

THE THAMES.

DEPARTURE OF FATHER NIVARD.
(From our correspondent.)

Last Sunday, 22nd June, being the last Sabbath which our respected pastor would be here, was a day which will be remembered by the Catholics of the Thames for a long time, and a day unusually sanctified, by the large numbers which attended our Church in Shortland. It was announced in the newspapers that the Rev. Father Nivard would preach his farewell sermon after vespers in the evening. He celebrated high mass at 11 o'clock in the morning, and the Rev. Father Dwyer, of Tapu, preached an eloquent sermon on Sin. The Rev. Father Nivard in the evening, according to announcement, preached his "farewell." He said he did not intend to deliver a set discourse that evening. He meant to say a few words to them, to give them a few words of advice which he hoped they would treasure in their hearts. In all human probability it was the last occasion on which he would have an opportunity of addressing them, and therefore he would just speak to them as a father who would be about to leave his children. The first thing that was necessary for salvation was a knowledge of God. The royal Psalmist called him the "known" God in Judea. But how were they to know God? They could learn to know him by attending the discourses of his ministers, and for this reason he wished most earnestly to exhort them to attend to the instructions of his successors, the same as they had attended to his own. They should also learn to fear God. He impressed upon them the necessity of fearing God, when knowing him. He also recommended to them the practice of instructing themselves and their children at home. If they were instructed in the truths, the teachings, and practices of their holy religion, they could give an account of their faith to those who wished it, to their friends, to their foes, also to God himself. They should instil into their children's minds the love and fear of the Almighty above all. The rev gentleman then reverted to his past career on the Thames. He said he had strong ties here. When he first came here there were only four houses, and the majority of the people lived in canvas tents; now he left it with two prosperous townships and a large population. From the very first time he came to the Thames, he believed he had the goodwill of the people. Whenever he asked them for alms or subscriptions, they always gave liberally. They had also attended to his instructions, and he loved them for doing so. He hoped they would treat his successor with the same respect and love. He assured them that he would never, never forget the Thames. Father Nivard has endeared himself to all while at the Thames by his honest, kind, and liberal disposition. The church was crowded to excess, and many members of Protestant denominations were present. On Tuesday evening, the 24th June, he was presented in the academy of music with a purse of 200 guineas and a handsome testimonial. The hall was crowded, the gallery being devoted to the accommodation of the ladies.

Mr H. McMillane, chairman, said they had met for the purpose of presenting to Father Nivard a testimonial and address. That address came with a sincere desire from the residents on the Thames Gold Field for his good prosperity in his future home. The testimonial was one of the most substantial which had ever been presented to any gentleman who had taken his departure from the Gold Field. (Cheers.) He looked upon it as of more intrinsic value than even its value as gold could be considered, inasmuch as it had been presented with so liberal and so Christian a mind from the inhabitants of the Thames generally. (Cheers.) At the first meeting held on the subject in Shortland, he (the chairman) stated that he should desire to see the rev. gentleman presented with a substantial testimonial, and one which would not be a Catholic one entirely, but be from the residents of the Gold Field generally. (Cheers.) He was now in a position to state that his hopes had been beyond expectation realized—(cheers)—and Father Nivard would take with him a handsome testimonial from all the inhabitants of the Thames Gold Field.

Mr Gudgeon, the treasurer of the testimonial fund, then handed the 200 guineas and the address to Captain Fraser, R.M.

Captain Fraser said that it was truly gratifying to him, who was not a member of the Church Father Nivard belonged to, to see such an interest taken in this presentation. (Cheers.) He had now to present the testimonial and address, in the name, not only of members of the Church to which Father Nivard belonged, but of a great many residents on the Thames Gold Field who did not belong to that Church. Father Nivard had been here since the opening of the field, and had always endeavoured to assist in everything for the good of the community. (Cheers.) He hoped that Father Nivard's successor would walk in his footsteps, and if he did so he would gain the good-will of everyone on the Thames. Father Nivard had shown them an example of Christian piety and earnestness during the whole time he had been amongst them. Captain Fraser then briefly referred to Father Nivard's connection with the Thames Hospital, and to his readiness to aid in every good work since he had been at the Thames.

Rev. Father Nivard said: Mr Chairman, my dear friends, I feel very sorry to have to leave you, but at the same time I feel highly gratified at the esteem you have shown towards me, though I believe in my heart it is not deserved. If I have worked on this gold field, it has been simply my duty to work—to do my duty as a priest before my God, and as a man before my fellow-men. And therefore I feel indeed highly honored and grateful to you for the love which you have showed me; and certainly I have had, during my career here at the Thames, signs of love not only from my co-religionists, the Roman Catholics, but from every section and creed of the community. (Cheers.) For at the Thames I have met men who have been brothers to me, and women who have indeed been sisters. And I have known the feeling of brotherhood, not only from Roman Catholics, but from many others. (Cheers.) I have known that feeling not only in word but also in deeds. If I have put up some buildings for the Roman Catholics in this place, I must say that my Protestant friends of every sections of the community, and even men of other religions, have helped me in money. (Cheers.) So you may see from these few facts that I would be indeed a hard-hearted man if I did not feel for the

people at the Thames, and if I did not try on my side to return also good feeling towards their good feelings. (Cheers.) My dear friends of all religions, and of all sections of the community here at the Thames, I beg of God to bless you in this life, and to reward you in the next. (The rev gentleman resumed his seat amidst prolonged cheering.)

Rev J. Hill was loudly called upon to address the meeting. He said: I deeply regret that Father Nivard is about to leave us. I have said so frequently in private, and I have come here to-night to say so in public. (Cheers.) More than nine years ago I was accidentally brought into Father Nivard's company in Auckland, and the opinion I formed then of his kind, obliging, and generous disposition has never departed. (Applause.) On the contrary, by my intercourse with him here, that opinion has been strengthened and confirmed. (Cheers.) The more he is known, the deeper and stronger must be the respect and love cherished for him. (Cheers.) If ever a history of the Thames Goldfield comes to be written, Father Nivard must occupy a prominent and honorable place in its pages. Located here from the commencement of the field, Father Nivard had been associated with all the efforts that had been made for the real good of the community. He was among those who laid the foundation of our hospital; and has ever been one of its best supporters and most zealous advocates (cheers). He has ever taken a deep interest in the Mechanics' Institute—in short never has there been a meeting called for an object that really benefited the community without Father Nivard being present there to countenance it. (Cheers.) And at all these meetings the opinion of Father Nivard has ever been received with respect, and it has ever carried with it considerable weight. (Cheers.) Father Nivard is about to go, and I believe—nay, I know—that he leaves the Thames without an enemy. (Loud applause.) Nay, more, I know he leaves the Thames with all in this community, of every class and religious denomination, his true and sincere friends. (Cheers.)

The Chairman here apologised for the absence of Rev. Mr Lush, who could not attend owing to a prior and important engagement.

Mr W. Rowe said Father Nivard would leave the Thames having the best wishes of the whole community, and their prayers that the blessing of God would accompany him wherever he went.

Mr O'Haire, as one of Father Nivard's congregation, thanked those of other sections of the community who had come to that meeting. He would promise that he would do all he could that the kindly feeling shown should be reciprocated.

Mr Renshaw was called upon to speak. He referred to Father Nivard's coming to the Thames when he preached his first sermon on Sunday afternoon in Mulligan's back-room. From that time he had frequently been associated with Father Nivard, and he had frequently wished that he was a Protestant. (Cheers and laughter.) When he had noticed his perseverance, his kindness of manner, the spirit in which he kept the connection with even the poorest of his congregation—visiting them, not waiting for them to come to see him—he had envied the Catholics the possession of such a man, and wished that there were more such like as he amongst the Protestants. He could hardly, conscientiously, join the wish for Father Nivard's success as a priest, but he hoped that his life in his new sphere would be as useful as here; and if he studied his Bible a little more, he might study it so much as ultimately to become a Baptist. (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr Severn was called upon, and also briefly addressed the meeting; as did Revs. Fathers Goulden and Dwyer.

Mr A. Brodie, in response to a call, also spoke, and appropriate remarks were also made by Mr W. Davies, Mr Gudgeon, and Mr Gillies. The proceedings then terminated.

On Tuesday, the 25th, the rev father was presented with a handsome watch and chain by the ladies of the Thames, also a suitable address. The presentation was made in the Grahamstown Church, from whence the rev gentleman took his final departure to embark in the "Golden Crown" for Auckland. The church was literally crammed, many being unable to obtain standing room inside. Miss McSweeney read the address. Father Nivard replied in feeling terms. He accepted the handsome gift which they had just presented to him as indeed a true symbol of their esteem for him. He would wish them good-bye! and give them his blessing. He would always remember the ladies of the Thames wherever he went. The manner in which he concluded was very affecting. Immediately after, Masters W. J. Napier and W. J. Curtis presented an address from the boys of the district, and the rev gentleman gave them his blessing, and gave them a few words of good advice, remarking that he would always remember his young flock at the Thames. The rev gentleman then wished all present good-bye individually, and took his departure for Tararu, where the steamer was lying. Father Jourdan, or Father Nivard as he was called, said his first mass, and preached his first sermon, on the Thames, in the tap-room of a public-house; and now there are two fine churches, a school, and a large piece of land, on which is built the priest's house, the property of the church in this district. Father Nivard will leave Auckland for Sydney, en route for China, about the 4th of July proximo, and he carries with him the best wishes of every individual in the district.

THE NEW LONDON AGENT OF VICTORIA.

MR MICHE, the 'Times' correspondent at Melbourne, has been rewarded for his complimentary allusions to Mr Francis, the present wooden figure-head of the Victorian Government, by being appointed to the office of Agent-General for the colony in London. Mr Michie is an able man, who began the world on the London press, and then emigrated to Australia, where he distinguished himself not only in his original profession, but also at the bar, in the Legislature, and in the administration of the Colony of Victoria. His fitness for his new office is undeniable, and we would wish him every success in it, but for the remarkably bad taste he showed in using his situation as correspondent of the 'Times' to revenge himself on Mr Duffy, in various spiteful and disparaging paragraphs, for having displaced a ministry of which Mr Michie was a prominent member. Was such conduct strictly honest?—(Catholic Opinion.)