

as the day of peace to the war-shattered population of Port Arthur. Just ten years ago Jeremiah McAuliffe, the discoverer of Kanowna, in Western Australia, arrived at Kurnalpi after a long and heart-breaking journey over scorched sandy plains where not a drop of water could be procured. He and his horses were at death's door—perishing of heat and thirst. McAuliffe led his death's-head team to a condenser and treated them to just as much water as would save their lives. He paid the price previously stipulated and took a receipt. It ran as follows: 'To one drink for 8 horses and a foal, £15 11s.' There are worse things in Australia than grass-fires.

Some Charlatans

One of the little comedies of New Zealand journalism consists in the occasional reproofs of credulity and superstitions that appear in the editorial columns, while the advertising pages are spotted with the advertisements of 'futurists,' fortune-tellers, palmists, 'astro-mathematicians,' and the rest of the horde of parasitic quacks and charlatans, of which the country could advantageously export a big brigade.

'Since knowledge is but sorrow's spy,
It is not safe to know.'

For our good, God has hidden the future from our eyes. Those sin who seek to lift the veil from tomorrow or next week or next year by the arts of the fortune-teller. 'Certainly it is possible,' says a writer in the 'Catholic World,' 'for Almighty God to tell our fortunes; He knows them; it is a necessary part of His omniscience. But can we seriously believe, even for a moment, that the Lord is going to do this by means of tea leaves or a pack of cards, or any other part of the fortune-teller's outfit? No one surely does or can imagine such a thing. Nor can we imagine that the holy angels or the saints in heaven, who share to some extent in the knowledge of God, are going to use such means. No; a thousand times no! If God wills to reveal everything to us, He will do it by means of prophets evidently inspired by Him, or at any rate in some way worthy of His glory and majesty. We can then confidently say that any real or genuine fortune telling is the work of the devil. By fortune telling I mean all forecasting of the future, which does not come from any real scientific or expert knowledge of the subject in general—such knowledge as the astronomer, the weather man or the Wall street man obviously has. To try then, seriously, to ascertain the future by fortune telling is implicitly to invoke the devil.'

A Great Civic Service

In Australia and New Zealand the Catholic Church has a practically complete monopoly of religious primary education. In the United States the good work is shared, although to a relatively small extent, by the Lutherans and the Jews. The recently issued report of the United States Commissioner of Education states (says the 'New World') 'that 16,009,361 pupils attended the public schools during the last fiscal year, and that the cost of education now averages 22.75 dollars (about £4 10s) a year for each pupil the country over. The same report states that during the same time 1,093,876 pupils attended the private schools. As everybody knows, the private schools are chiefly parochial schools; consequently the bulk of this class of attendance belongs to them. The "Catholic Directory," in fact, shows that 1,000,000 pupils are attending those schools. If these were sent to the public schools, of course it would cost 22.75 dollars a year to educate them. Since they were not, obviously the State was saved this 22.75 dollars, per pupil, or a total of 22,750,000 dollars (about (£4,550,000) all told. What it saves in cost of putting up school buildings is simply incalculable.'

Catholics in Australia and New Zealand are, in proportion to their number, rendering at least an equally valuable service to the State. With our American contemporary we might ask: 'Has the State no gratitude for this immense service? Ought it not to admit frankly that of all the religious organisations laboring in this country the Catholic Church is the most helpful? Not only is the Church doing its full duty in aiding the development of social order, it is giving the State actual assistance for which the latter should be grateful. What other Church in America is donating such vast sums annually to the cause of education?'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

The annual retreat of the clergy of the diocese commences on Monday evening at Holy Cross College.

The Christman Brothers' School re-opens on Monday, January 30, and St. Joseph's parochial school on Monday next.

The general committee in connection with the school children's annual picnic, which will be held on February 1, at Waikouaiti, met on Monday evening in St. Joseph's Hall, when it was reported that the arrangements for the outing were well advanced. The train is expected to leave Dunedin about 9 o'clock and will stop at Pelichet Bay and Port Chalmers for the convenience of intending excursionists.

NEW ZEALAND GENERAL

It is said that a fruit-canning factory will shortly be established in Christchurch.

The sum of £130,000 was invested on the totalisator at various race meetings in New Zealand on December 26 and 27.

The 'Triad' for January contains a good deal of interesting information on music, science, literature, and art, and is beautifully illustrated.

A trout weighing 22lb was shown in Blenheim recently. It was to be forwarded to Wellington after being frozen at Picton.

Speaking to a representative of the 'Press' on Monday, Mr. J. C. Blackmore, Government pomologist, stated that orchards in Central Otago were remarkably prolific this year, and that the canning factory at Roxburgh would have a busy time before it.

The Borough of Timaru is apparently a very desirable place in which to live, as during the month of December not a single borough resident died. The registrar says this is the first time within his recollection that such a state of affairs has existed.

It is noticed in the 'Gazette' that Mr. Hugh Gibben, of Christchurch, has been appointed a justice of the peace. Mr. Gibben's many friends on the West Coast, especially in Hokitika, where he had been for many years Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum, will be pleased at the honor conferred on him.

An occasional correspondent writes: The parishioners of the Lower Hutt held their picnic as usual in the presbytery grounds. It was a great success, netting £50 for school purposes. The grounds were visited in the afternoon by the Right Hon. the Premier, Mrs. Seddon, and family, also by Sir Joseph Ward and family, who made themselves most popular. Despite many counter attractions the picnic has been an unqualified success.

A fatal fire occurred at Oamaru on Saturday morning, George Leslie (tobacconist) meeting his death. The outbreak occurred in Leslie's shop and spread to the adjoining premises of Fox (bootmaker), Miss Brown (art repository), and Miss Falconer (dressmaker), the upper portions of the shops being destroyed and the stocks damaged by fire and water. It is supposed Leslie overturned a candle and set fire to his bedclothes. He was found lying on the floor, evidently suffocated when endeavoring to reach the door.

A Geraldine correspondent writes: A mission opened in Geraldine on Sunday week, New Year's Day, and was brought to a close on last Sunday evening. The mission was conducted by the Rev. Father Shearman, C.S.S.R., assisted by the parish priest, the Very Rev. Father Bowers. The exercises were remarkably well attended throughout, the beautifully kept church being well filled all through the week, while on Sunday last it was densely crowded. The number of communicants was most gratifying, and the mission was in every respect a great success.