

Notes

Significant.

The following significant paragraph is taken from the annual report of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice:—'A complaint came to our office in the summer that a woman, lecturing against Roman Catholic institutions in a public hall in Brooklyn was selling to young girls, young men and women, a most obscene book. A copy was procured. It was found to be a book that had been legally suppressed by the courts both in England and this country. The lecturer fled the State after warrants had been issued for her arrest. She subsequently sent to our office 1115 books and 49 electro plates, with orders to have the same destroyed, which was done later.' The creature referred to is at present in Sydney, where she is 'lecturing' under the auspices of certain bigots and underground societies. Comment is unnecessary.

The Cost of a Strike.

There are still to be found in this Colony a few persons whose limited view of their own interests prompts a condemnation of the legalised method of settling industrial disputes. To such we would commend for reflection the following figures, indicating the cost of the Pennsylvania anthracite coal strike for the first six weeks. The loss has been estimated at over seven millions of money, made up as follows:—Loss to operators in price of coal, £3,104,000; to mine workers in wages, £1,554,000; to employes other than miners made idle by the strike, £384,000; to the business men of the coal region, £1,040,000; to business outside the coal region, £600,000; cost of maintaining coal and iron police, £80,000; cost of maintaining non-union workers, £17,000; estimated damage to mines and machinery, £300,000. If the foregoing figures are analysed, it will appear that the employers lost far more than the operatives. And yet victory rested with the former, for the simple reason that the contest was, as all such contests are, one of endurance, in which the weaker must ever go to the wall. Like all such strikes, it was merely a 'conflict between empty stomachs and full purses.' A victory under such circumstances establishes no principle. It merely hardens the heart of the worker, and admonishes him to postpone further attempts to improve his condition until he is in a better position to enforce his demands. If any one will contend that this is a stable and desirable relation between labor and capital, we shall await his reasons with considerable interest.

Reasons for the Strike.

The strike arose out of the old, old conditions—a heartless combination and a callous disregard of the condition of the toilers who produce the wealth. The president of the united mine workers of America has laid their case before the public with a calm convincingness and fidelity to detail that carry conviction. According to Mr. Mitchell's statement, says a contemporary, the miners work not more than 200 days in the year, at an average compensation of 5s 11d per day, or less than £60 a year in the aggregate. Mr. Mitchell protests, and justly, that this is not a living wage for the workmen, nor enough to enable them to live decently and educate and support their families. Parents are not only not able to send their children to school, but they are compelled to put them, at a tender age, to work in the mines, that their little wages may go to help the family to live. The cost of living has materially increased during the last two years, so that the purchasing power of wages is really less than it was before the 10 per cent. advance of two years ago. Mr. Mitchell shows from statistics that while the operators were mining coal at an increase of 13 cents per ton in 1901 over the cost in 1900 they were selling at an increased profit of 39 cents per ton. This increased cost to the consumer has brought no increase in the wages of the miner. The rise in the price of coal without any increase in the cost of production is a clear gain to the operators. The miners are right in thinking that if the price of coal is increased the wages of those who, at the constant risk of their lives, dig it out of the hills, should be increased.

*

The grossness of the pretext put forward by the capitalists was easily exposed. Mr. Mitchell points out that from 85 to 90 per cent. of all coal mined in the anthracite region is from mines owned and operated by the various coal carrying railroads. The owners, acting as railroad managers, charge themselves extortionate rates for hauling their own coal, and then offer to show their own books and prove by the figures that they cannot increase the wages of the miners. In this way they are enabled to rob the miner at one end of the coal transactions, and the consumer at the other. And behind all this are the black pall of death and the means of the maimed. Every day that the mines are in operation two men are killed and five are injured! In the year 1901 there were 481 fatal accidents, and 1,216 which were non-fatal. Such

considerations as these must give pause to the most rabid advocate of the theory of individual bargaining. The bulk of the miners in the anthracite mines are poor foreigners, who have escaped from Continental conditions that seemed hard, but were merciful in comparison with those imposed by the sordid corporations that regard human life and limbs as merely so many component parts of a soulless industrial machine. If it be conceded that the system of conciliation and arbitration in New Zealand does not meet ideal claims, at all events it contains principles that make impossible the conditions that caused the anthracite coal strike, and this much having been gained, all that remains is to perfect it by removing the few anomalies it contains.

A Wrong Standard.

The English publicist who still imagines that Wellington is somewhere in Australia, and who thinks river ferry boats the medium of communication between Australia and New Zealand, has been focussing his gigantic intellect on Mr Seddon, and applying his own Lilliputian standard to our Premier's claims to a voice in Imperial concerns. He sagely points out that the population of New Zealand is only 761,000, which, by the way, proves that the critic is not yet in possession of the census returns compiled in March of last year. He also incidentally mentions that the population of Glasgow is 735,000, of Liverpool 627,000, of Cape Colony 587,000, of Natal 69,000, and of Hastings 62,913. And he then asks what would be thought if the Mayor of Hastings had brought up to London an 'unofficial mandate' on Imperial Trade Policy! The obvious answer is that just as much would be thought of the proceeding as if the mayor of a provincial town in the Colony were to go to Wellington and try to instruct Sir J. G. Ward in the composition of a Loan Bill or the construction of a railway policy. The critic omits to mention that the mission of Mr Seddon is only part of a wide colonial movement, having for its object the consolidation of Imperial interests and the crystallisation of Imperial sentiment in some tangible fashion. It may be, as Mr Barton says, that for some time the mutual obligations of the Mother Country and the colonies will be interpreted in terms of the heart rather than in terms of the counting-house. But despite the vaticinations of economists, who declare that a Zollverein is for the present impracticable, something practical is certain to come, even though it should come about by the unwritten law of national feeling and not from written compacts. The bearer of a message from one of the parties to a project such as this must not be compared to the mayor of a provincial town. The comparison is not fair. The potentialities are much greater in a young and progressive colony than in even the most flourishing city. New Zealand, yet barely half a century old, has a trade amounting to about twenty-four millions per annum. The trade of all the British Colonies amounts to £212,000,000, or nearly one-third of that of the whole Empire. Though this is considerable, it is only a fraction of what will yet be accomplished, and the importance of the Colony, like that of all the others, is to be measured not so much by present results as by future possibilities. There is an unwritten law at courts that the ambassador of an independent country takes rank equally with others who represent nations much larger and more important. The Premiers of the colonies, who are now meeting in conference in London, can surely lay claim to the same consideration.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday from last Mass until Vespers. In the evening there will be the usual procession.

The ping pong tournament in connection with St. Joseph's Men's Club was concluded on Friday evening. About 20 entries had been received. After a number of keen contests the players were reduced to three—Messrs. D. Columb, D. Rodgers, and Jas. Swanson, the last having the bye. Mr Columb having defeated Mr Rodgers, a very exciting game was played by him against Mr Swanson, the latter losing by one point. The presentation of the trophies was made by Mr H. Miles. These were a handsome pipe and a serviceable walking-stick.

The fifth annual meeting of St. Joseph's Cathedral Choir was held in St. Joseph's Hall on Thursday evening of last week. The Rev. Father Murphy, Adm., presided, and there was a good attendance of members. The report and balance sheet, which were read and adopted, showed that the choir had made good progress during the year, and that the financial position was good, there being a credit balance of over £15. Father Murphy, in congratulating the members on the good work done during the past 12 months, took the opportunity of complimenting Mr A. Vallis, choirmaster, on the high state of efficiency attained by the choir, and also paid a meed of praise to Mr W. T. Ward, honorary conductor. The election of a committee resulted as follows:—Misses Rose Blaney, A. Heley, Messrs W. T. Ward, J. Leihy, C. Columb, and J. Woods. During the evening a musical programme was gone through, items being contributed by Misses Blaney, Leonard, Fraser, Davis, and Pearson, and Messrs Leihy, McCosker, Phillips, and Woods. Mrs J. Woods