

craned his neck over the ledge of the gallery to catch every word. If the expression of the countenance can give any indication of the feelings, the Prince was not only a delighted but an approving auditor of the Prime Minister's plea for an Irish Parliament. The close of one of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule speeches was marked, several years ago, by an extraordinary incident. The cheers in the House were emphasised by a loud clapping of hands in the Peers' Gallery. The "offender"—of whom the gallery attendants, with an admirable discretion, took no notice—was the late Duke of Clarence, who sat beside the Prince of Wales, and whose enthusiastic outburst was not restrained by his father."

Some of the enemies of progressive legislation have no worse—or better—taunt to fling at the New Zealand Government than this: that it is a 'grandmotherly' one. Well, it is at least a wise old grandmother, and, for all her age, fully abreast of the times—in some respects the lively old dame is a little ahead of them. Our Government's functions are as varied as those of the elephant's trunk, which can shift half a ton of lumber or pick up a number 6 sewing needle. Mr. Seddon's Cabinet can with apparently equal ease solve the knottiest questions of land and labor legislation, and teach settlers how to raise poultry and 'dress' ducks and feed goslings. A few days ago our representative visited the poultry-farm lately established at Milton. He found it an object-lesson of enormous possible commercial value to that rich and favored district. He has now quite recovered from the shock of blank surprise with which he learned that fowls not only habitually swallowed their teeth, but that the molars most in request by them are jagged pieces of crushed glass—as large as dried peas—which, in their passage down the oesophagus towards the gizzard must feel like a procession of red-hot barbed wire. But Government is not stopping at merely teaching settlers how to raise poultry. It is giving a trial to the experiment of shipping the dead birds to the London market. Few people are aware of the enormous source of wealth that is possible to scientific poultry raising. The 'old stockings' of France are to a great extent filled by the domestic fowl. According to Mulhall Great Britain in 1896 imported from France alone 6000 tons of poultry and 394,000,000 eggs—the whole valued at £1,600,000. We learn that there are about 45,000,000 hens in the Republic. These are valued at over £5,000,000. One-fifth of the stock is annually consumed for food, and is sold for about £1,000,000. Two million roosters are also sold, and these bring in close on £250,000. The laying hens are numbered at 35,000,000, and the annual value of their eggs is set down at £9,000,000. Here we have an annual return of over £10,000,000—a sum very nearly equal to New Zealand's total exports a few years back—from the poultry of France. New Zealand settlers would do well to look into this matter. There's money in it.

A second short sharp shock of controversy ended the dispute at Westport as to the exclusion of one of Marie Corelli's screaming and anti-Christian romances from the local public library. The objectionable volume, *The Master Christian*—which is simply a no-Popery pamphlet on an extended scale—is to remain without disinfectants upon the shelves of a library which derives its chief support from the public purse. We hope the matter of turning public institutes of this kind into propagandas of no-Popery will not be allowed to rest where it stands at present in Westport. In the meantime the local Catholic body owe a debt of thanks to the able writer who, over the pen-name of 'Catholic,' did such good service in directing attention to a grave abuse. During the last brief convulsion of controversy 'Catholic' got in the following left-handers on the Athenæum Committee:—'Opinions as to whether *The Master Christian* is blasphemous will, of course, depend on the relative degrees of respect entertained for the Saviour of the world. Our chief objection, studiously disregarded in the committee's discussion, is that the book is, on the best testimony, a mere libel on the Vatican. A dominant note in the criticism of leading English reviewers was the ignorance of Rome and Roman life displayed by Marie Corelli; yet, in the face of this, we have Mr. Marshall's sapient opinion that there is nothing bad in the book. It would seem that Mr. Marshall believes a libel on the Catholic Church is probably a form of virtue. Mr. Strachan opined that, because the book was by a well-known writer, it should be restored to the shelves. Surely Mr. Strachan does not think that even a well-known writer is free from the restrictions ordinarily placed on the false witness. Marie Corelli and some of her admirers apparently have no regard for the maxim that "fiction is not falsehood." Mr. Atkinson considers the work an unjustifiable attack on the Catholic Church, but, in that case, could he explain how its patronage and circulation by the Athenæum is justifiable? On the whole it would be difficult to conceive a more wretched defence of their official affront than the remarks of these pro-Corelli apologists.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

The Right Rev. Dr. Verdon, Bishop of Dunedin, was in Lawrence on Sunday, when his Lordship administered Confirmation to a number of children.

At St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday Mr. Kilburn Heron, a Melbourne tenor, sang the 'Cujus Animam' from the 'Stabat Mater' (Rossini), while Miss Blaney also sang a solo, with violin obligato by Herr Zimmermann.

It is understood that Mr. P. Hally, who has displayed such marked ability from time to time in conducting cases on behalf of the operatives before the Conciliation Board and Arbitration Court, and by his studied moderation gained the respect of employers and employees, will be a candidate for the vacancy on the Board caused by Mr. Millar's retirement.

The Orphanage of St. Vincent de Paul, South Dunedin, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, has been left £500 by the late Mr. Frank Johnston, an old and highly-esteemed Catholic of South Dunedin, who died recently at his residence, Anderson's Bay road. He also left a sum of £50 to the St. Vincent de Paul Society in connection with St. Joseph's Cathedral parish.

On Tuesday the Very Rev. Father Boyle, C.M., left Dunedin for Sydney by the Zealandia, after having conducted a series of retreats which were successful in quite an unusual degree. The Very Rev. Father, who had endeared himself very much to priests and people during his stay in Dunedin, was accompanied to the boat at Port Chalmers by the Catholic clergy of the city and South Dunedin.

The retreat given by the Very Rev. Father Boyle, C.M., at St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, during the past week was numerous attended. On Sunday morning a very large number of the congregation approached the Holy Table, and in the evening, when the retreat was brought to a close, the basilica was crowded, when a renewal of Baptismal vows was made. The Very Rev. Father Boyle occupied the pulpit, and referred to the great pleasure he felt at the large attendances both morning and evening during the week. Some excellent advice was given by the Very Rev. Father to the younger members of the congregation and also to parents, whom he urged to give their children a good religious education, and trusted there would not be one Catholic family in the parish sending their children to any but their own schools. He also advised every one who possibly could to join the association of the Sacred Heart and continue the practice of the monthly communion. The Rev. Father Coffey, who had just returned from the country, said he felt extremely gratified at the success of the mission, and trusted the advice of the Very Rev. Father Boyle would be taken to heart and acted up to. A large number of names were received from those intending to become members of the Sacred Heart association. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by the Rev. Father Delaney. The choir, under Mr. G. Neill, rendered several mission hymns in a creditable manner at the evening services.

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL.

THE Sixth New Zealand Contingent for South Africa arrived at Pretoria on Friday last, all being reported well.

THE purchase money (£141,661) for the Purves Russell's Hatuma estate, compulsorily acquired by the Government, was paid over in Wellington on Tuesday.

DURING the past year 489 children in Wellington, 135 in the suburbs and Manawatu, and 321 in Wairarapa have received instruction in cookery under the Board of Education.

THE Dunedin Tramways were officially taken over on Thursday by the City Council, when the event was celebrated by a luncheon, a procession of cars, and free rides to all and sundry.

DURING 1900 there were 145 deaths in the four centres of the Colony from cancer, 171 from heart disease, 266 from phthisis and other tubercular diseases. There were 110 violent deaths during the year.

THE Wellington City Council think that the head of civic affairs would look more dignified in robes, and consequently have ordered a suit for the Mayor. The new regalia is to be ready by the arrival of the royal visitors.

THE Government have decided that the number of councillors in a borough shall be as follows:—With a population under 5000, nine members; over 5000 and under 30,000, 12; 30,000 and over, 15. The last provision will for the present only apply to Auckland and Wellington.

THE new century volume of *The Dominican Star* is now in course of preparation, and will be ready shortly. We understand that the new volume will even excel its predecessors from every point of view, which is saying a good deal, considering the very high standard attained by this popular annual since its first issue.

THE Cabinet has decided that the New Zealand military contingent at the opening of the Federal Parliament shall consist of 100—viz., 20 men each from the Permanent Artillery, mounted corps, infantry, naval artillery, and Maoris. The men are to be selected from all parts of the Colony by the Commander of the Forces.

THE extensive stables of the New Zealand Express Company, Dunedin, were destroyed by fire on Wednesday evening of last week. The building covered nearly half an acre and had been only recently erected. Besides the building, seven horses, vans, furniture, and harness were burned. The damage was estimated at between £7000 and £8000.