

'He wields his little trident
And wears his sapphire crown.'

On the island of Rhodda, near Old Cairo, an island luxuriant in groves and gardens, and near the spot marked by tradition as the place in the bulrushes where Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter, is the Nilometer, or column about 30 feet high, sunk in a wall-like chamber, and registering the rise and fall of the great river that fertilises the land of Egypt. When the Nilometer registers a rise of 27 feet, then there is joy in the land and the water courses are open for the visit of the great fertiliser.

THE DERVISHES.

Once a week—every Friday about 2 o'clock—take place the religious exercises of the fanatical orders of Dervishes. In the mosque of Kas-el-Sin we saw the howling Dervishes go through their dreary, weird performances, quite regardless of the presence of strangers. The performers under the lead of an elder, standing in a circle, at first bend their heads to and fro in unison while ejaculating invocations to Allah in peculiar dismal groans. The swaying gradually becomes more rapid and more violent, till the shaggy manes of the Dervishes sweep the floor front and rear. We were not moved to enthusiasm over the giddy exercise, but we marvelled much that men should find in shouts and groans and howls the fit exterior sign of inward faith and devotion and fervor. But the dancing Dervishes at the Gekizeh El-Akban afford a spectacle more elegant and interesting than their brothers the 'howlers.' Dressed in white robe, with light mantle of the same, and white fez to match, they extend the arms to the full and revolve in silence, within narrow limits, at the rate of 60 to 70 times a minute. And this, mark you, for over a half hour at a time. The howlers evoke a feeling of pity, if not of disgust, but I must say that the gyrations of the dancers in complete silence and extended arms had in them something of the elegant that pleases and captivates. After a brief rest they rise refreshed and in silent gravity take the floor with renewed zest to gyrate with placid face and immobile features in proof of their lofty sanctity.

While at Matarieh we paid a visit to an ostrich farm close by, where some 1400 of these gigantic birds are kept. Some of the male birds, leviathans of their species, are kept in walled courts securely barred, for no one could resist their attack. A big industry is here fostered in feathers, eggs, and ostriches.

The last evening we spent in Grand Cairo, Friday, November 30, feast of St. Andrew, we strolled through the city, charmed observers of the passing phases and forms, and colors and occupations of Oriental life. Yet here, too, we noted the incongruity of the tram car and the bicycle rubbing wheel and tyre against the staid, unchanging primitive implements of the Oriental.

On the morning of Saturday, December 1, we took train for Alexandria and through a veritable dust storm all over the valley of the Nile we took fare-well, with some regret, of this cradle land of the earliest civilisation and culture, now, through centuries of exploitation and misrule, of plunder and fight and conquest lying at the feet of a western power 'pledged' 'to maintain order,' 'to sustain the local authority,' 'to advise the Khedive, by means of a standing army,' 'with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability and progress.' No one may deny that some such power is needed to hold together the heterogeneous elements of which modern Egypt—however great its past—is at present composed. Arrived at Alexandria in the early afternoon we called at the British Consulate to have our 'fezgiresh' or passports duly signed and countersigned, for no one unprovided with this 'open sesame' may hope to enter the Holy Land so jealously guarded by the Mussulman.

ON THE WAY TO PORT SAID AND BEYROUT.

A visit of farewell to our good ship, the Syrian Prince, to the captain and officers, was the only prelude to our taking up our quarters on the Rhamanieh, of the Khedival line of steamers en route to Port Said and Beyrout on the Syrian coast. It was fairy-like at evening as we shipped our mooring and stood down channel. The dome of dark blue, edged with pink and crimson lace, the clustering shadows stalking across the rising wavelets, themselves alight in phosphorescent brilliancy, the sentinel stars peeping out cold and clear and piercing, told us of the pictures we saw drawn from the life by classic writers.

Sunday, December 2, found us at Port Said, the narrow waterway of two worlds. Here Madame was stricken with Egyptian fever. We wended our way with Celtic instinct to the convent of the 'Good Shepherd' Sisters, and here indeed we sought not in vain the hospitable kindly assistance of that type of charity and mercy—the Good Shepherd nun—

'When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou.'

Ere nightfall our patient, though weak, felt better, and by the advice of the medical officer of the Naval Hospital, Dr. Jeffrey, was moved, with the kindly assistance of one of the Sisters, to the steamer.

Nothing in Port Said became us like the leaving it. As we got to the open a cry broke from the sailors, 'A man overboard,' and from the bridge we saw a sailor fall from the yards. All was rush and consternation. 'It was a passenger.' 'It was a case of suicide.' 'He is lost.' 'They are bringing the corpse aboard.' 'Ea fama vagatur.' 'So doth busy rumor ever lie.' A life-belt was thrown like a streak of lightning—a boat shot from the davits, a few minutes of harrowing dread and fear! But the brave lad was picked up, and was quit of the accident with a ducking. In the still starry night, calm and peaceful as a saintly soul, we make north for Syria, the goal of our hopes. Under easy steam, for the captain is in no hurry by reason of quarantine in force on the Syrian coast, we make our way northward, and awake on the morning of Tuesday, December 4, to see rising over against our steamer,

the houses and hills, and groves and gardens, and nodding fronds of the palms of Beyrout. The medical officer, grim, grave, and grandiose, in frock-coat and scarlet fez is soon on board and examines all the ship's company with discriminating eye. Madame, we are thankful, has recovered from her fever, and all present the Turkish officer with a clean bill. None the less—for there is a haunting fear of plague from Egypt—we are condemned to 48 hours' quarantine. There is a crumb of comfort. The deck and second-class passengers are hustled off to the Lazaretto. We are privileged to pass our duration on shipboard—hence these notes. The only access to Syria and Palestine during these days of quarantine is by Beyrout. From Beyrout we purpose visiting Baalbec and Damascus, before entering on the sacred soil of Palestine.

Diocesan News.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

March 2.

His Grace Archbishop Redwood is at present in Auckland. Very Rev. Father Lewis, V.G., has returned to Wellington much benefited by his recent trip.

Close on 80 children are undergoing instruction for their First Communion, which they will receive in the Sacred Heart Basilica shortly after Easter. The Rev. Father Holley is instructing them.

Miss Cissy Guise, a pupil of St. Mary's Convent, passed the Junior Civil Service examination.

Miss Nellie Gallagher, ex-pupil of St. Mary's Convent, has obtained an 'E' certificate at the teachers' examinations held last January.

Miss Hickling, whose services when in Wellington have been given most freely to St. Joseph's Church choir, leaves shortly for Bulawayo where she will settle down.

The Very Rev. Father Keogh, S.M., B.A., the new rector of St. Patrick's College, arrived in Wellington on Thursday. His arrival was the occasion of much rejoicing both for students and professors. The boys enjoyed a holiday granted to them to commemorate the event. Father Keogh received telegrams of congratulation from various places throughout the Colony.

A visit paid to the Home for Incurables under Mother Joseph and the devoted Sisters shows that the rooms set apart for incurables are taxed to their utmost capacity. There are at present in the home eleven male and six female patients. The latest addition—the Victoria Ward—was opened on the day of the Queen's memorial service. To carry on the work on a large scale a six-roomed house on the eastern side of the present home has been rented, and this in a fortnight's time will be ready for patients. When everything is in working order Mother Joseph will accommodate twenty-five patients.

The half-yearly meeting of the Marist Old Boys' Literary Society was held last Thursday evening, when Mr. Kays, J.P., presided. A report relative to the publication of a magazine in connection with the society was read and evoked much discussion. It was ultimately agreed that a magazine should be started, and final arrangements were deferred till Thursday fortnight. The prizes recently won by the essayists were presented at the meeting. The first prize was eight volumes of Irving's 'Shakespeare.'

The following students of St. Patrick's College passed the New Zealand University Matriculation examination this year:—Thomas Gilbert, Daniel Hurley, Martin O'Brien and Gerald O'Kane. In the Civil Service examination, the result of which is just published, the students successful were Richard F. Madden, Duncan McMurrioh, John M. Prendeville, John L. Conlan, Gerald W. O'Kane, Michael Hanan and Clarence Arthur.

The annual meeting of St. Mary's Convent Ex-pupils' Association was held on Monday evening at St. Mary's Convent. There was a large attendance of members. The report for the year was read and adopted. The cost of the section of land at Titahi Bay and the erection of a cottage thereon amounted to £360. The debt had been reduced by £200 leaving a balance of £160 which, it is hoped, will be liquidated by the proceeds of entertainments to be held during the coming year. The furnishing of the cottage was helped considerably by donations from present and past pupils. A vote of thanks was passed to the donors. The election of officers for the current year resulted as follows:—President, the Rev. Mother Superior; vice-president, Miss O'Connor; treasurer, Mrs. T. G. MacCarthy; secretary, Miss K. Williams (all re-elected); committee: Misses McDonald, Skerrett, Collins and Brady.

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND.

(From our own correspondent.)

March 1.

The Rev. Fathers Benedict and Hilary begin a fortnight's mission at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday, March 3.

Among the successful candidates at the recent Junior Civil Service examinations were the following from the Sisters of Mercy schools:—Miss M. V. Speight (St. Patrick's High School) and Miss Maude Towers (St. Mary's, Ponsonby).