

Zealand, being erected into a diocese, he was transferred to that new See, which he most successfully ruled until his death in 1895, and was then succeeded by the present Bishop, Right Rev. Dr. Verdon, so long and so favorably known to us in Dublin as President of Holy Cross College, Clonliffe.'

#### The First Mission in New Zealand.

During 1877 there was a great awakening in the religious life of the Colony, brought about by the eloquent Irish-American missionary, Father Hennebery, who visited all the chief centres and conducted missions, the first of the nature in the history of the country. Missions have since then become familiar to us, and the faith of the people strengthened and made better understood, through the efforts of those connected with important religious Orders, principally the Redemptorist, Vincentian, Passionist, Jesuit, Dominican, and Marist. Father Hennebery, besides preaching missions in the ordinary way, fostered a love, and fuller knowledge of the history of the fatherland by the spread and encouragement of the reading of many suitable literary works which he brought directly under the notice of his numerous hearers. Many of these books are still to be found on the book shelves and in the libraries of our principal Catholic families. A feature, too, of his missionary propaganda was a temperance crusade on the lines adopted many years before by the famed Father Mathew. Pledge cards and medals were issued, the former bearing the following inscription:—Under the heading 'Catholic Total Abstinence Association' (with an impression of the obverse and reverse of the medal), there followed the name, 'Admitted—1877 by Rev. P. Hennebery,' and took the following pledge: 'I promise to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, except used medicinally and by order of a medical man, and to discountenance the cause and practice of intemperance.' At the foot on a scroll was printed: 'Founded by the Very Rev. Theobald Mathew, 10th of April, 1838.' Probably many of these are still preserved in our Catholic homes, and the good resolutions then adopted steadfastly adhered to ever since. That he accomplished lasting good is a well known fact, as numerous instances of notable conversions are still in existence.

#### AUCKLAND.

A friend has forwarded me a copy of the *N.Z. Town and Country Life* of a recent date containing, under the heading 'The Catholic Homes for Children: St. Mary's Orphanage, Ponsonby,' an admirable historical and descriptive article, from which I extract the following interesting particulars:—

New Zealand was not much of 'a white man's country' in the days when Captain, afterwards Sir George Grey, was sworn in as Governor-in-Chief over the islands of New Zealand, and also as Governor of the Provinces of New Ulster (Auckland), and New Munster (Wellington). The Maoris were then waging war upon the European settlers, and there was more or less of unrest, trouble, and uncertainty; the outlook for the pioneers who were seeking to make homes for themselves in this Britain of the South, was far from reassuring, and the conditions of settlement were anything but alluring. But it was in that year the Marist Fathers first set foot in Auckland and formed the first religious community in the province.

Two years later, that is in 1850, the Sisters of Mercy came and settled in Auckland, camping first on the site of St. Patrick's Cathedral. They found the Marist Fathers in charge of four or five orphans, whom they had succored and sheltered in their distressed condition. The newcomers were asked to relieve the Fathers of the care of the children, and readily accepted the responsibility. Thus, before the Sisters of Mercy had fully established themselves as a community in the province, they were more than justifying their existence by caring for the orphans, the fatherless, and the widow. Cheerfully they performed the duty, the children being supported by the community funds, partaking of the common fare, and being clothed at the expense of the Sisters. Needless to say, they were well fed and kept clean and tidy.

The number soon increased to 30, and Sister Ignatius, afterwards Mother Superior of the Order, was placed in charge of the orphans. One of the Sisters had a little money left to her, and a small building was put up in which the children were housed. It consisted of the one apartment which was used by day as a dining room and playroom, and by night as a sleeping apartment, the children's bunks being arranged around the building. The bunks, the forms, and a long table, stretching down the centre of the room, comprised the furniture. The children attending and receiving their education at the day school. That was the best the Sisters could then do for them. It was the day of small things, and they had to depend wholly upon their own unaided resources.

#### The Work at Ponsonby.

About a year later the community removed to Ponsonby, where a site had been granted to the Catholic Church for educational and other purposes. Just before they left the St. Patrick's Cathedral site, the Hon. P. Dignan secured a small capitation grant for the Orphanage. It was very small, but it proved of material assistance to the Sisters and heartened them considerably. At Ponsonby the Sisters erected a small building, which had, perforce of circumstances, to do duty as school and dining room and sleeping apartment, and here, with 50 children (all girls) under their charge, the Sisters labored patiently on, until the Rev. Mother was able to commence the building of the Orphanage proper. That was in 1868, the first portion of the building then erected being that which comprises the present work and play rooms, dining room, and kitchen of the existing Orphanage.

Sixty years nearly have elapsed since the Sisters of Mercy thus began their humane work and labor of love. In the interval hundreds of children have been cared for and tended, educated and trained, and passing through their hands, have entered upon life's sterner duties worthily and well, filling their part in the world all the better for the teaching they received in the home. And many of them, passing beyond the ken of mortal sight and sound, have left behind them the fragrance of lives uplifted and ennobled, by the loving sympathy and training they thus received from the good Sisters. Where, in 1850, five orphans claimed their attention, the Sisters now have nearly 200 under their care and protection, and homes for both girls and boys, well found and equipped, are standing monuments to their labors, prayers, zeal, and faith.

#### The Church's Noble Work.

The Church never acquits herself more worthily in the eyes of the world than when engaging in those direct works of mercy and love, which are so intimately and inseparably associated with the earthly mission of her Divine Lord and Master. In ministering to the suffering and distressed; in tending the sick and the dying; in comforting and caring for the fatherless, the widow and the orphan; in protecting the weak, in rescuing the fallen, and in shielding from temptation and wrong those who are liable to be led astray by their surroundings and environment, the Church does a work which commends itself to all right-thinking minds.

The work begun by the good Sisters of Mercy at St. Mary's Orphanage, long known as 'The Star of the Sea' Orphanage, at Ponsonby, has been worthily upheld by the priests and prelates of that great Church. The three Bishops of the Auckland diocese, Dr. Pompallier, Archbishop Steins, and Bishop Lenihan, all took an active interest in the fortunes of the 'Star of the Sea' Orphanage, Bishop Lenihan being for many years its manager and warmest friend. In the whole history of the Catholic Church in the Auckland province we know of no finer work that has been accomplished than this, although the benevolences of that Church are many, and there is much in its philanthropic work to prompt the admiration and worthiest emulation of other churches. The Church, through the good Sisters of Mercy, is giving the children at Ponsonby a chance in life which they could not possibly obtain in the homes of their parents (where such exist), or at the hands of those to whose guardianship they were left, prior to entering the home. Left to themselves, they would, in the greater number of cases, grow up in want, ignorance, and misery, the victims of vice in its worst forms, and be thus a continual menace to society. For the slum and the slum maker unfortunately exist, and foul wrongs have been and are perpetuated even to-day upon many poor, defenceless children, whose innocent years are no protection against the vice and crime which will flaunt itself even in New Zealand—God's Own Country, though we delight to call it.

## A CATHOLIC ANSWER TO DARWINISM

### A DISCREDITED THEORY

Among the papers read at the annual conference of Catholic Young men's Societies of Great Britain in Coventry was one on the Darwinian theory by Dr. Thomas Colvin, of Glasgow. It is said we live in a scientific age (remarked Dr. Colvin), and while no one will gainsay that the past sixty years is a period that will be ever memorable for its wonderful and far-reaching discoveries in natural and physical science, and especially for the application of scientific research to the needs of everyday life, it is an open question if the man in the street is more scientific and more exact in his methods of thinking out a problem than he was in the days when science was not so much in the air.

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