

Even in Mayo and Donegal, where the population is largely congested, but where simple pasturage is not the prevailing occupation—and where the migration of labor is common—the proportion of lunatics is far below the average for Ireland. Districts which include large towns have a much lower ratio than those which are purely rural. It must, I think, be admitted that the alarming increase in lunacy is partly due to the decrease in the population of large districts of Ireland, which has reduced the number of people below what is necessary for a healthy social life, and also to the nature of the people's occupation, which does not sufficiently interest and employ intellects naturally quick and easily affected.

The Growth of the Church

Phenomenal indeed has been the growth of the Church in English-speaking countries during the last century—from a mustard seed to a mighty tree. One hundred years ago the Catholics of Great Britain were ruled by four Vicars-Apostolic; now there are 24 archbishops and bishops, besides four retired prelates. The number of priests has increased from a handful to 3565. In 1801 the number of conventual institutions in England did not exceed a dozen; in 1902 there were more than 300. The surmised Catholic population of the United Kingdom is now about five millions and a quarter; that of the British Empire, ten millions and a half. The number of bishops under the protection of the British flag throughout the world is about 170.

The comparative statistics of the Church in our own country (says the 'Ave Maria'), which were set forth by Cardinal Gibbons in his sermon on the first Sunday of the new year are even more striking. At the time of the consecration of Bishop Carroll, whose see embraced the whole of the United States, the Catholic clergy numbered 25; and the Catholic population, residing chiefly in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York, was thought to be about 25,000. At the present time the Church in the United States comprises a hierarchy of nearly 100 members, 12,500 priests, and a Catholic population variously estimated at from 12 to 15 millions. Including our Philippine and Porto Rican possessions the number of Catholics under the aegis of the American flag will amount to upward of 20,000,000. In several States and Territories Catholics are now more numerous than non-Catholics; and the number of converts to the Church in a single year exceeds the entire Catholic population a century ago.

With figures like these in mind one finds it easy to subscribe to the statement regarding the growth and growing power of the Church lately made by one of the leading Protestant scholars of Germany: 'Humanly speaking, the Catholic Church is destined to achieve still more notable conquests in the 20th century.'

Dr. Kolbe, the historian of the Protestant Church in Germany, has published in the 'Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift,' of Leipsic, his opinion concerning the present strength of the Catholic Church in the Empire, in the course of which he says:—'Few people, and only those who study modern facts in the light of church history, have any appreciation of the phenomenal advance made by the Catholic Church during the last decades, especially as a power in the political world and in the conquests of new spheres of thought and life. . . . In other respects, the Church has grown phenomenally. Each year the number of those who swell the ranks of the religious Orders grows by the thousands, and in the German Empire alone there are now 40,000 of these. Not since the days of the Reformation have these Orders, especially the Jesuits, developed the strength they evince in our days.'

The Tasmanian elections held last week resulted in the complete overthrow of the Government, the Opposition sweeping the polls. For the first time in the history of the State the whole of the Ministers were defeated. Eighteen new members will take their seats in the Assembly. Out of the whole 35, the Oppositionists and Reformists total 21, the Ministerialists 6, the Independents 4, and the Labor party 4. The defeat of the Government is attributed to their income tax proposals carried last session, and their non-compliance with the public demand for political reform. The new Parliament contains an overwhelming majority in favor of reduction in the number of members and the repeal of the personal exemption contained in the Income Tax Bill passed last session.

St. Patrick's Day (says the 'Freeman's Journal') was celebrated in every part of Australia with unbounded success. Some towns went so far in their enthusiasm—which was right—as to observe the day as a close holiday. Never in the history of Australia was St. Patrick's Day observed with greater eclat. The lack of a holiday, instead of militating against it, gave a filip to popular determination to lift the day into unexampled magnificence. All classes, too, united in good fellowship with their Irish citizens in doing honor to St. Patrick. This is a pleasing feature to record, as showing that the efforts of those who would set at enmity fellow-citizens who have a common aim in their country's destiny, have fortunately failed, and the Commonwealth is going to go on uninterrupted by old-world strife in the paths of peace and prosperity. Australians are not wanting in sound common sense, nor in that touch of nature which inspires to nobler ideals than the piling up of bricks and mortar, and no doubt when the accounts of St. Patrick's celebrations in other countries come to hand we shall find that we have not been eclipsed in our national celebration of the great festival.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

April 4.

The Misses Rigg, on their retirement, after 13 years' service from active membership of St. Joseph's choir, were presented with souvenirs as a mark of esteem in which they are held by the members.

At St. Patrick's Church, Masterton, on Sunday last, Miss Twohill, of Wellington, assisted the choir in rendering the music of the Mass, and also at the evening devotions.

Rossini's 'Stabat Mater' was given in a most efficient manner by the members of St. Joseph's choir on Sunday evening last. The church was crowded, and many people were unable to gain admission. The soloists were the Misses Maher, Sullivan, Segrief (soprano), Maher (contralto), Mr. Rowe (tenor), and Messrs. Hendry, Turner, Flanagan, and Cronin (bass), all of whom rendered their different numbers in an artistic and devotional manner. The choruses were admirably sung and showed signs of careful training. As an offertory piece Miss Sullivan gave a fine rendering of Gounod's 'Holy Temple.' Just before Benediction Rev. Father O'Shea thanked the choir and the orchestra for their splendid performance of the 'Stabat Mater,' and said it reflected the greatest credit on all concerned. A collection was taken up for the organ fund, which realised £25. Solemn Benediction was given by the Rev. Father McNamara, assisted by Rev. Fathers Moloney and Kimbell. Mr. McLaughlin acted as conductor, Mr. M. J. Ennis was at the organ, and Mr. M. Gleeson led the orchestra.

A re-union of ex-students and friends of St. Patrick's College took place on last Sunday, when between 80 and 90 guests sat down to luncheon in the large dining room. The toast of 'The College,' proposed by the Very Rev. the Rector, was replied to by the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy on behalf of the founders of the institution, by Mr. Nicholas Reid on behalf of the friends and supporters, and on the part of the old boys by Mr. M. J. Crombie. Replying to the toast of 'The Rector and staff,' proposed by Mr. M. Kennedy, Very Rev. Father Keogh, said that in no college with which he had been connected, and he had many years' experience, did the staff work more harmoniously than in St. Patrick's College. Good work was being done in the College and the standard of education therein was in no way inferior to that which obtains in secondary schools at Home. Later in the afternoon a meeting of ex-students, at which the Rector presided, was held in the study hall, and as a result active steps are to be taken to resuscitate the Old Boys' Association. The following committee was elected to take the necessary preliminary steps:—Messrs. W. E. Butler, W. R. S. Hickson, S. J. Moran, D. Ryan, and A. H. Casey, with Mr. M. J. Crombie as hon. secretary.

DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own correspondent.)

April 6.

Rev. Father Rouillac, S.M., is at present visiting South Canterbury.

The Rev. Father Molu, S.M., reports the condition of the Catholic Maoris at the settlements he has visited in the South Island to be very satisfactory. At Kaikoura they are building a new church. He is at present among the natives at Little River.

His Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Verdon, Bishop of Dunedin, is (at time of writing) the guest of the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes at the Episcopal residence. Bishop Verdon arrived at Lyttelton on Sunday evening, and the Very Rev. Vicar-General had a carriage awaiting him at the Christchurch railway station. We are all pleased to know through his Lordship that his Eminence Cardinal Moran looks remarkably well and is in vigorous health.

At the Pro-Cathedral on Palm Sunday, the palms were blessed and distributed at the 11 o'clock Mass by the Rev. Father O'Connell. Owing to an accident which unfortunately befell his Lordship the Bishop recently, thereby temporarily incapacitating him, the customary impressive ceremonial of the occasion was somewhat interfered with.

There was the usual distribution of palms at St. Mary's, Manchester street, and in the evening, instead of the ordinary Vespers service, a strong choir, with orchestra under the conductorship of Mr. W. H. Corrigan, gave a fine rendering of Rossini's 'Stabat Mater.'

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND.

(From our own correspondent.)

April 2.

The Marist Brother's new college is nearing completion, and on all sides it is voted a valuable architectural addition to the district of western Ponsonby.

Auckland's custom duties for the year ending March 31st is a record for the Colony, the total being £612,666, an increase of £57,784 on last year's total, and £50,962 more than this year's total for Wellington.