

unmolested for a decade had to be grappled with, and fences whose many gaps invited all straying cattle and all mischievous larrkins to come in and have a good time, had to be repaired or renewed. When the house, which had hitherto been concealed from view by the wild growth around was seen (for the first time by some of the parishioners), it became painfully evident that to "house" a priest in such a wretched shack was not in accordance with the respect the people owed themselves. So after a few months plans for a presbytery, drawn up by the late F. W. Petre were procured, and 1885 saw the building in the hands of a Dunedin firm of contractors—White and Clarke. The contractors brought the bricks from Wingatui; perhaps not being aware that Jones' Milton bricks were already acquiring a reputation that has since been steadily maintained. The building is still fresh and firm after standing the storms of forty years. From its upper windows views of the surrounding plain and hills greet the eye, and from the first it was voted one of cosiest parish residences in the diocese.

The financing of the building was much helped by the generous action of three prominent parishioners—viz., Michael Kett (a Waterford man), James Scanlan (a Limerick man), and Thos. Halpin (a Tipperary man)—who combined to lend, free of interest, a sum of £150, which sum was not long owing as the parishioners soon wiped it out. The ladies of the congregation busied themselves to good effect in furnishing the house. Foremost of this band of enthusiastic church workers was Mrs. Jas. Scanlan, who alone of all the original committee survives, and who still, with her family, takes an earnest interest in everything affecting Church matters. Mrs. Thos. Halpin was another generous and devoted helper. Her benefactions to the Church were so many that we may piously hope they have merited for her a high place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Mrs. Pat Walsh, Mrs. Tom Lynch, Mrs. McLachlan, and members of the Poppelwell family were conspicuous by their zeal in this and every work undertaken in the parish.

A Retrospect.

Before continuing the account of the progress made in the parish, it might be well to gather up the scattered memories of the parish as they were found amongst the people in 1884.

The earliest Catholic settler arrived in Tokomairiro in the early 'fifties, in the person of Mr. Wm. Poppelwell. His home at Sunwick, was for years the gathering place of the Catholics as they arrived in varying numbers as the years went by. Memories of French Missionaries were kindly prized by the first Catholics. Amongst the first to visit the district we find the names of Father Seon, Father Petitjean, Father Moreau, Father Martin, Father Ecuyer, who took in the Tokomairiro flock on the journeys to and from Dunedin and Invercargill. In those days travelling was slow and tedious—no roads, no bridges, no trains, no motors. Patiently plodding along with their knapsacks on their backs and glad to get a night's lodging at any settler's place along

the road, they helped by their ministrations to keep alive the Faith brought from a land of abounding Faith. When gold was discovered at Gabriel's in the early 'sixties a priest was stationed in Tuapeka. Milton was included in the Tuapeka district and monthly visits were paid by the priest to the Tokomairiro portion of the flock. Father Ecuyer occupied this post up to the time of formation of the Dunedin diocese, but was removed by his religious superiors to the West Coast on the arrival of the new Bishop in Dunedin.

The first attempt at securing a place of worship in Milton was made during Father Ecuyer's time. At the eastern end of High Street an old store, which had belonged to Smith and Hobbard, was secured. Mr. Smith was long known by his subsequent connection with the Greenfield estate.

For some years this building did duty for a church till, in 1869, a Gothic building of Baltic timber was erected for the congregation, the contractor being Mr. McCormick, of Dunedin, whom many old Dunedinites will still remember and whose descendants are scattered over the Dominion at the present day. A mortgage over the property was taken out by Mr. Neil Bruce McGregor, of the Taieri, who lent £300 to the congregation. Both principal and compound interest were owing in 1884 when Milton's first resident priest resigned, but the McGregor family did not press for payment.

A school was conducted in the church, which was attended by a large number of children and conducted by a succession of efficient lay teachers. Old Miltonians will remember the names of Desmond, Murphy, McMonagle, Griffin, and the Misses Brownlow, Keogh, Poppelwell, McLachlan, and Anglin, who were connected with the school before the Dominican Nuns took charge. After the departure of Father Ecuyer, Milton was visited by priests from Dunedin, amongst whom were Father Coleman, Father Mackay, and Father Crowley, who is still living in Ireland, being parish priest of Meelin, in the diocese of Cloyne. The bulk of the congregation came from the West of Ireland. Gaelic was the language in which they had learned their Christian Doctrine, and some of the old ones knew no other language. They rented small holdings from the borough council and worked around amongst the established farmers and in the construction of roads and railways. There seemed a dispensation of Providence in gathering the people of the Gaethact into the diocese of Dunedin, for with their national pride and unfaltering loyalty to the faith of their fathers they opposed a wall of brass to the conceited and supercilious bigotry of the *unco guid*.

(To be continued.)

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North Auckland Notes

(From our own Correspondent.)

Dargaville, December 7.

The annual bazaar in aid of the extinction of the local parish debt was held in the Theatre Royal last Saturday, and proved another huge success. During the afternoon and evening the stallholders had a busy time and did a thriving business. Art unions were the order of the day's proceedings, and those in charge kept things going in good style. The energetic committee had everything in order and the bazaar went off without a hitch. The Dargaville Town Band rendered a fine programme of music during the afternoon and evening and the music was appreciated by all. The following were in charge of the stalls:—Hibernian: Messrs. A. J. Martin and L. Wilson; Plain: Mesdames C. J. Carrington and A. J. Martin; Refreshment: Mesdames F. A. Jones, P. Hackett, C. S. Rush, W. Martin, J. W. Rames, J. F. Moriarty, Misses Lucy Marchbanks, K. Hackett, Seymour, Jones, and Smith; Children of Mary: Misses Molly Stanaway and Veronia Carrington; Jumble: Mesdames Totich, Dean, and Barbarich; Art: Mesdames D. A. Williams, T. Jones, Miss T. Brown. The sum realised was in the vicinity of £200; not so large as usual, but considering all things, quite satisfactory. The following committee, combined with the lady stallholders, deserve special praise for the way they worked all day:—Father Jansen (chairman), Messrs. C. J. Carrington, F. A. Jones, T. Jones, F. Lunny, A. J. Martin, T. Fannon, and the energetic secretary (Father Devolder).

At the recent Proficiency examinations in Dargaville the following pupils of St. Joseph's Convent gained their proficiency certificates:—Mavis McLean, Rosie Stanaway, Ivy Nola, Mary Yankovitch, Denis Martin.

A euchre party was scheduled at the Hibernian Hall the other evening, and just as proceedings were about to commence the firebell rang and half of one of the main streets of Dargaville was burnt. Needless to say the euchre party was off. Your correspondent went along to the hall about 10 p.m. (he had on former occasions sampled the excellent suppers for which the ladies of the parish have a well-earned reputation) and he was surprised to find all the tables occupied. Proceedings commenced at 9.30 p.m., and an enjoyable evening was spent, first prizes going to Mrs. Dan Tidey and Mr. Wm. Whitmore.

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