

THE Hon. W. Hall-Jones addressed a large meeting of his constituents at Timaru on Tuesday evening. Referring to the statement made a few days ago by a Dunedin representative that the Sinking Fund moneys were not paid to the proper account, he said that there was now to the account of the Sinking Fund with the Public Trustee an account of nearly £300,000. The expenditure for the year, he admitted, had been abnormal, but much of it would not occur again. The Royal visit, mobilisation of volunteers, visit of the Imperial troops, education (£57,000), Tourist and Health Departments (both new departments), Cook Islands schooner, etc., and a new steamer, to a large extent accounted for it. Penny postage partly accounted for the increased postal expenditure. It was true that the expenditure had increased, but the revenue had increased in a greater proportion. He anticipated that the surplus next year would amount to between £400,000 and £500,000. The remission in Customs duties since 1895 amounted to close upon £700,000. The increases in the Customs returns were due solely to the increased spending power of the people, and not on account of taxation. The value of free goods imported amounted to £1,687,481, and that of dutiable goods to £6,665,935. The duty per head on the necessities of life amounted at a liberal scale to 11s 10½d per head of population, or a total of £458,599. For this 11s 10½d the people received education, police protection, defence, subsidy to charitable aid boards, and the services of the Labor Department, which had been of immense advantage to the people in providing employment and settling labor disputes.

Convent of Mercy, Lyttelton.

ON Thursday, May 8, the Feast of the Ascension, the impressive ceremony of the profession of two young ladies took place in St. Joseph's Church, Lyttelton. On the morning in question, a visitor, looking at the inside of the neat little church, would require no one to inform him that something out of the ordinary was about to take place. A little later this idea would be strengthened, as whilst the choir intones the 'Veni Creator,' a procession proceeds slowly into the church headed by the cross-bearer, Miss May McConville. As soon as his Lordship the Bishop arrived at the sanctuary he blessed the black veils and rings, after which Mass was celebrated by the Very Rev. Dean Foley. There were present the local Rector, Rev. Father Cooney (who acted as master of ceremonies), Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chesnais, V.G., Rev. Fathers Mar-nang, Galerne, and McDunnell. At the conclusion of the Mass his Lordship delivered an impressive sermon on the obligation and happiness of the religious life, after which the novices were led by the Mother Superior and Mother Assistant to the foot of the altar, where they were interrogated by the Bishop. Then the most solemn part of the ceremony took place, when the two novices clearly and distinctly pronounced their vows. The Right Rev. Dr. Grimes then placed the black veils on their heads and the rings on their fingers. The newly-professed arose and said aloud, 'We are espoused to Him Whom the angels serve, and at Whose beauty the sun and moon stand in wonder.' The music was very nicely rendered by the choir. The young ladies who had the happiness of making their religious profession were Miss Helena Florence Thompson, Balclutha, Otago, and Miss Delia Slattery, Cloughjordan, Tipperary, Ireland.

An Encyclical Letter.

VERY great importance (writes the Rome correspondent of the *Catholic Times*) attaches to the Encyclical Letter which the Holy Father has just issued. His Holiness thanks God for having granted him an exceptionally long tenure of the Holy See. This Encyclical, he goes on to say, will almost constitute his testament, which he wishes to convey to his people with an ardent desire for their salvation. The Holy Father reviews the persecutions to which the Church has at different times been subjected, mentioning especially the struggle with Luther and the bitter warfare carried on against the Church by modern philosophy and the systems of Rationalism and Materialism, which, he says, penetrated even into the organisation of the State and overthrow order, both in the family and in society. The Pontiff regrets that marriage has in so many places been deprived of its religious character, and he denounces divorce laws. His Holiness affirms that all moral and political disorders are due to Atheism, and he proceeds to attack the theories of Socialism, expressing in this connection his indignation at the outrages committed by Anarchists, which, his Holiness says, are the consequence of the disappearance of the religious sentiment from society. The charge that the Church is the enemy of science, progress, liberty, and civilisation he repudiates, and he declares that society will find its salvation only in

A RETURN TO CHRISTIANITY

and to the Catholic Church. His Holiness complains of the persecution which is being carried on against the clergy and religious Orders, and even against the Head of the Church. But, he says, the Church, with the help of God, has always triumphed in the past, and it will continue to triumph in the future. It extends everywhere in spite of obstacles and difficulties. The Holy Father exhorts all the faithful to trust in God, and calls upon the clergy to stand aloof from political struggles, to follow the counsel of the bishops, to make their work harmonious with that of the Catholic laity for the triumph of the Church, and to be ever ready to prove their loyalty to the Holy See.

THE HOLY FATHER'S OLD AGE.

In the opening words of the Encyclical the Holy Father makes such a touching reference to his old age that it deserves to be trans-

lated literally here. 'Having reached the 25th year of Our Apostolic ministry,' he says, 'and wondering Ourselves at having made such a long journey amidst arduous and incessant cares, We are naturally inclined to raise Our thoughts to the good God Who has been pleased to grant Us, with so many other favors, a length of Pontificate scarcely equalled in history. To the Father of all, to Him Who holds in His hands the secret of life, be offered then the hymn of praise as an earnest expression of the heart's desire. Human thought cannot penetrate the whole design of God in so protracted and unexpected a longevity, and We can only adore it in silence; but one thing We know, and it is that if it pleases Him to prolong Our life still further, the exalted duty rests upon Us to live for the service and the welfare of His immaculate spouse the Church, not to be discouraged by anxieties of labors but to consecrate to her all the rest of Our strength.' After these affecting words his Holiness proceeds to deal with the subjects outlined above. The Letter, which occupies eleven columns in Italian in the pages of the *Osservatore Romano*, shows that his Holiness has not lost his old vigor as a writer.

Bad Habits.

If you ever find yourself getting into the habit of blinking your eyes rapidly without any cause, stamp the inclination out at once or it will grow into an incurable habit that will make your eyesight fail long before it ought. Natural blinking is necessary to clear and moisten the eye, and the average number of natural blinks per minute is about 20. These are necessary, and you do them unconsciously. But a nervous 'blinker' will, says a writer in *Answers*, get in something like a couple of hundred in a minute in bad cases, and the result of this is a big development of the eyelid muscles, and a counter-irritation that acts on the optic nerve, and renders the sight daily more weak and irritable. Once contract this habit, and you will find you cannot bear a strong light or read small type, and you will get worse and worse. The cure consists in keeping the eyes shut for at least ten minutes an hour, and bathing the lids in warm water.

Do you ever feel inclined to breathe through your mouth? If so you had better make up your mind at once to keep that habit in memory and never give it a chance to increase. If you let it grow on you, you will let the lower half of your lungs fall almost entirely into disuse, for they are not filled if you do breathe through your mouth; the lungs will be weakened, and left an easy prey to maladies of the chest, and your system will only be fed by about half the oxygen it requires. Thousands of people contract this dangerous habit, which really is a certain life-shortener. Even if you sleep with your mouth open—still more people do this—you will get about half the benefit from a night's rest you ought to, and this is the main cause of 'that tired feeling' on waking in the morning. And if there is an epidemic floating about, you double your chances of catching it, and also halve your chances of recovering, as you weaken the lungs.

Another bad habit for the health, though not quite so dangerous, is the common trick of moistening the lips with the tongue. If you make a confirmed habit of this, you will make your lips drier and drier, and render the nerves of them terribly sensitive. Eventually you will contract permanently cracked lips, which, besides being painful and annoying, dispose you seriously to the danger of cancer.

Do you pick your teeth? If so, don't. It will make a difference of years in the life of your 'ivories,' and send you to the dentist before your time. This habit, even after meals, will sooner or later start the enamel of your teeth and give decay its chance to creep in at the breach, which it certainly will do. Besides this some people contract a perpetual habit of picking their teeth when they have nothing else to do, and this will put a good sound set of teeth on the road to decay at least six or seven years before they ought to go. You will lose your sleep, pay half a dozen dentist's bills, and then wish you had left toothpicks alone. Brush your teeth instead with carbolic powder after every meal if possible.

A rather absurd, but quite common, habit, and an uncommonly bad one, is that of scratching one's head when perplexed. This is often done facetiously at first, and in absent-minded people becomes a perfect mania. It is nearly always done in the same place—over the ear—and, by breaking up the fibres of the hair and irritating the roots, will eventually thin out the hair on that spot into almost a bald patch, which will spread. Numbers of people have this patch without even realising how they cause it.

At the monthly meeting of the Mudgee Hospital Committee on April 1, Mr W. Shaw drew attention to the fact that that day was the 34th anniversary of Monsignor O'Donovan's taking his seat on the committee. Mr Shaw expressed the hope that Monsignor O'Donovan would remain on the committee for many years to come. Of those who sat on the committee 34 years ago only two remain in the flesh, the Right Rev. Monsignor and Mr E. Daly.

Our readers in Christchurch and districts are reminded of the Coronation Carnival which opens this (Thursday) evening in the Colosseum in aid of the building fund of St. Mary's Presbytery, Manchester street. The Colosseum has been transformed into a veritable fairy land for the occasion, the equal of which, it is said, has never before been seen in the City of the Plains. The carnival will remain open for 12 nights. As there will be a complete change of programme each evening there will be no end of variety for all patrons. A miniature coronation ceremony will be enacted every evening, and in addition there will be a grand march, followed by dances, and tableaux, etc. As a spectacular affair it promises to eclipse anything of the kind ever produced in Christchurch.