

dragoman, Sadi Osman—calm, alert, patient, imperturbable—repelled the invasion and adjusted the Bedouin claims and the tastes and curiosity of the visitors to the full satisfaction of all. One Mohamed Hassan, from among the Bedouins, offered for two francs to ascend the Cheops and return to its base in eight minutes. We took him at his word. Nimble-footed as a goat, but considerably faster in pace, Mohamed scaled the rough stones, rising higher and higher. He performed the feat within the time specified, and fairly earned his wager. From the pyramids we passed on camel back to the Sphinx.

THE ETERNAL SPHINX,

'Staring right on with calm, eternal eyes,' in lonely majesty, little altered by the ravages of time, impervious to decay. The Sphinx is cut out of the living rock, and represents a crouching lion with a human head. The body is rough-hewn from the rock, but the head has been sculptured with considerable care and not a little power. Still looking out into time, impassive, grave, unsympathetic, cynical, wrapped in the silence of ages, reeking nought of the changes that perturb the little world of men. The Sphinx is a type of immortality—yesterday, to-day, the same for ever. The face bears the damages of Arab marksmen, and the red color spread over the features is patchy—the head-dress and part of the beard are gone—still the Sphinx looks out into space with as placid and imperturbable an eye as when Abraham, son of Thare, because of a famine in the land, went down to Egypt and sojourned there when Abraham received the divine promise of a land for his children to extend from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, when Jacob went down to the land of the Pharaohs to seek his son Joseph, when Moses rose in his might to lead the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, when the Holy Family sought refuge in flight from the murderous decree of Herod, when Napoleon mobilised his legions on the sands of the desert in vain boast of universal conquest. For thousands of years the Sphinx looking out into immensity from its bed of sand has furnished an enigma for traveller and archaeologist, and though modern antiquarians have stripped the colossus of much of the mystery which constituted its charm, the Sphinx still remains, the oldest monument in the world—colossal, fascinating—looking down unmoved at the wavelets of time breaking at its base. 'Comely the creature is, but the comeliness is not of this world; the once-worshipped beast is a deformity and a monster to this generation. Yet you can see that those lips, so thick and heavy, were fashioned according to some ancient mould of beauty—some mould of beauty now forgotten—forgotten because that Greece drew forth Cytherea from the flashing foam of the Aegean, and in her image created new forms of beauty and made it a law among men that the short and proudly-wreathed lips should stand for the sign and main condition of loveliness through all generations to come. Yet there still lives on the race of those who were beautiful in the fashion of the elder world; and Christian children of Conit blood will look on you with the sad, serious gaze, and kiss your charitable hand with the big, pouting lips of the very Sphinx' (Kingslake). The year 2900 before Christ is set down as the date of the carving of the Sphinx.

Medieval critics write that the Sphinx is a model of human symmetry, wearing an expression of the softest beauty and the most winning grace. But though owing to the march of the Vandal in the ages that have passed, there is little concrete beauty in the colossal features. There is in the bald position, the solitary grandeur, the solemn surrounding, the mysterious traditions and the immemorial antiquity an overpowering fascination and charm in the Sphinx. Yesterday, to-day, the same for ever, may be written of the immortal Sphinx.

The body of the Sphinx is 150ft long, the paws 50ft, the well-proportioned head 30ft high and 14ft broad. It will give, some notion of its immense size, though it does not look so in the vast, sandy space, when I say that if a man stands on the top of one ear, he cannot reach the top of the Sphinx's head. Under the clear blue sky, on the lonely, sandy waste, flecked only by rusty camels, and Bedouin colors and our party of three, we stood lost in awe and wonder, gazing at this carved block of stone, that has resisted the shock of ages and stands silent and solid while empires rise like mushrooms and crumble to dust. A souvenir of our visit to the pyramids is a photograph of our party, mounted on camels, with dragoman and Bedouin guides in the foreground, and for background the pyramids, the immortal Sphinx, the Libyan desert. The picture is a satisfactory presentment of the travellers and will long serve as reminder of a delightful visit to the most interesting and fascinating monuments on this earth of ours.

An elderly man is required as gardener for the Convent, Nelson.—*

Wanted, about 50 clerks to help read testimonials *re* Tussicura. Sole manufacturer, S. J. Evans, 2s 6d.—*

The McCormick Harvesting Machine Company built and sold 213,629 machines in the season of 1899. This is the greatest sale of harvesting machines ever made by one company.—*

The Railway department notifies that several alterations in and additions to the ordinary train service will be made in connection with the Dunedin autumn races to be held at Wingatui on February 27, and March 1 and 2. Full particulars will be found in our advertising columns.—*

Did you ever read *Helen's Babies*, and do you remember the delightful enthusiasm of little Toddy when he got at the internal workings of somebody's watch and wanted to see 'the wheels go round'? And does it occur to you that wheels occupy a pretty important part in cycles? We have realised this fact, and as an evidence of the attention given the subject, want you to examine the latest Sterling chain, chainless, and free wheels. Built like a watch. New shipment just landed. Morrow, Bassett, and Co.—*

THE H.A.C.B. SOCIETY.

ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING.

The annual meeting of the New Zealand District Board of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society was opened in St. Joseph's Hall, Dunedin, on Wednesday morning, February 20. All parts of the Colony were well represented. Bro. D. Flynn, District President, opened the proceedings with prayer, after which he welcomed the delegates, and expressed his pleasure at meeting them once more. He trusted that the greatest good would result to their excellent Society from their labors, and begged them to give close attention to the items on the order paper, and, considering the amount of business to be transacted, he asked them to be as brief as possible in their remarks.

The following telegraphic message was received from the Right Rev. Dr. Lenihan, Bishop of Auckland:—'Please convey to brethren Hibernian meeting my hearty good wishes.'

The president was directed to wire a reply thanking his Lordship for his kind message.

Bro. M. F. Dennehy was appointed assistant-secretary to the meeting.

The following is the list of delegates who were present:—District president, Bro. D. Flynn; D.V.P., Bro. M. O'Sullivan; D.T., Bro. M. J. Sheahan, J.P.; D.S., Bro. W. Kane; district trustees, Bros. John Patterson, J.P., and P. J. Nerheny (president Auckland branch); district auditors, Bros. O'Kane and J. B. R. Stead. Delegates from the following branches were also present:—Greymouth, Bro. W. Beehan; Charleston, Bro. J. O'Shaughnessy; Gramstown, Bro. C. Little; Dunedin, Bros. J. Marlow and J. O'Connor; Onehunga, Bro. Edward Carroll; Christchurch, Bros. G. J. Sellars, P.P., and F. J. Doolan; New Plymouth, Bro. James Casey; Wai-pawa, Bro. John Hally; Leeston, Bro. John McCabe; New Head-ford, Bro. D. McVeigh; Timaru, Bros. M. F. Dennehy and P. Kane; Oamaru, Bro. P. G. Duggan, S.; Milton, Bro. P. Walsh; Auckland, Bro. P. J. Nerheny, P.D.P.; St. John the Baptist (ladies' branch), Christchurch, Sister Burke; Wellington, Bro. Stratford, P.P.; St. Mary's, Wellington, Bro. Power; Santa Maria, Auckland (ladies' branch), Mrs. Kane.

The minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The district officers' report was submitted, and the secretary explained that had the several branches forwarded their returns the figures would show to still greater advantage.

The report was adopted.

The balance sheet was read by the secretary, and showed the credit balance of the funeral fund to be £4450, being an increase of £220 on the year's transactions, although the sum of £80 was paid away in funeral claims. The statement of the investments in connection with this account showed the society to hold securities to the extent of double the amount of its various loans. In this connection the meeting passed a unanimous vote of thanks to the district trustees for their lucid statement of the investments, and for the evident care bestowed upon them.

The district secretary moved:—'That with a view to the better government of the female division, the branches now in existence may amalgamate and be incorporated with the male branches in their respective localities, and female candidates may be admitted to membership in any male branch in this district, provided they are duly qualified according to law.'

The motion was seconded by Bro. Nerheny, and supported by Bros. Beehan, Dennehy, Duggan, Hally, and Carroll, and was opposed by Bros. Sellars, O'Connor, Stratford, Marlow, Power, Doolan, and Sister Burke. After a reply by the mover, the motion was carried.

It was moved by the district secretary:—'That in order to place branches on a more satisfactory basis, the district executive shall, and is hereby empowered, to send a properly qualified district officer to see that branch books, etc., are properly kept, and, where necessary, to arrange matters in connection therewith.'

Bro. Dennehy seconded the motion.

The motion was approved of by Bros. Sellars, Marlow, and others, and was carried.

The following motion was also moved by the district secretary:—'That a movable meeting be held every third year, commencing with 1904, and be styled or known as "The Triennial Movable Meeting" of the New Zealand District, No. 3, H.A.C.B.S.'

Bro. M. J. Sheahan, district treasurer, seconded the motion, which was spoken to by nearly all the delegates and passed.

It was moved by the district secretary:—'That in the event of any branch being unable to send a delegate to a district board meeting through distance or other satisfactory cause, it shall have the privilege of being represented by a duly qualified member of the district, provided the district executive had been supplied by the branch concerned with written instructions to the delegate.'

The foregoing motion as amended by Bro. Marlow was carried. The meeting rose at 9 p.m. and adjourned until next day.

SECOND DAY.

The meeting opened on Thursday at 10 o'clock. The Rev. Father Cleary, editor of the N.Z. TABLET, entered the room, and was heartily welcomed. He invited the assembled delegates to visit the TABLET Company's premises during the afternoon. The invitation was accepted. By direction of the District President, Bro. Dennehy read the leader in the TABLET welcoming the Society to Dunedin. It evoked loud applause.

Bro. Stratford (Wellington), moved:—'Consideration of an application from St. Patrick's branch, No. 95, Wellington, to reinstate a member, some time full benefit member, struck off for being in arrears, and later joined as an honorary member, which he is, under clause 2 of general law 103.'