

# New Zealand Herald

TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

VOL. XXVII.—No. 52.

DUNEDIN: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1899.

PRICE 6D.

## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

### POLITICIANS AND THEIR CALLINGS.

OUR return of the professions and trades followed by the members of the new Parliament has received the compliment of being textually copied (without acknowledgment, by the way,) by a goodly section of the Press of New Zealand. This return goes to show that the two chief industries of the country—the pastoral and the agricultural—find their due proportion of representation in the House as now constituted. The new Parliament has representatives of no fewer than 26 separate trades or callings. Among them are several who in a past day wrought with the miner's pick and rocked the 'cradle.' But oddly enough there is only one member who is now exclusively connected—and he only indirectly—with that great industry which swells our growing exports by close on £2,000,000 a year, and which since 1853 has poured some £70,000,000 of wealth (chiefly in golden ingots) into the lap of Europe. The case was different with the recent Queensland Parliament. There a working miner, Mr. Browne, succeeded in soaring to the dual position of Minister for Mines and Education in the recent Queensland Labour Ministry, which collapsed after a brief and troubled period of existence. The constitution of the remainder of that curious Ministry was, says the Sydney Freeman, 'unique of its kind even in the colonies. Mr. Dawson was the Premier—an enginedriver. The Home Secretary, Mr. Turley, is a wharf labourer. The Treasurer, Mr. Kidston, has deserted a stationer's business for labour politics. The Minister for Lands, Mr. Hardacre, was a clerk before he became a politician. The Minister for Railways, Mr. Fisher, is editor of a labour paper. The seven Ministers all entered Parliament together in 1893, when a party of 17 was elected as a result of the great industrial struggle which had been waged just before.'

### CATHOLIC NUNS IN WAR.

It was only when lying wounded and dying upon the battle-field—'his battered casque and plumage gone'—that Marmion found woman to be 'a ministering angel.' A like lesson was painfully learned in like circumstances by many a non-Catholic soldier

regarding the Sisters of Mercy in the Crimean campaign, in the great American Civil War, and more recently still in the brief struggle between the United States and Spain. The present war in South Africa will be the means of tearing up many a deep-rooted prejudice from the minds of non-Catholic soldiers. To learn is often slow. To unlearn is generally hard, especially when it is a question of parting with ingrained and long-standing prejudice. But the battle-field and the military hospital are stern schools where every lesson is learned with pain, if not with agony. But once learned, it is not likely to be soon forgotten. In the Matabele campaign the Dominican Nuns at Buluwayo gave soldier and settler and miner alike a noble evidence of the height and depth of the self-sacrifice and charity of Catholic Sisterhoods. The same is being done in the present war by the Sisters of Nazareth and the Sisters of the Holy Family who are tending and comforting the sick and wounded within the beleaguered lines of Mafeking and Kimberley and Ladysmith. When train after train was bringing packed loads of refugees in open trucks from Johannesburg to places of safety at the Cape or Durban or Lorenzo Marquez, the Sisters of Nazareth remained behind in the half-deserted city to tend the sick in their hospital, and to find food for the seven hundred orphans and for the helpless old people (mostly British subjects) who had none others to stand between them and the pangs of absolute starvation.

About the time that the first shot of the war was fired, Mgr. Gaughran, Vicar-Apostolic of the Orange Free State, wired to the Sisters of Nazareth at Mafeking. He gave them their

choice to remain at their posts and face the music of the Boer bullets or to leave the threatened frontier town for safer quarters farther south. The Salvation Army 'lasses' and others who might have given a helpful hand moved off southwards in the crowded passenger trains to places where bullets do not whistle nor shrapnel shells shriek and explode. But without one exception or one moment of hesitation the Sisters of Nazareth decided to remain. And they are now giving to the British wounded the tender and skilful services which their dark-clad companions within the Transvaal are rendering to the Boers. A Protestant writer in a South African paper says of the beleaguered nurses of Mafeking: 'Whilst the Sisters would very probably be the very last persons in the world to desire any public commendation of their course, it seems only fair that attention should be called to their conduct. In this age of money-getting and place-hunting, such deeds as these confirm our faith in the beauty of self-sacrifice and humanity.' The same Order of Sisters and those of the Holy Family are rendering the same kind services at Kimberley and Ladysmith. At Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town their convents, schools, and hospitals are crowded with refugees from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In one of its recent issues, the North London Advertiser editorially refers as follows to the good work which is being done by the Sisters of Nazareth in South Africa: 'England must be proud of such brave ladies, and those that slander their religion should go and do likewise instead of bearing false witness against their neighbours.'

In South Africa as in the Crimea and the great American Civil War, it will probably take some time for the ingrained prejudice against the Catholic name and the religious habit to quite melt away. But the thaw has already well set in. Even when the Sisters of Mercy were gratuitously toiling and dying of cold and hunger and overwork and disease at their unpaid post of duty in the Crimea, there were to be found some inglorious varlets—even clergymen—who sat in guilty comfort in their easy chairs in England and in pamphlet and newspaper railed at and ridiculed their admitted devotion to the sick and wounded soldiers of the Queen. The undoubtedly valuable services of Miss Nightingale were made the theme of song and story. Those of the Sisters of Mercy were either passed over in absolute silence or coldly and thanklessly accepted as a sheer matter of course. Miss Nightingale was, however, more generous than either the clergymen or the journalists of her time. Shortly after the close of the war she wrote the following words to the Superior who had been in charge of the Sisters during the course of that sublimely blundering campaign:—

I do not presume to express praise or gratitude to you, Rev. Mother; because it would look as though I thought you had done this work not unto God but unto me. You were far above me in fitness for the general superintendency in worldly talent of administration, and far more in the spiritual qualifications which God values in a superior; my being placed over you was my misfortune, not my fault. What you have done for the work no one can ever say. I do not presume to give you any other tribute but my tears.

In the American Civil War of the sixties the chief glories of the hospital work were by unanimous consent accorded to the Catholic nursing Sisters—the Sisters of Charity, the Sisters of Mercy, and the Sisters of the Holy Cross. At the opening of that long and deadly campaign, two circumstances combined to somewhat hamper the good work done without fee or reward by the Sisters: One was the galling suspicion and dislike of the non-Catholic private soldier; the other was the exasperating obstacles placed in the Sisters' path by army surgeons, army officers, and other war officials who were gifted with strong and well-fed and bulky prejudices against things and persons Catholic—and especially against those strange women in strange uniforms who were known as 'Sisters,' and who were regarded as companies from the monstrous Amazonian regiments of the Man of Sin. The Sisters, however, had no vanity to wound. They had no resentment to repay. So they

The "ANGLO SPECIAL" Cycle Is absolutely the Best Colonial-built Cycle. B. S. A. and Co. Parts. Prices: Gent's, £21; Lady's, £22. Call and see them. THE ANGLO-NEW ZEALAND CYCLE CO., 6 PRINCES STREET.