

A NEW ZEALAND RELIGIOUS ORDER.

THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION.

The year that is so fast drawing to a close was marked by an event that is freighted with many benefits for the Catholic Church in New Zealand. We refer to the holding of the first Provincial Synod of this Colony. But just two months before the date of meeting of that grave and reverend assembly at Wellington there were laid in the same fair city the modest beginnings of a fresh form of religious activity which marks a new departure in the field of applied Christian charity in New Zealand, and promises, under God, to become a permanent and important factor in the applied charity of the Catholic Church in this Colony. We refer to the work of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion, a New Zealand religious Order which was founded some time ago by Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, with the approval of his Grace the Archbishop of Wellington. The scope of this new Order of Charity is limited only by its possibility of doing good, and its ready and practical sympathies go out to every form of human misery and distress. Among its manifold activities, it undertakes the nursing of the sick in their own homes, the care of orphans, and of aged poor of every creed and colour, the providing of food, clothing, etc., for them, visiting the poor in their homes, keeping children from the perils of the streets, sending them to school, etc. Sixteen years ago Mother Mary founded an Order for works of charity among her beloved Maori. The title of the Order has since been altered, but the work remains the same, with this difference, that the colour-line has been eliminated, and henceforth the expansive charity of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion knows no bound or bar save only the limit of its possibilities for doing good.

Some two months before the opening of the Provincial Synod, the new departure in the work of Mother Mary's Institute was inaugurated in Wellington. This was in January of the present year. A small house was rented next St. Joseph's, Buckle street. Four Sisters from Jerusalem, Wanganui River, occupied the little convent. Two others were added at a later date. Later still—in July—three adjoining houses in the same block were purchased. Possession was taken in September. A fresh impetus was thus given to the new charity, and the good work has progressed at such a rate that the six Sisters are all too few to meet with the ever-growing demands upon their labours. In a conversation with the foundress of the institute some time ago we learned that their visits, etc., have revealed the existence of a far greater degree of distress among the deserving poor than most people would imagine. In fact, some of their best and most consoling work is that which is done among the very poor who suffer and are silent, unwilling that their distress should come to the knowledge of their neighbours. The womanly tact and evident sympathy and sincerity of the Sisters have won their way to many a troubled heart and desolate home and brought comfort to many a struggling widow and many a hungry and ill-clad child. When able, the destitute of every age and creed come for relief to the little house in Buckle street. When unable to come, the Sisters go to them, watch by them, and tend and nurse and care for them in a thousand thoughtful ways.

Mother Mary's needy and deserving institute is still burdened with a millstone of a pretty considerable debt. Among the scores of Christmas appeals we know of none that should strike a chord of true sympathy among Catholics than those among whom Mother Mary's apostolate is cast—her destitute white poor and her beloved Maoris. We may, in this connection, appropriately conclude by quoting the following words, from a current issue of *Our Fernery*, the annual published by the Sisters of Mercy, Wellington: 'Our Lady of Compassion.'—Under the heading of 'Beginnings' we would draw the attention of our dear 'old' girls, and the public in general, to the poor little convent of the above Order lately established in Wellington. Since the 6th of January, in one of the smallest houses in Buckle street, six Sisters of Our Lady of Compassion have lived and worked, solely for the deserving indigent and sick of the city—irrespective of creed. They are thankful for anything and everything that is given them to help on their work. Mother M. Joseph Aubert is so well known by her years of devotion amongst the Maoris of Hawke's Bay, her Jerusalem establishment, and her marvellously efficacious medicines, that it is enough to say that she is their head, to elicit sympathy. Friends of the poor and the afflicted! You who are firmly on your feet, help this beginning! That fine old Scotch saying, 'Many mickles make a muckle,' is exemplified when the 'wicker' in charge of two of the Sisters, and wheeled from door to door, returns home laden. There, in the little back kitchen, soup and dainties for the sick are made and cooked every day. Garments are also turned and mended. And what may seem to some the most important point—homes are visited, the inmates comforted and taught how to make the best of this world's few favours that are theirs. The convent rent, fuel, light, furniture, etc., are quite dependent on voluntary contributions. But as other beginnings as lowly have triumphed in the face of hardships and difficulties, so will this, having the Divine blessing and the patronage of a generous and appreciative people.

Rev. Mother Mary Joseph Aubert writes from Wellington:—'It may interest your readers to know that we are putting a large addition to our place here for the reception of those poor incurables whom hospitals will not keep and the charitable homes will not admit. The contract for the bare addition is £700. Including the furniture and other requisites, it will cost between £900 and £1000, for which we have to trust entirely on Divine Providence and the generosity of charitable souls. We expect to open this new home about the beginning of February. There will be a ward for men and one for women, each accommodating six patients. It is a humble beginning, which I hope will be blessed by the Father of the poor and protected by the Comforter of the afflicted.'

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

In consequence of pressure on our space several reports of school entertainments and distribution of prizes are held over.

THE Lyttelton election, which took place on Friday last, resulted in the return of Mr. Laurensen, a Government supporter, by a very large majority.

THE *Charleston Herald* apologised for its non-appearance on a recent Saturday, on the score that the 'staff had the misfortune to get struck with the influenza on Friday.'

THE Wellington Education Board has decided to extend tuition in cooking to all schools of whatever denomination applying for it, so far as the resources at its command will allow.

THE *Westport Star* understands a telegram has been received from the Premier intimating that the Government is not disposed to accept Mr. O'Regan's resignation of his seat on the Westport Harbour Board.

TRIAL runs of the new dining-car for the Christchurch-Dunedin express are being made on the north line. The car is, according to the *Lyttelton Times*, most conveniently fitted, there being table accommodation for 24 persons at a sitting.

REV. Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, of Wellington, desires to gratefully acknowledge receipt of £5 from 'Well-wisher,' for the Foundling Home at Jerusalem, and 5s from 'A Friend,' Greymouth, for the same object; also £5 and a quantity of clothing from the St. Elizabeth Society for the poor of Wellington.

FROM a private source we learn that the Right Rev. Monsignor Hoyne, V.G., Ballarat, and the Rev. Father Kelsch, of Tasmania, who left Dunedin on Monday week, have arrived safely in Hobart. They were accompanied on the journey by the Very Rev. Father Ginaty, of Mount Magdala, who was on his way to Melbourne and Sydney.

A GREAT many readers of the *Dunedin Evening Star* of Friday last must have wondered what was the meaning of the term 'Scottish habits,' which appeared in a news item from Wellington. The paragraph ran thus:—Our Wellington correspondent wires:—'Replying to the Rev. L. M. Isitt's recent assertion that ten members of the present Parliament had contracted "Scottish habits," the *New Zealand Times* says, &c.' The words used by Mr. Isitt, according to the *New Zealand Times*, were 'sottish habits.' Our Scottish friends should receive an ample apology from somebody.

THE Government experimental station at Momohaki, which was started for the purpose of investigating diseases in stock, testing seeds and plants, raising economic plants for distribution to settlers and ascertaining the feeding value of grasses, etc., comprises 380 acres, and the expenditure on buildings, fencing, cultivation, stock, and other purposes since its inception amounts to £1842. The wages paid amounts approximately to £750 per annum. The returns, in addition to a number of vines and seeds distributed gratis, were £771. The expenditure in connection with the poultry farm recently established has been £496 and the receipts £108.

THERE was a large attendance at Mr. O'Regan's committee meeting last evening (says the *Inangahua Times*, December 12), and it was unanimously resolved to present the late member for Buller with a suitable testimonial in recognition of his services to the district and as a token of personal respect. Correspondence was read and received from all parts of the electorate promising assistance, and it was finally decided that, as the Westport electors had already taken the initiative, the Inangahua electors should make a presentation on their own account. It was decided to communicate with the secretaries of the different committees in the Inangahua portion of the electorate. The date for the presentation will be decided later on, and it is safe to predict that Mr. O'Regan will not be allowed to sever his connection with those whom he has served so well without substantial evidence of appreciation.

THE Rev. Father Kelsch, of Tasmania, contributes another letter to the *Monitor* on his holiday tour in New Zealand. Regarding the Magdalen Asylum near Christchurch he says: Mount Magdala is the title by which the Good Shepherd Convent and Magdalen Asylum here is generally known. Situated about four miles from the city, on a plain of 200 acres, one wonders at first blush whence came the name of Mount Magdala. There is, however, a slight rise on one side of the institution which offers at least an excuse for the title. Founded about 13 years ago as a branch from the well-known Abbotsford Convent, near Melbourne, through the zeal and energy of the Very Rev. Father Ginaty, S.M., the New Zealand Convent and Asylum has advanced not slowly but surely, and is now one of the chief attractions of the Christchurch diocese. The Sisters are 22 in number, and the penitents, or 'children,' as they are termed, under their care are 130, gathered from all parts of New Zealand. The buildings are of brick with Oamaru stone dressings and are quite imposing. A new distinct structure for the better classification of the 'children,' and costing £2,300, is nearing completion. It is needless to dilate on the care bestowed on the inmates of this fine institution by the Good Shepherd Nuns, nor on the nature of the laundry work turned out by them. A visit to our Tasmanian branch at St. Canice's, Sandy Bay, will give inquirers across the Tasman Sea the best idea of the worth of the homes or refuges under the management of the Good Shepherd Sisters. The farm work at Mount Magdala, however, is on a much larger scale than at St. Canice's, as the whole 200 acres are now attended to by the farm hands and inmates with marked success. In one respect the New Zealand Government deserves to be copied by that of Tasmania, in the generous support extended to Mount Magdala, an annual vote of £500 being passed by Parliament as a grant-in-aid.