

The first deep family grief felt by the Emperor was when his favourite brother, the Archduke Ferdinand, later known as the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, was shot by the Mexican insurgents on June 19, 1867, and the tragedy was made all the more sad by the fact that the ex-Empress Charlotte of Mexico became insane with grief.

A simple liver, Francis Joseph has enjoyed excellent health, despite his domestic sorrows. His principal home is the castle of Schoenbrunn near Vienna. He also has a residence near the Hungarian capital, Budapest. No prince of the Hapsburg House ever enjoyed such universal respect, and whoever has occasion to approach the Grand Old Man among the monarchs of the world is filled with enthusiasm for his charm of manner, his democratic approachableness, his frankness, and his sterling sense of justice. Notwithstanding his great age, nearly 78 years, he rises before five, summer and winter, and spends several hours a day at his desk at state and military affairs. His Majesty is a most generous giver to the poor and suffering, and is also a very liberal patron of arts and letters, and no considerable exhibition is given in the capital without his visiting it, and buying a number of valuable canvases selected by him with rare taste.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

The United Irish League held a social gathering at Lyons' rooms on Thursday evening as a welcome to Mr. M. Kennedy, Mr. J. C. Fitzgerald, and Mr. L. Paton, and also as inaugurating a series of similar meetings this winter in the general interests of the League (says the 'New Zealand Times'). The chair was occupied by Mr. Kennedy, and he was supported on his right by Councillor McLaren, and on his left by Mr. J. C. Fitzgerald, who has returned to Wellington after an absence of eleven months.

Replying to the toast of welcome, proposed by Mr. Moran, and spoken to by Councillor McLaren and Mr. J. Fitzgerald, Mr. Kennedy congratulated the League upon the success of the gathering, at which he was pleased to see so many members present. He was only too glad to lend his support towards the objects they had in view. In connection with Home Rule, a little while ago they had teen a cablegram from Home that this had been postponed for some time to come, but recently they had noticed that Home Rule had been reinstated in the British Government's programme, as Mr. Redmond had stated it would be. Hitherto they had been told that so long as there were dissentients in the party in the House of Commons it would be impossible to get any considerable hearing in the House. The dissension, however, had passed away. The party was now united, and with such unanimity as there was at present, they had every reason to believe that some good would result. If they did not get complete Home Rule immediately, at any rate they could be assured that a considerable measure of relief would be afforded to the people of Ireland; and, of course, the duty of the League was to support the party that had emblazoned on its flag complete Home Rule.

Mr. J. Carey Fitzgerald, in also acknowledging the toast, said he regretted the absence, through illness, of Mr. P. J. O'Regan. It was eleven months since he had met them in that room, and again on his return he was met with expressions of goodwill and by that bond which knit the race together all the world over, old and young, humble and exalted, in a common effort for a common cause, and it could be no ordinary or ignoble movement that could find such patriotic expression as he had found existed right throughout Australasia. He had spent some months in Western Australia, where he had met Mr. Keir Hardie. The latter's words to him were, 'The labor man who is opposed to Home Rule for Ireland or any other country doesn't know the A.B.C. of his political creed.' He urged the Irishmen in Wellington to form a Celtic Club on the lines of similar clubs which were so successful in Australia.

The musical programme, which was under the direction of Mr. J. McLaughlin, was contributed to by Miss McKay, Messrs. A. Foote, Archer, O'Kane, Hines, and Petersen. The hon. secretary, Mr. J. Finlay, made very complete arrangements for the entertainment of the company.

Blenheim

(From our own correspondent.)

His Grace the Archbishop of Wellington has arrived here, and will bless and open a new church on Sunday, May 10, at Renwicktown, a village settlement about eight miles from Blenheim. The opening of two Catholic churches within two years is somewhat of a record for this part of the Dominion. In the evening his Grace will administer Confirmation at St. Mary's Church.

Hawera

(From our own correspondent.)

May 8.

During the past few months a great deal of interest has been centered in the Manara Convent and its work. In that part of the parish, the Sisters have to work under great difficulties as it is a great dairying district, and it is very difficult to get the regular attendance of the pupils, which is so necessary for the best results. This year there has been a marked improvement, and it is very gratifying to know that splendid progress is being made. On Friday, May 1, twenty-three of the children received their First Communion at the eight o'clock Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Father M. M. O'Dwyer. The parents, who have manifested a great interest in their children's spiritual welfare, were present in large numbers. After Mass the children were entertained at breakfast by the Sisters, which was followed by a short concert in the school at which Father O'Dwyer, Mr. Maldon and many of the parents were present. The items were all very creditably rendered, the contributors being, Misses Milnes, Cassie McKenzie, and J. Landers. During the interval an address was presented to Rev. Father O'Dwyer, thanking him for his great kindness in preparing the children for their First Communion, and accompanied by a silver-mounted umbrella. Rev. Father O'Dwyer thanked them for their very kind remarks and present, and gave the children some very sound and useful advice. At the conclusion of the entertainment, Mr. Maldon thanked the Sisters for their kind invitation, and also spoke in very eulogistic terms of the good work they had accomplished. He took the opportunity of presenting the boys with a football, and also offered to procure some suitable means of amusement for the girls.

DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

(From our own correspondent.)

May 11.

The May devotions at the Cathedral and St. Mary's, Manchester street, are being well attended each evening.

Although the Canterbury representatives were prevented owing to the flooded state of the Waimakariri from getting through to the Otira on the day of the tunnel ceremony, Mr. John O'Halloran, of Glentui, essayed the journey on the night previous. Finding himself the sole Canterbury man present, he at once undertook the duties of representing the province, and discharged the duties to the evident satisfaction of both press and public.

The St. Patrick's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society is inaugurating a movement to secure increased membership, and circulars are being issued showing the many advantages offered to Catholic young men to join the society. As the movement is of a competitive nature, led by the president, Bro. R. P. O'Shaughnessy, and vice-president, Bro. J. McAleer, the result should prove both beneficial and interesting. It is pleasing to note also that several leading Catholic citizens are joining the branch as honorary members.

At Easter an open-air fete held in the Athletic Grounds, Leeston, illuminated by the electric light, installed by Mr. A. E. Brown, of Christchurch, was a great success. The Ellesmere Brass Band performed several selections during the evening. A number of attractions and competitions were introduced, and proved very remunerative. A committee formed from the congregations of Leeston and Southbridge churches, with the Rev. Father Hills, S.M., as chairman, organised and carried out the gathering, which was in aid of the Leeston convent schools, a profit of £225 being made.

A very successful concert was given by St. Mary's Court Minstrels and Variety Company in St. Mary's Hall on Monday evening last. There was a crowded

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