

The Stoke Orphanage.

We beg to acknowledge the following sums entrusted to us for the Stoke Orphanage :—

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged ...	43	19	0
Mr. D. A. Cameron (Nokomai) ...	1	1	0
Mr. M. J. MacReynolds (Pungarehu) ...	1	0	0
Mrs. Halpin (per Mr. M. J. MacReynolds)	0	5	0

We shall be glad to receive, acknowledge, and forward further subscriptions entrusted to us for this great and sorely-tried charity. Rev. P. Murphy, Adm., has kindly consented to act as Treasurer for moneys received by us for this purpose.

EDITOR, 'N.Z. TABLET,'
DUNEDIN.



'To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.'

LEO XIII. to the N.Z. TABLET.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1903.

A MEMORABLE CENTENARY

IT is the business of history to get back to origins—to track the footsteps of our institutions backward through all the paths they have trodden since their infant days. This the Church in Australia has lately been doing in the quiet celebration of the first centenary of the first Mass that was celebrated on its shores since the days when it was first colonised by a batch of 1030 convicts who were landed at Sydney Cove in 1787. Among the some 6000 convicts there in the earliest years of the nineteenth century were some 200 Catholics, many of whom had been deported for complicity, or alleged complicity in the gallant but ill-fated struggle of 1798. Three of these were priests—Fathers HAROLD, DIXON, and O'NEILL. The most evil traditions of the penal laws were in force in the new convict colony against the exercise of the Catholic religion. But in 1803—after many representations—Father DIXON was emancipated and permitted once a month, under humiliating restrictions, to exercise his sacred ministry among the Catholic convicts in Sydney. His first Mass was celebrated on May 15, 1803. There was no altar-stone. The chalice was of tin—the work of a convict. The vestments were like JOSEPH's coat of many colors—made of parti-hued old damask curtains sacrificed for the occasion; and the whole surroundings of this memorable event in the history of the Church in Australasia bespoke the poverty of Bethlehem and the desolation of Calvary.

That fifteenth day of May, a century ago, marked the first small and grudging signs of official toleration which the fierce officialism of those early Australian days showed to the Old Church in these virgin lands. The concession had been forced upon the Sydney authorities by the Home Government. It was viewed with marked disfavor by them from the first. After a little more than a year it was withdrawn after a mock-trial and a hideous inquisition of lash-torture. The three Irish priests were gradually permitted to return to their native land. The last state of the Catholic convicts became worse than the first. The lash and loaded irons were freely applied to compel them to at least external conformity with the perfunctory observances of the official creed. A deep spiritual desolation fell upon the infant Church in Australia. 'Vengeance and cruelty,' says ERSKINE MAY, 'were [the convict system's] only principles; charity and reformation formed no part of its scheme.' The traditions and torture-punishments that

made the Old Bailey a home of such evil odor were in full blast in the new south land.

'Pale Anguish kept the heavy gate,
And the Warder was Despair.'

Callous inhumanity and a hard animalism ran through and through the system; but out of its jaws a directing Providence has, nevertheless, drawn a high civilisation and a glorious Church, as SAMPSON took honey from the mouth of the devouring lion.

The thirties were well advanced on their course before a decent meed of religious liberty was accorded to the practice of the Catholic religion in Australia. The evils of the convict system lay heavily upon the Church in three of the seven Colonies till the nineteenth century had passed the midway of its course. Her struggles were chiefly struggles against the system and its results; her worst trials were the creation of the system; the heaviest losses of her children came through the operation of the system; her triumphs were won over, or in despite of, the system; and, in Bishops WILLSON and ULLATHORNE, she was chiefly instrumental in smiting it to death, as the fair Christian maiden of the Rhineland legend slew, with her cross in sacred confidence high uplifted, the devouring monster of the Drachenfels. It was a long, slow agony, but she triumphed in the end over the political, social, domestic, and personal wrongs of the convict days. The persecuted 'little flock' of 1803 has now grown into a million, spread over the seven colonies of Australasia. The one priest that exercised the sacred ministry in Australasia is now represented by over a thousand under the guidance of seven Archbishops (one of them a Cardinal), eighteen Bishops, three Vicars-Apostolic, and one Abbot *nullius*—in all, a hierarchy consisting of twenty-nine prelates exercising episcopal functions. There are, besides, close on 600 religious Brothers, nearly 5000 nuns, 1512 churches (some of them not surpassed by the great ecclesiastical monuments of the Old World), four ecclesiastical seminaries, 359 colleges and high schools, 792 primary schools, 80 institutes of charity, and 113,602 children receiving a Catholic education under Catholic teachers in Catholic institutes of learning.

It is, indeed, a vast progress—spiritual, numerical, social, political. And the sturdy pioneers of the early decades of the nineteenth century—many of them deported without trial for political offences, or under the suspicion of political offences, or for things not punishable by any code of laws existing nowadays—sowed in stripes and tears what we now reap in joy. The centenary of the first Mass celebrated in an Australasian white settlement recalls the grave and thankful words that came from the hearts of the Fathers of the Sydney Plenary Council of 1895—words which we can use with even greater reason and appropriateness to-day: 'Such a contrast between the beginning and the close of a century is unexampled in history. Such a blessing of fruitfulness is unparalleled since the early ages of the Apostles.'

Notes

A Fishy Tale

A travelling agent of the Bible Society has been telling some droll 'history' at Gisborne lately, if we may credit a report of his remarks which appeared in a recent issue of the 'Gisborne Times.' 'He stated,' says the report, 'that five years previous he held a meeting at Naples, where a number of Italian ministers in connection with the Wesleyan Church conducted a meeting in the Italian language on Protestant lines, singing Protestant hymns close to the dungeon in which 40 years previous many had been incarcerated and suffered lingering deaths on account of their possessing Bibles.' The tale about people going through various stages of martyrdom for merely having Bibles in their possession is a local application of an old and fishy legend which has done such good service among the gobemouches in the past that it is not likely to be lightly relinquished. But we rather think that the level of general intelligence in New Zealand is somewhat too high to receive fables of this sort with anything more than the smiling incredulity

RIDE "ANGLO SPECIAL" CYCLES.