

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

PRO-CATHEDRAL CONFERENCE,
CHRISTCHURCH

Patron, his Lordship the Right Rev. J. J. Grimes, S.M., D.D., Bishop of Christchurch; spiritual director, the Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chenaix, S.M., V.G.; president, Bro. E. O'Connor, J.P.; vice-presidents, Bros. G. Hayward and J. J. Wilson; treasurer, Bro. A. Mead; secretary, Bro. W. Fox; wardrobe-keeper, Bro. J. A. Hennessy; assistant do, Bro. Jas. Power.

REPORT AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED
JULY 23, 1902.

Fifteen years have just elapsed since the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as at present known, was reorganised in this city, or, to be more exact, was re-established by his Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes. This, indeed, was among the first episcopal acts of our revered chief pastor. The Society's uninterrupted existence since that time, its benevolent work among the suffering, destitute, and distressed, as noted in the reports annually placed in the hands of the public, must undoubtedly have cheered our devoted clergy and impressed our parishioners, as well as encouraged the few faithful laborers and timely helpers. On referring to the first annual report we find it therein stated that the Society commenced with 14 active and 6 honorary members, whilst the number when the report appeared was 35 active and 9 honorary. Why, then, this great falling off? Is the spirit of charity less manifest, are we more callous to the wants and sufferings of poor humanity than we were 15 years ago, or is there less need of such an organisation to-day? To the latter question the answer cannot be in the affirmative; the need exists to-day, and will exist, although not so pronounced perhaps as in years gone by, especially during periods of depression. We earnestly hope our modest wants will continue to be supplied, and that the ranks of membership will not only be maintained, but increased.

'For since kind Heaven with wealth our realm has blest,
Give it to Heaven by aiding the distressed.'

With reference to the establishment of a Home for the Aged Destitute, and Incurable, the movement is still being promoted. Already the nucleus of a fund for this most laudable and necessary undertaking is in hand, as the result of a concert and sports held on last St. Patrick's Day. A detailed account of the Society's operations for the past year is contained in the following summary:—

Orders issued, 136; visits to families, 113; to hospitals, 48; the Samaritan Home Jubilee Home, etc., were also visited frequently; school and prayer-books and rosaries were given to children, to the inmates of the Burnham Industrial School, the Samaritan Home, and to hospital patients; a few families were supplied with new clothing and boots to enable children to attend school; employment (temporary and permanent) was secured for 14 men; a number of boys and girls were placed in situations; 7 children were sent to Stoke Industrial School, several aged men got donations of warm clothing; funeral and interment expenses were supplied; and a suitable subject for the Home for Incurables at Wellington was provided with a passage.

BALANCE SHEET.

Receipts.		Expenditure.	
£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
To balance forward	12 15 4	By donations to ladies	
" Collections at weekly meetings	10 5 6	" Groceries	5 0 0
" Collections on occasion of last charity sermon and donations	20 15 0	" Coal and firewood	6 8 6
		" Boots	1 0 6
		" Railway and steamer fares	1 19 6
		" Tram fares (Jubilee Home and Deaf and Dumb Institute)	5 10 11
		" Funeral expenses	2 0 0
		" Board and meals (casuals)	0 15 6
		" Sundries—including printing, rail-age, stamps, telegrams, cab hire, books and religious objects for Burnham Industrial School, and hospital, etc., etc.	3 14 7
		" Cash balance in hand	12 7 4
	43 15 10		£43 15 10

In addition to the above and not included in the balance sheet the Very Rev. Vicar-General has assisted many deserving cases on behalf of the Society at an approximate cost of £15. On the recommendation of the Society many of our deserving poor people have been enabled to share in the Mayoral distribution of coal and blankets during the winter.

We would be extremely grateful if employers requiring workmen communicated their wants to the Society, as such cases are continually before members.

The charity sermons on behalf of the funds of the Society were preached last year by the Very Rev. Vicar-General and Rev. Father Galerne, to whom we are much indebted, their united efforts being the means of providing funds for the successful carrying on of our work throughout the year.

To his Lordship the Bishop, the Very Rev. Vicar-General, and the clergy of the Pro-Cathedral we return our sincere thanks for generous assistance and encouragement. We, likewise, thank all who have in any way contributed to our funds, wardrobe, etc.

LADIES' ASSOCIATION.

President, Mrs J. J. Courtney; vice-president, Mrs F. McGarva; treasurer, Miss S. Fuller; wardrobe-keeper, Mrs O'Rielly; secretary Mrs D. Scrimgeour.

Cases relieved in various ways, 50; visits to hospital, 20; Gordon street Refuge, 50; Jubilee Home, 16; Samaritan Home, 6; poor people in their own homes, 25. Goods distributed—Flannel—150 yards, flannel 70 yards, print 48 yards, 20 dresses, 15 new pinafores, 9 pairs boots, 10 parcels baby clothing, 60 parcels women's and children's clothing (old and new), 18 odd parcels containing stockings, collars, ties, etc., 5 pairs blankets, 12 yards material for making two new dresses, 12 yards lining, 12 yards sheeting. One child was taken to the hospital, and from there to the Preservation Home, Mount Magdala.

In addition to above, donations of various kinds have been received and distributed. To these generous benefactors we beg to offer our sincerest thanks, and also to the members of the Brothers' branch for the prompt and willing manner they attended any case brought under their notice. Our thanks are also due to the Vicar-General, Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chenaix, S.M.

BALANCE SHEET.

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURE.	
£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
To Balance from last year	1 17 11	By Drapery	13 3 0
Donations received from collection on Charity Sunday	5 0 0	Balance in hand	5 19 0
Amount of subscriptions from members	12 4 1		
	£19 2 0		£19 2 0

A Negation.

We have often said (says the *Ara Maria*) that the public are gradually coming to view the school question as Catholics do. There are many indications of this. Half admissions of our stand are heard on all sides, and many persons who formerly denounced the Church for its opposition to education without religion are now loud in their praise of its solicitude for the moral well-being of the youth of the land. Such an article as appeared in the *Brooklyn Eagle* the other day would have excited general discussion a few years ago—that is, if the *Eagle*, or any other paper, were independent enough to publish it. Our 'great dailies,' as they are called, do not influence public opinion: they simply reflect it; and the article to which we refer is of interest as showing how the school question is now viewed by intelligent non-Catholics. We quote the more salient sentences:—

The truth is we are taking for granted a moral intelligence which does not exist. We are leaning upon it, depending upon it, trusting to it and it is not there. . . . We have multitudes of youths and grown men and women who have no more intelligent sense of what is right and what is wrong than had so many Greeks of the time of Alcibiades. . . . The great Roman Catholics Church . . . is unquestionably right in the contention that the whole system [of State education] as it now exists is morally a negation. . . .

Smaller symptoms of moral obtuseness show themselves on every hand. We are foolishly surprised when we find a gang of toughs assaulting harmless passengers on a trolley line or stoning a passing carriage: when we see a whole populace unmoved at any extremity of corruption in civic administration; when we see young men of respectable families running about the streets, and their sisters affecting the manners of the Tenderloin. Why should we be surprised? It is the literal truth that they know no better. This is the depressing part of it all. . . . They have never learned, because there is no provision made for teaching them.

The great company of educators and the whole American community need to be sternly warned that if morality cannot be specifically taught in the public schools without admitting religious dogma, then religious dogma may have to be taught in them. For righteousness is essential to a people's very existence. . . . We are within measurable distance of the time when society may for its own sake go on its knees to any factor which can be warranted to make education compatible with and inseparable from morality, letting that factor do it on its own terms and teach therewith whatsoever it lists.

In cases of Sprains or any injury to the limbs the application of WITCH'S OIL gives instant relief.—* *

Messrs James Samson and Co. have been favored with instructions from Mr Thomas Tate to sell by auction on the premises, Patearoa, on August 14, leasehold properties, cottage, and household furniture, also timber, ironmongery, carpenters' and wheelwrights' tools, etc.

Parents and guardians should visit the branches of the New Zealand Clothing Factory, where they will get suits for their boys that will fit well and wear well. These suits are in navy and Fox's serges and can be purchased at the moderate price of from 11s 6d.