

was steadier; he had an infallible guide. In the *Considerations*, he lays down as a principle that "We are all bound to the throne of the Supreme Being by a flexible chain which holds but does not enslave us." In revolutionary periods, the chain and the bond suddenly tighten; man's action is restricted, and the designs of Providence manifest themselves more clearly. These designs, De Maistre endeavors to discover in the European upheaval of his time. With his eye upon France, with something of pardonable pride in her history and even in her misfortunes, France appears to him the principal instrument of Providence for good in the world; by its permission she also is the instrument of its chastisements. Old French chroniclers wrote at the head of their story *Geste Dei per Francos*. The *Deeds of God*, but through the Franks, His agents. According to him, the title was justified, and for good or for evil France has ever been a Providentially chosen instrument. But, says De Maistre, France in the eighteenth century, unfaithful to her mission, had been driven to a species of national apostasy. She had then to be chastised. The Red Terror of 1793, Robespierre, Danton, their rivals in tyranny, had been but the instruments in God's hands, instruments to punish crime at home and at the same time, almost in spite of themselves, the means through which France was to be saved from the foreign yoke through the fierce spirit of nationalism which they aroused.

Apologist of France in the *Considerations*, he is the apologist of Providence in the *Saïres de St. Petersburg*, eleven dialogues between a count, himself no doubt, a knight and a senator, in which he "justifies the ways of God to man." Here he studied the "riddle" of Divine power and human freedom, the problem of good and evil, the mystery of suffering innocence, the horrors of war, which he painted in a tableau scarcely surpassed by Thucydides, and to which the battle scenes of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" of Ibanez are an Arcadian idyl. In this vindication there are paradoxes, exaggerations, regrettable lacunae, but it is none the less a masterpiece, in which he mercilessly beats down the protagonists of infidelity, colossi with feet of clay. And having thus studied the relations of Providence to humanity, he analyses in "The Pope" the relations of Christ's Vicar on earth to the Church of which he is the infallible head, to the temporal powers with which he is brought into contact, to the civilisation and welfare of the nations and finally to the heretical and schismatical bodies which have broken away from his Divinely constituted authority. "The Pope" in an *Apologie pro Sede Petri*, for the doctrinal infallibility of the successor of Peter, for his spiritual and temporal power. Going straight to the heart of the question, De Maistre appeals to the safeguards which men demand to protect them against the abuses of sovereign power. Such safeguards, he tells us, are not to be found in written charters, constitutions, in parliaments or senates, but in a power superior to all others— independent and impartial, aloof from the pettinesses of ephemeral politics and passions, the champion of justice, the interpreter of moral law, the guardian of revealed truth, the highest tribunal on earth, the Supreme Judge between subjects and rulers, between peoples and kings. The Papacy is such a power. The functions which the author claims for it were already exercised, he tells us, in the Middle Ages, whose splendors it prepared by rescuing Europe and civilisation from barbarism. The Papacy alone can save Europe now, De Maistre concludes; the Papacy alone can protect authority and rulers against revolt, nations and peoples against autocracy and tyranny.

Such is the bare outline of a masterpiece whose arguments are admirably suited to our needs. Theologically sound with the exception of one proposition, the book is not a theological treatise. It is a political, social, historical vindication of the Papacy, built on reason, faith and facts, tingling especially in the conclusion with a compelling eloquence. For De Maistre, the Pope is the religion of Christ rendered visible in a majestic figure, summing up in himself all the prerogatives and the glory, the legislative and doctrinal functions, the history and the immortal destinies of the Church of which he is the head. It is no wonder that after the author has described all that the Popes have accomplished for civilisation, for the sacredness of human life, the dignity of the wife and

child, the helplessness of the slave, sciences and art, the liberties of Italy over whose destinies they so long presided, he hails the Church over which they rule, in the words Virgil addressed to Mother Italy of old: *Salve, Magna Parens, Magna Virum*: "Hail, Mighty Mother, Queenly Nurse of Heroes and of Men." Among the Church's loyal sons there is one whose name Catholics in these strenuous times gratefully recall, her apologist in court dress, Count Joseph de Maistre.

## Diocesan News

### ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

January 13.

The St. Patrick's Day committee met last Thursday evening to make the necessary arrangements for this year's celebrations. Rev. Fathers Mahony, S.M., Smyth, S.M., Adm., and Cullen, Adm., were among those present. The following office-bearers were appointed: Patron, his Grace Archbishop Redwood, president, his Grace Archbishop O'Shea; chairman, Mr. J. P. McGowan; treasurer, Mr. J. L. Burke; general secretary, Mr. P. D. Hoskins; assistant secretary, Mr. A. B. Boake. Owing to the possibility of St. Patrick's Day being eliminated from the list of Government holidays some discussion took place as to the day on which the sports and procession would be held, and it was eventually decided to hold the procession and sports on Saturday, March 18, and the concert on Friday evening, the 17th. Sub-committees were appointed for concert, sports, and procession. The next general meeting was fixed for Thursday, 26th inst.

The secular clergy of the Archdiocese will enter into Retreat on Monday, 16th, and at the conclusion of the Retreat the Marist Fathers of the Archdiocese will commence theirs. The Retreats will be conducted at St. Patrick's College.

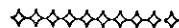
Additions are being made to the Sacred Heart primary school, Island Bay, to provide extra accommodation. This is evidence of the growth of the Catholic population of the Bay parish.

Rev. Father Herring, Marist Missioner, is busy making arrangements for the men's Retreat, which will commence at St. Patrick's College on Friday, January 27. He has been engaged in St. Mary's, Island Bay, and Thorndon parishes taking names of intending retreatants.

The Boxing Day art union will be drawn on Wednesday, January 25, and all who have tickets are reminded to send their returns in before that date.

Rev. Father Silk, late of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, is at present on a visit to this city.

An old boy of the Marist Brothers' School in the person of Mr. A. ("Happy") Smith, died on the 11th inst. The late Mr. Smith attended the old Boulcott Street School in Rev. Brother Sigismund's days. For many years he was a member of the old St. Mary's Cathedral choir. Mr. Smith was employed at the Government Printing Office, and was an enthusiastic swimmer. He was married. The interment took place on Friday.—R.I.P.



### DIocese OF AUCKLAND

(From our own correspondent.)

January 13.

The Retreat for the clergy, beginning on January 23, is to be conducted by Rev. Father John Ryan, C.M., Sydney.

Rev. Father Rohan and Rev. Dr. Nevin, both from Sydney, are at present guests at the Bishop's House, Ponsonby.

Rev. Father Morkane, of Holy Cross College, is spending a holiday in Hamilton, and is the guest of Rev. Father Bleakley. Father Brady, of St. Patrick's Cathedral staff, is recuperating in Hamilton.

The first Marist Brothers' School, outside the chief city of the Auckland province, is to be officially opened at Hamilton by his Lordship Bishop Liston, on the first Sunday in February. After the opening ceremony there will be Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the church. Rev. Brother Calixtus is to be principal of the new school, and he will be assisted by Rev. Brother Walter. The old church has been converted into a well-lighted and very suitable school by an energetic working-bee. It is expected that on the opening day of the school over 80 pupils will be in attendance.

The annual general meeting of the delegates to the St. Patrick's Day Celebrations' Association, was held in St. Benedict's clubrooms on Sunday, January 8. Mr. M. J. Sheahan presided, and there was an attendance of about 25 delegates from the various parishes and branches of the Hibernian Society. The following office-bearers were elected:—President, his Lordship Bishop Cleary, D.D.; vice-presidents, Messrs. M. J. Sheahan and F. Burns (re-