AUCKLAND NEWMAN SOCIETY

(From a correspondent.)

The general monthly meeting of the Newman Society took place last Sunday afternoon at St. Mary's College, Epsom. Rev. Brother George, B.A., occupied the chair and among the members present were Rev. Fathers Doyle, Ormond, and O'Sullivan, as well as the Sisters of Mercy, and a number of the senior girls from the college. After general routine business had been dispensed with, Father Doyle, of Remuera, delivered a most interesting lecture upon 'Robert Louis Stevenson's treatment of Catholics.' Father Doyle said in part: Stevenson's earlier works, notably *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, were teeming with painful and rather unjust criticisms of Catholic persons and practices. This want of fairness in Stevenson's earlier writings was all the more strange, because Stevenson himself reprehended most severely and justly condemned its presence in the typical Englishman. From a man like Stevenson, so generally broad-minded and free from religious bigotry, we naturally expect a juster judgment than we could hope for from one blinded by passion and prejudice. And from this point of view it would seem that Stevenson's strictures on things Catholic are far more hurtful and reprehensible than the criticism of Dickens and Thackeray. Stevenson had a most lovable character, and generally his books are a reflection of himself. His thoughts and character, his tender sympathies, his child-like nature with its poetic outlook upon life, and its perfect candour, shine forth behind the printed word on every page. Indeed, one of the most charming things about Stevenson is his absolute frankness and lack of reserve. Because of these things, and liking Stevenson as we do it is with pain and regret that we stumble now and then on his little slurs and jests and witticisms upon Catholic life. Some of his verses, too, are tainted throughout with the rankest materialism. After these considerations, it is with pleasure that we turn to the truly bright side of the picture. If Stevenson did us a great wrong in the beginning of his literary career, it may almost be said that he made ample amends for it, as he grew in years and experience. In fact some of the finest and most heartfelt tributes ever paid to Catholic missionaries by outsiders have issued from his pen. His noble and courageous defence of Father Damien is a production that will endear Stevenson to the heart of every Catholic, and, indeed, to every lover of justice and fair play as long as English literature shall last. In the same spirit of justice and fair play and with the same vigor did he defend the cause of Mataafa, the dusky Catholic King of Samoa, against the injustices inflicted upon him by the representatives of the great Powers. And R.L.S's account of the ruined mission of Carmel (California) could scarcely be more touching or sympathetic if penned by the band of the most fervent Catholic. Finally, when all is said—when his praise and his blame, his tributes and his censures, are weighed in the balance—we are safe in maintaining that the good outweighs the evil he has done us. And his latest accounts of us go a long way towards atoning for the faults and injustices of his earlier days. So, after a deliberate survey of the field, we might freely pardon him the wrong he did us unwittingly, and gladly acknowledge him as our friend, and the friend of truth everywhere as God gave him the light to see it.

An interesting discussion followed the lecture. Brother George enlarged upon the shattering power of the Damien defence. Miss Jacobsen said we owed much to Stevenson for propagating the gospel of cheerfulness. Mr. Kavanagh urged the necessity of studying modern authors, and correcting in an emphatic way their distorted views of Catholicity.

A most hearty vote of thanks was accorded Father Doyle for the splendid material he had placed before the meeting.

The Sisters entertained the visitors at afternoon tea, and the gathering was brought to a close with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the college chapel. It was arranged to hold the next meeting at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Remuera, on the second Sunday in November.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN VICTORIA

On October 1, his Grace Archbishop Mannix opened a bazaar at Surrey Hills, Melbourne, in aid of the liquidation of the parochial debt. His Grace, in the course of his address, said it had been suggested by their pastor (Rev. Father Gleeson) that his (the Archbishop's) education had been very defective; for he had had no training in the art of opening bazaars. If now late in life, he were desirous to make up for that lack of knowledge, there was plenty of opportunity in Melbourne. His Grace the Archbishop, with the kind consideration that he always showed towards weakness and inexperience, had endeavored to save him from bazaars, and to do most of the diocesan work in that department himself. His Grace's well-meant effort was not wholly successful. He (Dr. Mannix) was reminded of what happened once in Maynooth. A certain president of that college, a very estimable man, advanced in years, but with no very keen sense of humor, got a new vice-president to help him. He thought it right to give his new assistant some idea of his duties, and he explained, among other things, that the college should be officially represented on many public occasions, such as funerals, public meetings, dinners, and so on. Then, as a division of labors, he suggested that the vice-president should attend the funerals, and he himself would see to the dinners. The only fault with the arrangement, so far as the president was concerned, was that it did not work. In his (Dr. Mannix's) case, the Archbishop was kind enough to propose to keep for himself the trouble of making the opening speeches, and to give him (Dr. Mannix) the pleasure of reading them. But that arrangement also failed to work. . . . In that parish, as elsewhere, the Catholic people cheerfully bore the burden of their debt so far as it was incurred in the erection of their churches. The same could not be said of their school debts. These school debts also they had borne, and would bear so long as it might be necessary. But they bore them under protest and under

A Sense of Injustice.

It was not his intention that night to dwell upon matters that had been so recently discussed before a larger audience. The Catholic case had been most ably presented. The discussion, as reported, had given Catholics much reason to rejoice that their cause had been entrusted to capable hands, and had been triumphantly vindicated. In Melbourne there were persons who were greatly concerned about the alleged grievances that might possibly some day press upon a minority at the other end of the world—what was called the loyal minority in Ireland—a very meek and gentle section of the community. Of course, their proper name was the disloyal minority in Ireland. He wondered that the Melbourne champions of minorities could not extend their sympathy to an oppressed and a wronged minority much nearer home to them than Ulster. That Catholic minority that they had in their own midst was not a disloyal minority. For Catholics loved Australia, were proud of Australia, and they may be relied on to defend Australia if ever she needed defence. But, on the other hand, they claimed equal rights with their fellow-citizens, and they would never rest content until the present unjust educational load was lifted from their shoulders. People wonder how we can talk so often, and so much, of our grievances. They forget that we are always bending under our burden, and that we feel it the more when we are forced, by bazaars and other devices, to purchase freedom of conscience in a land that claims to be free. He knew that there were many liberal-minded Protestants here who were prepared to do justice to their Catholic fellow-citizens, and to them they were grateful. They were open to argument, and they were prepared for peace on reasonable conditions. He hoped that peace would come, and soon, with the aid of the great body of fair-minded people in Victoria.