

Father Patterson, and Misses Nicholson (2), Rist (3), Nelly Donovan, M. Thorne, E. Miller, and M. E. Sheahan. Miss Agnes McGuire recited. A most enjoyable evening was spent.

His Lordship the Bishop went out to Otahuhu last Sunday and unveiled the beautiful statue of Our Blessed Lady, to which reference has been already made. The ceremony was attended by the parish priest, Rev. Father O'Hara, and a large congregation.

The Feast of the Assumption was celebrated in the city churches with due solemnity. Early Masses were celebrated at St. Patrick's and St. Benedict's and at the Sacred Heart (Ponsonby) and St. John the Baptist's (Parnell). At the Cathedral at the 6.30 Mass the Children of Mary's choir sang several hymns to our Blessed Lady. A large number of the faithful received Holy Communion. At St. Benedict's a number of boys and girls received their First Communion. In the evening his Lordship the Bishop addressed the first communicants, and exhorted them to ever remain true to their holy religion by which they would be good dutiful children, and hereafter good citizens and friends of Almighty God. A 'Te Deum' was then sung by the choir. A word of praise is due to the good Sisters of St. Joseph for the handsome manner in which the high altar was decorated.

OPENING OF RANFURLY NEW PRESBYTERY

(By our Special Reporter.)

On last Sunday the handsome new presbytery erected by the Rev. W. A. MacMullan at Ranfurly was blessed and opened. Despite a keen wind that blew from the snow-clad ranges that rise out of the broad Maniototo plain which forms the centre of the Ranfurly parish, a large congregation assembled from every part of the district to witness the conferring of the Church's blessing on the good work which Father MacMullan and his people have for some time had in hand. The ceremony took place at 11.30 a.m. in the presence of a large gathering of the parishioners. The rite of blessing the new building was performed by the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, of Lawrence, assisted by the Rev. W. A. MacMullan (Ranfurly) and the Rev. H. W. Cleary (Dunedin). At its completion a Missa Cantata was sung in the adjoining church by the Rev. H. W. Cleary. The sermon for the occasion was preached by the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary. He took for his subject the feast within the octave of which the work of the past few months had been crowned by the Church's solemn benison, and delivered an able and striking discourse on the Assumption of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, drawing therefrom, in terse and taking phrase, many practical lessons for daily life and conduct. The Very Rev. preacher created a great impression upon his hearers. At the close of his discourse he paid a high and well-merited encomium on the style and finish of the new and much-needed parochial residence, on the excellent thought and taste which had been bestowed upon it by the pastor, and on the marked generosity of the congregation, as evidenced by the large donations already given by them to this and other church purposes in the parish.

The music of the Mass was rendered in excellent style by a large and competent choir of well-practised voices. Miss Herlihy presided at the organ. After Mass a collection was taken up and realised close on £80. At its close the Rev. Father MacMullan returned cordial thanks to the visiting clergy; to his brother-priests who had given him their kindly and practical help and encouragement in his work; to the choir for their valued and efficient service on the occasion; and to the people for the generous contributions which they had given, and the endless manifestations of goodwill and thoughtful kindness which they had shown to him ever since he had come to minister amongst them. The Rev. Father declared that he was proud to labor in the sacred ministry for and amidst such people. The ceremonies concluded with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, at which the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary was assisted by the Rev. Fathers MacMullan and Cleary, the choir supplying the music in their customary efficient style. Among its members our representative had the pleasure of discovering Miss Annett, the estimable young lady teacher whose infamous treatment by cowardly fanatics focussed the scandalised eyes of New Zealand on Rongahere a few years ago, and formed the subject of a series of plain-English articles in the editorial columns of the 'N.Z. Tablet.'

The new presbytery is of a substantial character. It was designed by Mr. H. M. Davey, architect, Dunedin,

under the direction of the Rev. Father MacMullan. Being erected in a locality where the wind is very much felt at times, it is constructed of brick, with hollow walls, the hollows being filled up with concrete. This ensures great rigidity of the structure. The building consists of the following:—Reception room, octagon ended, well lighted with four windows finished above with cathedral glass lead lights, the woodwork being picked red pine; dining room, lighted by three windows with cathedral glass lights, and having presses and library shelves also in picked red pine. There are three bedrooms, a bath room, kitchen, back kitchen, pantry, etc. The out-buildings consist of a coach-house, cowshed, fowl-house, wash-house, etc. Water is fairly abundant, there being a well from which water can be pumped up as needed, and two large tanks, one being placed high for the shower, and this overflows into the lower one so that the water is conserved as much as possible. The whole was built by Mr. Geo. Greaves (Dunedin), the plastering being done by Messrs. Philp and Son, the painting by Mr. Pledger, and the lead lights by Messrs. Smith and Smith. The iron gates were locally made. There is a verandah in front, the whole being on a substantial concrete foundation. The presbytery is very convenient to the church. In consequence of the strong winds which occasionally blow in the district the roof of the building has been tied down with iron to the concrete filling between the walls to prevent it from being carried away. Great praise is due to those of the Rev. Father MacMullan's congregation who devoted their time to the cartage of a quantity of material, some of these having to come from a great distance for the purpose.

The furnishing and appointments of the new presbytery are all in excellent taste and finish, and the building is one of the handsomest and most complete in the diocese. The grounds are well laid out and arrangements are made for planting them in handsome and up-to-date style with ornamental trees and shrubs. Through the forethought of the Rev. Father MacMullan a valuable freehold property of 62 acres was secured, and on it, adjoining the rising town of Ranfurly, the church (a handsome and substantial structure) and the presbytery stand. This fine property already forms a useful endowment to the parish, and, situated as it is in a well-populated and thriving district, it is sure to increase greatly in value as time goes on. Last Sunday's proceedings added a fresh and memorable chapter to the history of the marked and solid progress which the Church is making in the district.

Southland News Notes

(From our own correspondent.)

The I. A. Dramatic Society stage a play at Kennington on Friday evening in aid of the organ fund.

The 'Liliputian Fair' in connection with the parish schools is to take place this week, and from all appearances it will be a thorough success.

The building of the Invercargill municipal theatre is being pushed forward with considerable energy, and several other works in course of construction give the town a lively and progressive appearance.

Another of the winter socials in connection with the Athletic Football Club was held last week and, as usual, was well attended. The popularity of such functions seems never to wane, in fact the socials are looked forward to with eager expectation, especially by the younger portion of the congregation.

The members of the Literary and Debating Society recently entertained the president, Mr. M. O'Brien. Mr. J. Robertson presided, and referred at length to the lengthy services rendered by Mr. O'Brien to this and kindred societies, and trusted that in the future, as well as in the past, he would place his services at the disposal of the congregation and the community at large. The chairman's expressions were endorsed by Messrs. D. J. Corcoran, J. Aitken, T. P. Giffedder, J. Mulvey, L. W. J. Morton, T. Cavanagh, and others. In the course of his reply Mr. O'Brien assured members and their friends that his assistance and co-operation would always be forthcoming in connection with all good works and undertakings.

Mr. and Mrs. Butler, of Thornbury, who are leaving that district for Ashburton, were last week accorded a farewell banquet by the people of the western locality. They were also the recipients of inscribed mementoes, which will doubtless serve the purpose of keeping in memory the happy days gone by in the district from which they are departing.