ship, will be of practical interest to many of our readers.

*

His Excellency the Governor has received official information from the Secretary of State for War to the effect that the New Zealand Hospital ship Maheno will proceed direct from Port Said to England for the purpose of receiving as many as possible of the men who are incapacitated for further foreign service and returning them to New Zealand. The Maheno is due to arrive in Great Britain towards the end of August, and will commence her return journey to New Zealand