

THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

(Contributed.)
WELLINGTON.

(Continued.)

From the school boys were drafted, some for service at the altar, others for the choir. My brother and I were selected for the latter. Mr. Huntly was choirmaster, Mrs. (Dr.) Fitzgerald organist. Of this lady it was said that nothing was ever allowed to interfere with her choir practice. Dr. Fitzgerald, colonial surgeon in charge of the provincial hospital, was either originator, or mainstay of every undertaking for charity, or the furtherance of our holy religion. The other adult male members of our choir were splendidly supported by several bandsmen of H.M. Sixty-Fifth Regiment, whose headquarters were then in Wellington. The two brothers Currie, Rattigan, and Ward all helped vocally, but on festival occasions their instruments were brought into requisition. The question of raising funds for Church purposes, owing to sparseness of population, and consequent scarcity of money, was one of great difficulty. The comparatively short time occupied in the erection of St. Mary's Cathedral in Thorndon was a matter of astonishment to all, especially to our non-Catholic neighbors. The liberal donor of the site (the Hon. Mr. Petre), Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Clifford, Dr. Fitzgerald, and other Catholic gentlemen of the time gave valuable and generous assistance.

The first Holy Week ceremonies held in the Cathedral made a deep impression on the minds of all who witnessed them. On Holy Thursday the good Bishop washed the feet of twelve boys. In those days Mr. Clifford had frequent visitors from the Old Land, gentlemen who, so far as we boys were concerned, were a much appreciated addition to a noted Catholic household. One of these, Mr. Stapleton, spent a great deal of his time training boys for the altar. One Easter Sunday this kindly gentleman provided at his sole expense a luncheon for altar boys, choir, schoolmasters, and all who were in any way connected with the Cathedral. He also added considerably to the enjoyment of the company by assisting at the table, and seeing that the juvenile portion particularly were well served.

MARLBOROUGH AND THE SOUNDS.

Through the kindness of the Rev. Father Holley, S.M., I have obtained from Mr. John O'Sullivan, at one time a pupil of the late Archpriest Garin, the following valuable information regarding Marlborough and the Sounds:—

From 1850, the date of Father Garin's appointment to Nelson, to 1864, the date of Father Seauzeau's appointment to Blenheim, a space of fourteen years, Father Garin had charge of this place, and made periodical visits from Nelson. Those visits were attended with great difficulties and danger to life. The only known route at that time between Nelson and Blenheim was by way of Top House and Wairau Valley, a distance of 110 miles. There being no formed roads or bridges, very dangerous rivers (in which many of our most prominent pioneer settlers lost their lives) had to be forded. The Catholics were few and very scattered, necessitating a continuous travel, beset with the same difficulties as stated above. There being no church here in those days, Mass was celebrated in the settlers' houses, and to show how that saintly priest worked, never sparing himself, I will mention one instance. I and four other Catholics, were road-making 25 miles back in the country, and finding no way of communicating with us, he rode that 25 miles to let us know that Mass would be celebrated on the following Sunday, at Mr. C. Murphy's house, near Blenheim. When he arrived at our camp he looked very faint and tired, the effect, no doubt, of so much continuous and rough travelling. He sat down in our tent and partook of our rough fare—some damper and mutton and a pannikin of tea—and returned on his road to Blenheim, making a journey of 50 miles, so that we might benefit by attending Mass during his visit. This is only one instance of many others I could name, attesting to Father Garin's great zeal and perseverance in the interests of his scattered flock in those early days. Some idea of what he had to encounter may be formed when it is known that in those days he had to attend to the spiritual wants of the Catholics scattered over all that country forming the entire south coast of Cook

Strait from Cape Farewell to Cape Campbell, and down the east coast as far as Kaikoura, a distance of about 250 miles, with all its bays and sounds. I have met him in both extremes of this country, weary and jaded from rough travelling, but always with a smile and a cheerful word, never complaining. In visiting the Sounds, he had to start from Blenheim. There being no road between Blenheim and Picton, he had to walk that distance, 20 miles, and then go from Picton to all parts of the Sounds by open boat as best he could. His fare was at times of the roughest kind, there being no other accommodation than that afforded by a whaling station or a Native settlement. When Father Seauzeau was appointed to Blenheim, Father Garin was relieved of all that part of the country comprised in the Province of Marlborough. In time Father Seauzeau erected three small churches, one in Blenheim, one in Picton, and one in Havelock. When Father Pezant joined him as assistant priest he appointed him to the northern portion of the mission, including Picton, Havelock, and the Sounds. In attending to the requirements of his district, Father Pezant suffered many hardships and privations. Having had his leg broken in a coach accident, he would not afterwards travel by coach, and not being a horseman, he had to do all his journeys on foot, or by boat when in the Sounds. It was distressing to see him, in all kinds of weather, travelling with a load strapped on his back. It was enough to break down a young man, how much more so a man so far advanced in years as the Rev. Father was. He disapproved of the sites on which the Picton and Havelock churches stood, and suggested to the parishioners that they should buy new sites and remove the churches. To this they demurred on account of the cost, but so determined was the good priest in carrying out this idea, and he set men to work, and pulled down both churches when, as a matter of course, the parishioners had to fall in with his plans. As a consequence the two churches now stand on two of the best sites procurable.

On one of his periodical visits in the Sounds, he took a near cut over a wooded range to call on a Native settlement, and after a very rough journey he found that the whole of the people were away from home being absent on a fishing or wild pig-hunting expedition. It was too late in the day to return over the range and he had to take up his quarters that night in a boat-shed, without bedding or food. Next morning, after breakfasting on some raw pumpkins which he found in the garden, he retraced his steps back over the mountain. On another occasion he took a journey similar to the one above related to attend a dying woman. He and a young boy, acting as guide, got benighted in the bush, and had to spend the night on the range. The boy soon fell asleep, and Father Pezant, in pity, covered the sleeping boy with his own coat. On arriving at the dying woman's house, a grievous shock awaited him. The woman refused to see him. Being married to a non-Catholic, she adhered to the advice of her husband, and died two days later, without the rites of the Church..

(To be continued.)

The Irish University Bill

As we were informed by cable at the time, Mr. Birrell introduced the Irish University Bill in the House of Commons on March 31. After some introductory remarks Mr. Birrell proceeded to give an account of the present state of University education in Ireland, and an outline of the measure. There are, he said, two universities in Ireland—the one founded by Queen Elizabeth, and the other by Queen Victoria—two famous women, but separated by a long distance of time. The older foundation is, of course, the University of Dublin, so inextricably entangled with its one college, Trinity, as to be known throughout the whole world as Trinity College, Dublin. Everyone knows Trinity College, her imposing site—one of the noblest in Europe—her magnificent buildings, her famous library with its priceless manuscripts, her gardens, and her proud memories in science, literature, and mathematics. This is a great foundation, splendidly situated, and comfortably endowed. It has about 1000 students. From private sources it receives £50,000, and altogether about £80,000 per annum. Catholics were admitted in 1793, and in 1873 people of that religion were admitted to cash emoluments. Ireland's other University is the Royal, founded in 1879, which replaced the former Queen's University, established in 1850. The Royal was not

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