

# THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

## MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

(Contributed.)

WELLINGTON.

The first colonising expedition, promoted by Captain Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Chairman of the New Zealand Land Company, landed at Port Nicholson from the ship 'Tory,' 400 tons, under command of Colonel William Wakefield, brother of the founder, on September 20, 1839. The site of the projected town and large tracts of the adjacent country were acquired from the Natives by the Company, at what must be considered very advantageous terms, although only after greatly protracted negotiations. The ship 'Cuba' next put in an appearance, conveying a staff of surveyors under Captain Smith. A township was laid off or planned on the Petone Beach, and named Britannia, and here the first settlers landed. A change of locality for a permanent town was after a few months decided upon, the result being the present site and alteration of name to Wellington. The time seems not far distant, however, when Greater Wellington will have so far extended that the historic spot marking the beginning of things will be absorbed in the rising city. The settlement was established under what seemed favorable conditions, and on January 22, 1840, just a week before the arrival of Captain Hobson at the Bay of Islands (as first Governor), the emigrant ship 'Aurora' arrived at Port Nicholson with the first shipment of regular British colonists.

Writing in his diary, Bishop Pompallier thus describes the first occasion upon which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up in this newly-founded settlement:—Accompanied by Father Pesant, who was now able to speak a little of the Maori language, I set sail from Akaroa for Port Nicholson. We arrived there on Christmas Eve, 1840. There is a rising town of about 3500 Europeans, among whom are some hundreds of Irish Catholics, who greatly desired to receive the succors of religion at the hands of a legitimately consecrated minister. There were also at Port Nicholson and in its neighborhood several populous tribes of Natives. The day after my arrival I celebrated Holy Mass in a House which the Catholic magistrate lent me for the purpose. All the Catholics, and a large number of Protestants assisted thereat. I gave them all an instruction in English. Several Natives also came to witness the ceremonies of the Mother Church, of which they knew more by the falsehoods they had heard against her than by the truths—that characterise her legitimacy and her divinity. As the missionary who accompanied me was not sufficiently well versed in either English or Maori, I exercised alone the sacred ministry in my pastoral visits, in which I applied myself to making known the true Church and the principal truths of salvation, and held out the hope of soon being able to send them a resident Catholic priest. We remained ten days at Port Nicholson. There I heard the confessions of the whites belonging to the faith, conferred Baptism on their children, blessed the marriages that had not been celebrated by a Catholic priest, and also gave Confirmation to a certain number of persons whom I had prepared. All the whites belonging to the faith showed much eagerness and zeal in profiting by the aids of salvation. I gathered them together at the end of my visit in a large room, and they opened a subscription for the erection of a church. The representative of the English Society was present; he gave also a handsome subscription and made a gift of a piece of land for the establishment of the Catholic mission. All the best Protestant society in the town showed great civility and kindness to the Catholic Bishop. After having left at Port Nicholson a pious and well-informed white catechist in the person of Dr. Fitzgerald, I set sail again for Akaroa, which was reached after a rapid and pleasant voyage. Mentioning this first visit of the Bishop to Wellington, Mr. E. J. Wakefield, in his book, 'Adventure in New Zealand,' says: Monsignor Pompallier, the Catholic Bishop of New Zealand, had visited Wellington during my absence, on his return from the French settlement at Akaroa, to his headquarters at the Bay of Islands. The gentlemen of the club and others who had enjoyed his acquaintance, spoke highly of his urbane manners and his philanthropic views with regard to the Natives. "A merry Christmas" and a "Happy New Year" had been celebrated in old English style. Fat bullocks had been slaughtered and dressed with evergreens, and the new year salu-

ted with ringing of bells, firing of cannon, and hoisting of flags.

About two years after this visit of the Bishop the Rev. J. J. P. O'Reilly arrived at Wellington, and devoted himself with great zeal to the spiritual care of the scattered faithful of the district. There was, stated Sir Charles Clifford, in a speech made in London in 1874, as yet no priest stationed there when he landed there in 1842. The Catholics were very numerous, and they agreed to assemble at my house on Sundays and holidays in order to, as much as possible, sanctify those days.

It is evident, however, that towards the end of the same year, or at the beginning of the year following, Father O'Reilly arrived on the scene. The earliest authentic record connected with Father O'Reilly, that most zealous missionary, who saw the Empire City rise from very small proportions to a large and important town, is contained in a letter written by him to the 'Australasian Chronicle,' of Sydney, in the month of April, 1843, which is republished in the 'History of the Catholic Church in Australasia':—"I came here" (Wellington), Father O'Reilly writes, "in the ship with the Hon. Mr. Petre on the application of the Most Rev. Dr. Murray, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, to take charge of what Catholics might be here. I was delighted to find some of my poor countrymen here from Erin's most distant shores, and it cheered me to let them see, if I could do nothing else, the solicitude of the Church in their regard. They are, in truth, like the Jews, scattered everywhere; but not like that historical nation to parcel out in fragments, broken and disconnected, the gem of truth, but to offer it whole and without flaw in the vast bosom of the Catholic Church. The poor people have no chapel here as yet, nor have they means of providing one. Up to the present we have been saying Mass in a room adjoining a public house; we are lately removed to an old store on the beach. Might I ask it as a favor of you to announce your willingness to receive the subscriptions of any of our good neighbors of Sydney who might without injury to their local charities confer a mite on us. Having given the temperance pledge 'to some thousands of my dear countrymen in Ireland, it may be that I am known to some stray member of the flock in Sydney.' The letter is dated from Wellington, Port Nicholson, April 2, 1843. Father O'Reilly was a Capuchin and a member of the same religious Order as the famous Father Mathew, and was one of his first and most energetic fellow-laborers in the cause of temperance in Kilkenny, Dublin, and elsewhere.

(To be Continued.)

## How the French Priests Live

A correspondent of a Paris paper has made inquiries as to how many of the priests of France are managing to make ends meet. The results of his investigation are interesting, and the reader will find that the Apostolic zeal of the priests, is only equalled by their devotion to the very important duty which they owe themselves, namely, that of making a living.

It is clear that the priests are not engaged in their trades and professions for the purpose of gathering a fortune; on the contrary, every surplus penny earned beyond the sum necessary for meeting domestic expenditure, goes to the Church Treasury, or, as in many cases, to the assistance of neighbouring parish-priests, who may either not be so enterprising, or lack the opportunity of showing what they can do.

It is a great point in favour of several of the priest-workers that they were engaged in professional pursuits before they felt the call to serve humanity.

Thus Canon Brisacier, of Tours, was an architect, Abbe Shoyez, of Angiers, a sculptor, others were printers, artists or watchmakers, the last trade a favourite pursuit formerly among the French clergy, even when their incomes amounted to ten times more than what was paid them under the Concordat regime.

Perhaps, the most interesting performance by a priest, in the matter of gaining a livelihood under the new conditions, is that of Abbe Martin who publishes the 'Trait d'Union,' the organ of the Catholic Alliance of France. The Abbe has three linotypes in full running order, operated by seminary students.

Says the Abbe, in speaking of his work:—"Our subscribers number several thousands, and we count them in Canada, in South America, and in the United States, in China, Australia, and India. Our correspondence is dated from every quarter of the globe, and there comes no mail from any important centre which does not bring its quota of subscriptions. Even lay

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