

PALMERSTON NORTH.

(From our own correspondent.)

May 26.

One of the most practical and most useful movements of the time is the work accomplished by the local Ambulance Corps. On Thursday last a most successful concert was held at the Theatre Royal in aid of the corps. Mr. Pirani, M.H.R., in the absence of Sir J. G. Ward, presented the various certificates gained by the members at recent examinations. A high class and delightful programme had been arranged by their energetic hon. secretary, Mr. E. Hitching, the following being the programme:—Orchestral selection, orchestra; song, Mr. John Permain; violin solo, Mr. T. Kitchen; song, Mrs. Flood; clarionette solo, Mr. Brunette; song, Mr. V. Dallow; song, Mrs. Schwartz; recitation, Mr. B. Haybittle; song, Miss Butcher; mandolin and guitar duet, Cornwall Brothers; song, Mr. A. Bennett; cornet solo, Mr. A. Williams; song, Mrs. Gilmour; trombone solo, Mrs. J. Jones; club exercise, Mrs. Turner. The accompaniments were nicely played by Miss Burr, Mrs. Hitchings, Miss Hopwood, and Messrs P. Tombs and Cornwall. Refreshments were dispensed by the ladies of the local ambulance class to the performers.

On the 29th inst. a concert will be given in the Theatre Royal by the pupils, assisted by friends, of the Convent School in aid of same. A first-class programme has been arranged by the Sisters, and a successful evening is assured.

The Pollard Opera Company.

On Saturday evening the popular Pollard Opera Company opened their season at the Princess Theatre, Dunedin, with the musical comedy, 'The Casino Girl.' The house was well filled in every part, an evidence of the appreciation in which the company is held by the play-going public. The comedy was staged in a manner that reflects much credit on the management, and the light and sparkling music and humor of the piece strongly appealed to the audience, who were as usual very liberal in their applause. On Tuesday evening 'La Perichole, or the Street Singer,' was staged with that completeness for which Mr. Pollard is famed. To-night (Thursday) Offenbach's beautiful work will be produced for the last time, so those who have not already seen it should not miss the opportunity. On Friday and succeeding nights the popular 'Florodora' will be presented, and we have no doubt that, as has always been the case, it will draw crowded houses.

Irish Industries.

THE Irish sale held recently at Lord Salisbury's London residence was a great success. Over £500 was taken for entrance money on the first day. 'The beginnings of all the enterprises scattered throughout Ireland that unite their forces in the general association,' (says the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*) tell very much the same tale of a few ladies teaching the peasants how to knit, weave, or make lace incessantly helping and encouraging them, and finally leaving them able to make a living in an entirely new industry. In 1882, for instance, Miss Dorothea Roberts began to send yarns to the straggling parish on the rocky shore of Donegal, known as the Rosses. The good offices of the parish priest were then sought, and when the yarns arrived every month or so his little room was thronged with women, many of whom had walked weary miles along the cliffs or had crossed in the boat from Inisfree or Owey, in the hope of receiving some of the yarn. For eight years this work went quietly on; but in 1890, when Mr. Balfour, then Irish Secretary, went round the coasts, he asked Father Bernard what was most wanted in the district, and the answer was, "Some more knitting." The upshot of this conversation was that the Secretary for War telegraphed for particulars, and since then each year has brought an order from the War Office for 13,000 or 14,000 pairs of army socks. In the lace-making districts the material results are even better. At Lady Londonderry's stall I was shown a needle-point dress front made by peasant women of Carrickmacross marked £150, and, according to the opinion of experts, worth more. It had probably taken two women a whole year to complete it, but the Association pays them a weekly sum in advance, and then they receive the balance due to them upon the sale of the article, no deduction being necessary, as the entrance money pays all expenses of the sale of work and leaves to the workers the entire benefit of their labors. The whole scheme, therefore, though conceived in philanthropy, is entirely free from any economical heresy. It may be, as Sir Boyle Roche said, but "a fleabite in the ocean" of Ireland's distressfulness; but within its obvious limits it does a most praiseworthy work, and its limitations do not lessen the title to public appreciation of the work done by ladies who, whilst their husbands confront each other on opposite political benches, have, under the guidance of Lady Aberdeen, found common ground in a practical effort.

Tenders for the supply of letter-carriers' and telegraph messengers' satchels and leggings and telegraph linemen's valises will be received at the General Post Office, Wellington, until June 12. Further particulars will be found in our advertising columns.

The railway authorities notify that holiday excursion tickets, in connection with the Prince of Wales' Birthday, will be issued on the Hurunui-Bluff section from 30th inst. to June 3, and will be available for return up to June 24....

Moral Training.

DR. Wu Ting-fang, Chinese Minister to the United States, visited Philadelphia recently for the purpose of lecturing under the auspices of the Educational Association of that city. The subject of his lecture was, 'A Comparative View of American and Chinese Education.' In the course of his remarks the lecturer said:—I have visited many of your colleges and schools. My candid judgment compels me to say that there is something here that is a little lacking. Unless I am grievously mistaken, your system of education is directed merely to mental training. In other words, you develop the students' brains: you teach them useful subjects which will enable them to gain a livelihood. Your boys and girls have a general knowledge, perhaps superficial, in the subjects useful in life. But let me ask, does education consist only in mental training—is that the only object toward which education should be directed? Are these enough to make a boy or girl a good member of society? No doubt they are calculated to make them good members of the community. But a man is not here to learn simply useful subjects. I think that morality should be cultivated. I have seen the most learned men through lack of moral principles reduced to wrecks of what they might have been.

In China we teach respect to heaven and earth, reverence to our sovereign, rulers, teachers and parents. This is the basis of education in China. In America you have in your educational system everything but moral training. I have often asked why moral training is not taught in the schools and have been told that is left to the parents. But the parents are too busy.

Hospitals in the Middle Ages.

THE middle Ages are a fruitful source of non-Catholic misconception and mis-statement. Some of our esteemed separated brethren (says the *Sacred Heart Review*) are firmly convinced that nothing except what was dark and evil existed in those times. Of course they are wrong; and, as the world grows older, religious bigotry dies out, and more exact research is made in the annals of the Middle Ages, facts surprisingly to the credit of those days are brought out. Here, for instance, is a statement from the February number of the *National Hospital Record*, showing what enlightened ideas prevailed in the Middle Ages regarding hospitals:—

'The hospitals founded in France in the Middle Ages were a hobby of the great lords, to whom they owe their origin, and they surprise one by the enlightened views manifested in their construction. Built on a scale not inferior to that on which the great churches and abbeys of the period were planned, they formed a marked contrast to the hospitals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were lofty, well-lighted, and of massive construction, and the internal fittings were almost luxurious. Unlike the terrible state of things at the Hotel Dieu in Paris in the eighteenth century where several patients occupied one bed, the beds were placed in cubicles, with wooden partitions, and were each occupied by one patient only. In that at Tonnerre, a gallery ran round the ward, from which the cubicles could be overlooked by the attendants, and which sheltered the patients from glare and draughts from the tall windows above. These could be opened when necessary, and holes in the window-panes provided constant ventilation. The ward is ninety yards long by nineteen yards wide, and is proportionately lofty, with a timbered ceiling. It was provided for forty patients only. This hospital was built by Marguerite of Burgundy in the thirteenth century.

An Interesting Ceremony.

THE Church of St. Agnes outside the walls of Rome (says the correspondent of the *London Tablet*) was filled to its utmost limits by a large crowd, eager to witness the ceremony of the blessing of the lambs. At the conclusion of the High Mass the little lambs were brought in and laid upon the altar. They rested on damask cushions in separate baskets with their tiny limbs tied up in red and blue ribbons. Their equanimity is usually disturbed by the ordeal of passing through the crowd to the altar, and they bleat a plaintive remonstrance against the rough usage to which they are subjected. Fragments of their gay ribbons are torn away and portions of their snowy fleece rudely plucked out by people anxious to carry away a souvenir of their benediction. This year, however, the crowd were more merciful and the little creatures were gently stroked as they were borne past.

After the blessing the abbot delivered the lambs to the first master of ceremonies of the Lateran Basilica, who, as soon as the ceremony was over, took them to the Vatican to present them to his Holiness. The Holy Father sent them immediately to the dean of the Sacra Rota, who in turn handed them over to the nuns of the monastery of St. Cecilia in the Trastevere. They become the property of the nuns. About Easter they are shorn of their beautiful white fleece, which is given to the Pope. His Holiness commissions his prefect of ceremonies to have the wool woven into palliums which are blessed on the Vigil of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul and then placed in an urn in the confession of St. Peter's Basilica over the body of the apostle. They are sent 'de corpore St. Petri,' the first shepherd of the Universal church, to metropolitans to be worn as a symbol of their share in the plenary jurisdiction of the chief shepherd over the whole flock of Christ.

The drawing of the Reefton art union has been definitely fixed for July 2. Holders of tickets are earnestly requested to send in their returns before that date....