

edification such silly romances are invented. Many who peruse these columns will, for instance, recall the droll clues which Max Adeler furnished in order to enable the alert reader to detect the hoax in his story of the Marble Man.

So much for the dramatis personæ. Now for the drama. After much cogitation, the 'illustrious painter' (and glazier) came to the conclusion that he could manage to procure the 'exact representation' of 'Mary in Heaven,' 'as she is,' for Pious Fiction without the bother of a trip to heaven and back. By some unstated and extraordinary means, he discovered that there was such a thing as a Bible, and that it would be necessary to go to it for 'authentic details about Mary.' But

'Willow, willow, woe is me! Alack! and well-a-day!'

Poor Joseph Peter had no Bible! None, of course, could be found in the Cloister of the Assumption, nor yet in the Abbey of Pious Fiction. Then Mary Pious Fiction 'wrote to Rome to obtain a copy from one of the libraries of St. Peter!' 'That favor,' writes Pious Fiction, 'was granted.' And this was passing strange! For does not every writer and reader of the Pious Fiction order of tract know right well that there never was a Bible in or near St. Peter's; that Dr. Martin Luther first discovered the Bible; that the Pope sits awake o' nights trying to keep the Bible from the people—instead of lending copies to remote abbesses and far-off glaziers; that, if you say 'Bible!' to the Man of Sin, he tears around considerably and curses you and yours with bell, book, and candle back to the forty-seventh generation; and that he carries a box of wax matches about in his vest pocket, so as to be ready, on short notice, to set fire to any Bibles and Bible-readers that he may drop across in his morning stroll? However, Joseph Peter proceeds to peruse the Bible miraculously procured from Rome. He writes in the familiar style of the cheap tract of the nineteenth century; he misuses Catholic terms precisely as the cheap tract-writer of our day does; he is wholly unacquainted with the epistolary style prevalent 'towards the close of the sixteenth century;' he advances precisely the controversial illogicalities that you may dig by spadefuls out of the more illiterate class of No-Popery pamphlets that added a pang to the religious contentions of the Emancipation period (1820-1830); he credits the Catholic Church with teaching that the Blessed Virgin was independent of Christ's saving grace (a once familiar but long-abandoned misrepresentation by certain Reformed disputants); and he falls into the unscholarly error of interpretation by which a certain class of disputants used to endeavor to deprive the Blessed Virgin of her crown of perpetual virginity and make her the mother of a large family. The upshot of the whole affair is, of course, the one that is familiar to the reader of the cheap tract: Newman's Bible-reading led him to Rome; but the illustrious glazier, having read the Bible, finds himself compelled to abandon the errors of Popery, and to embrace, instead, the errors 'made in Germany' or in Geneva. Pious Fiction did likewise. Poetic completeness requires that Joseph Peter and Pious Fiction should thereafter go in double harness. It is not, however, asserted that Joseph Peter did, in this instance, 'ring the bells.' But the author of this piece of 'pious fiction' leaves the impression that in this, as in other fairy tales, the hero and heroine contrived, somehow, to 'live happily ever afterwards.'

People who concoct and distribute this eccentric sort of 'pious fiction' must be deemed to be very much lacking in the sense of humor. The word 'Romance' is writ large over this absurd tale—in its substance; in its studied avoidance of names of places and of particulars as to the origin and history of the alleged letters; and in the whole terminology thereof, which is, throughout, that of typical Protestant tract produced by uneducated persons. For the rest, we need only add (1) that there was no 'illustrious painter' named Joseph de St. Pierre; (2) that the absurd name of the abbess is most probably the blunder of a writer unacquainted with the French tongue; (3) that the whole composition of the alleged letters is of our own day, and that they are the clumsy forgeries of a person wholly ignorant of Catholic teaching and of the manners, customs, language, and epistolary style of the times that he was rash enough to attempt to portray. Finally, (4) these forgeries are alleged to have been taken from the *True Catholic* of May 1, 1871. The inference which would naturally be drawn by the reader—whether Catholic or Protestant—is this: that this preposterous piece of 'Pious Fiction' was sent out with the sanction of some representative organ of Catholic learning and of Catholic opinion. Whether

it ever really appeared in the *True Catholic*, we cannot say. Nor does it matter a pin-head whether it did or not. For the little periodical in question was not a Catholic one; on the contrary, it was one of the vilest types of the No-Popery gutter-journal; it was started and run (when it was run) by an unfortunate cleric whom his ecclesiastical superiors found necessary, in the interests of religion, to expel in dishonor from the sacred ministry; and by him it was hawked for sale on and off through the streets of New York. It is not creditable to anyone concerned in Palmerston North or Kaikoura to be associated with the circulation of that silly forgery.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

From a private letter, received by a friend in Milton, we learn that the Very Rev. Father O'Neill accompanied his Grace the Archbishop of Wellington in his trip to the South Sea Islands.

Private advice by the last Home mail states that his Lordship Bishop Verdon had arrived in Ireland at date of writing, and that he was immensely benefited by his stay at the mineral springs at Vichy, France.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday from the last Mass until Vespers. In the evening there was the usual procession, in which the children of the parish schools and the confraternities took part.

The St. Patrick's Young Men's Social and Literary Club, South Dunedin, held its usual weekly meeting on Monday evening, when there was a fair attendance of members. The programme for the evening consisted of a 'question box,' which provided some interesting matter for discussion.

On Friday evening the St. Joseph's Men's Club continued the parliamentary debate from the previous week, the speakers being Dr. Hastings, Messrs. Hartstonge, Cowan, R. Rossbotham, D. O'Connell, and W. Bevis. Rev. Father Coffey congratulated the speakers at the conclusion of the debate, and expressed his pleasure at hearing so many excellent speeches.

A high-class and most enjoyable concert in aid of the school funds was given by the pupils of the Dominican nuns in the Sacred Heart School, North-East Valley, on Friday evening. There was a capital attendance, and the audience showed by their hearty applause, as item succeeded item, that they were highly pleased with the programme. The proceedings opened with a nicely-played pianoforte duet by Misses D. Miller and M. Gawne, which was followed by a song, 'A dream,' by Miss Carter, who was deservedly encored. A pretty song and dance by junior pupils came next, this being succeeded by a vocal solo, 'Hush, my little one,' by Miss Violet Fraser, A.T.C.L. It is unnecessary to say that the item was artistically rendered, and the audience showed their appreciation by an emphatic encore. Then came an operetta, 'Bubbles,' by the junior pupils, who did remarkably well. A violin solo by Miss Effie Fraser was admirably played, and Miss Clara Finnerty was honored with a recall for her singing of 'An Irish eviction.' Another most creditable contribution by the junior pupils, 'Gipsy revels,' followed. Miss Annie Heffernan was very successful in her song, 'A dolly and coach,' and had to respond to a recall. The next number was a pianoforte solo by Miss Daisy Miller, in which she displayed good execution. This was succeeded by 'Sing, sweet bird,' a pretty vocal item by Miss Newcomb-Hall, who also received a well-merited encore. Miss M. Brennan recited with much feeling and dramatic expression 'Soliloquy of a piano,' with musical accompaniment. Miss Violet Fraser sang 'Bid me discourse,' and had to respond to the inevitable encore. The final items were 'The German band' and a chorus. The accompanists during the evening were Misses Miller, Gawne, and Umbers. Mr. J. Casey acted as secretary. At an interval the Rev. Father Corcoran thanked the audience for their attendance and congratulated the performers on the excellence of the programme.

Invercargill

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

August 3.

As an appreciation for past services, St. Mary's choir forwarded to Miss E. Stone an oak and silver salad bowl, suitably inscribed, it being the occasion of her recent marriage to Mr. J. Flanagan.