

a praiseworthy manner by the choir under the baton of Mr. Eager, Miss G. Stokes being at the organ. The solos were taken by Misses M. Mahony and G. Creagh (sopranos), Mrs. Eager and Miss Freed (contraltos), Messrs. Applegarth and Gaffney (tenors), and Messrs. Matheson, Mee, and Bush (basses). As an offertory piece Mrs. Eager sang Mascagni's 'Ave Maria,' with orchestral accompaniment. The choir was ably assisted by an orchestra consisting of Mr. Stokes and Miss Robinson (violins), Mr. Amor (flute), Mr. Briggs (clarinet), Mr. Holland (cornet), Mr. Palmer (French horn), Mr. Rainsford (cello), and Mr. Dallas (double bass).

The various services at St. Joseph's Cathedral during Holy Week were attended by large congregations. The office of Tenebrae, at which his Lordship Bishop Verdon presided, was sung on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings. The following clergy were also present:—Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay (Oamaru), Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary (Lawrence), Very Rev. Dean Burke (Invercargill), Very Rev. Father O'Neill (Milton), Rev. Father Murphy (Adm. St. Joseph's Cathedral), Rev. Father Hogan (Dookie, Victoria), Rev. Father Coffey (South Dunedin), Rev. Father O'Dea (Ophir), Rev. Father Lynch (Palmerston South), Rev. Father Cleary, Rev. Fathers Delaney, M. Ryan, and P. O'Neill (Holy Cross College), Rev. Father Howard, and Rev. Father O'Malley. On Thursday morning Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by his Lordship the Bishop, Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay being assistant priest, Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, and Very Rev. Dean Burke, deacons at the throne; Rev. Father Howard deacon at the Mass, Rev. Father O'Malley sub-deacon; and Rev. Father O'Dea and Rev. Father M. Ryan deacons at the blessing of the holy oils. In the evening after Tenebrae the occasional sermon on the institution of the Blessed Sacrament—a very able and impressive discourse—was preached by the Rev. Father Coffey. The Altar of Repose was beautifully decorated, and numbers of devout worshippers visited the Cathedral during the day. His Lordship the Bishop was the celebrant of the Mass of the Presanctified on Friday morning, Rev. Father Lynch being assistant priest, Rev. Father Howard deacon, and Rev. Father O'Malley sub-deacon. The Passion was sung by Monsignor Mackay, Monsignor O'Leary, and Rev. Father Cleary. A very earnest and powerful sermon on the Passion was preached by Rev. Father O'Dea. The Rev. Father Murphy was master of ceremonies at all the Masses and services during the week. The students of the Provincial Seminary (Holy Cross College) assisted in the sanctuary on Friday morning.

At the early Masses at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Easter Sunday very large numbers approached the Holy Table. At eleven there was Solemn Pontifical High Mass of which his Lordship Bishop Verdon was celebrant, Rev. Father Cleary being assistant priest, Rev. Father Murphy deacon, Rev. Father Howard sub-deacon. As at the other Masses there was a very large congregation present. His Lordship the Bishop preached on the Resurrection. The choir, under the conductorship of Mr. Vallis, and assisted by an efficient orchestra gave a finished rendering of Gounod's 'Messe Solennelle.' The soloists were Miss Rose Blaney (soprano), Mr. Shepherd (tenor), and Mr. T. Hussey (bass). At the offertory Miss Blaney gave a very devotional and artistic rendering of Luzzi's 'Ave Maria,' and the Easter hymn 'Hæc Dies' was also sung at the Mass. Miss J. Woods presided at the organ with her accustomed ability. Dunster's 'Festival March' was played as an outgoing voluntary. The decorations, which were confined to the high altar and sanctuary, were appropriate to the festival and in excellent taste. His Lordship presided at Vespers, when the occasional sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Murphy. Solos were sung by Miss Rose Blaney and Miss Angus. Mr. Vallis being at the organ. After High Mass the choir, at the invitation of the Bishop, partook of light refreshments in St. Joseph's Hall. The Bishop congratulated them on their good work and referred in complimentary terms to Mr. Vallis. Easter Sunday being the anniversary of the day on which he first assumed the duties of organist.

OAMARU.

(From our own correspondent)

April 14

In a paragraph, a week or two ago, I mentioned that the completion of the portico of the basilica was then in progress. Now the contractors have almost finished the work. At the Masses last Sunday Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay announced that at the opening ceremony his Grace the Archbishop of Wellington and their Lordships the Bishops of Christchurch and Dunedin will confer the high honor of their presence upon the people of Oamaru. No doubt this honor is intended as a tribute in the first place to the zeal and energy of Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay, and secondly to the devotedness and self-sacrifice of his parishioners who have so nobly and generously co-operated in this great work.

The basilica has from time to time been described in the 'Tablet,' but as the work of carrying out the full details of the plan goes on something additional is always becoming noticeable. A line or two in reference to the portion now nearly finished will therefore be not out of place. Of course the readers of the 'Tablet' are aware that the basilica is of the Grecian order, showing wealth of column and chiselled ornamentation, carved capitals, and carved projections. The Oamaru white stone lends itself to this style, and, as the work is in

the hands of such a skilled carver as Mr. Given, the finest ideals of the architect are fully expressed. The total elevation from the street to the top of the cross surmounting the domes is 83ft 6in. The approach consists of a flight of thirteen steps the full width of the portico, and leads to the main entrance. The portico itself rests on light carved and fluted pillars and is surmounted by a marble cross 7ft in height. The corner towers are 42ft 6in high and on those rest eight pillars with carved capitals bearing an octagonal dome, giving a height of 32ft from the top of the towers. These domes are also surmounted by marble crosses. A Dunedin firm has contracted for the double gate, with two smaller side gates, and these, with the piers and walls, are to be in their places by the time of opening.

When the contract now on hand is finished, the nave of the basilica, except the carvings inside, will be completed. The sanctuary and transepts are the work of the future. When we consider the means of our people, with the monthly drain upon their poor resources to carry on our schools, only an optimist would venture to say that the dream and the hope of the people of Oamaru will be realised in the near future. But if one looks back a few years—not quite few—and remembers the task that then lay before our revered pastor, and now looks at the magnificent piles—basilica, convent, presbytery—he must say the most exaggerated dream is capable of realisation, under such guidance, and by such people.

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL

It is stated that the Government has agreed to pay £242,000 for the Levels estate, which has an area of 38,000 acres. Possession is to be given on March 31 next.

The Mayor of Timaru, in the course of a speech some days ago, remarked that he did not believe there was another district of the same size under the English flag that could compare with South Canterbury in productiveness, and he doubted if, in any other part of the world, a population of 30,000 produced as much as was obtained in that fertile district.

At present 600 co-operative workmen are employed on the North Island Trunk Railway, on the left bank of the Wanganui river, and work is being pushed on vigorously. Last week a start was made with the erection of the railway bridge over the Wanganui river at Taumaranui. The work will take at least two years to complete.

The railway traffic to and from Dunedin during the Easter holidays was very heavy, and it is satisfactory to know and complimentary to the department that the large numbers who took advantage of the fine weather to travel by rail were conveyed to and from their destinations without a single hitch or accident of any kind. This speaks well for the officers of the department, who had their hands very full in coping with the press of work during the holidays.

With very great regret (says the 'Inangahua Times' of April 7) we have to report that Dean Rolland's health is in no way improved, on the contrary it was found necessary to remove him to the hospital yesterday afternoon for the purpose of having an operation performed. Doctors Conlon and Scott held a consultation on Wednesday last and decided that this course was absolutely necessary in order to save his life. Both doctors are sanguine as to the result, although, of course, at Dean Rolland's advanced age an operation of this kind is always attended with a certain amount of danger. The rev. gentleman, however, bears up with characteristic fortitude under the trying ordeal, exhibiting in his whole demeanor that sublime resignation and implicit confidence in God, which have sustained him through life of many trials and vicissitudes. We who know Dean Rolland so well have only to hope with earnestness and sincerity that the operation may prove successful, and that he may be spared for many years to come to discharge his priestly ministrations.

Speaking at Waimate last week the Hon. Hall-Jones referred to the marvellous change which had taken place in Cheviot since it was acquired by the Government. A comparison of the position now, he said, with the position of the estate before it was acquired by the Government was an object lesson to all who differed from the Government in their land settlement policy. To give an illustration: In 1892, when the estate was acquired, the owner had upon it 82,000 sheep and 53 head of dairy cows, and obtained 7000 bushels of oats from it. Last year there was 196,000 sheep, nearly 6000 dairy cows, and more than 10 times the quantity of grain grown at the time the estate was owned by the Robinsons.

The lands acquired by the Government under the Land for Settlement Act up to the end of September last (said Mr. Seddon in his speech at Waimate last week) were valued at £2,596,721. Canterbury's share was £975,714, and, with some estates bought since and the purchase of the Levels (£242,000), the amount was brought up to a million and a quarter. Canterbury had fared well, and rightly so. There were few Crown lands in the province, and the largest estates were drawing the sons and daughters of the settlers to the North Island or elsewhere. Auckland had 2,513,000 acres of Crown lands; Hawke's Bay 270,000 acres; Taranaki, 557,000 acres; Wellington, 734,000 acres; Nelson, 3,351,000 acres; Marlborough, 142,000 acres; Canterbury, 4876