

COMMONWEALTH NOTES

GENERAL.

A number of aborigines from Melville Island and Bathurst Island, who went over to Darwin in a canoe on March 19, carried with them tidings of a disastrous hurricane and tidal wave that devastated the Catholic aboriginal mission station at Bathurst Island. In a letter received by Father Fanning from Father Gsell, who is in charge of the mission, it is stated (says the *Northern Territory Times* of March 22) that the hurricane pretty well flattened out everything, and the tidal wave that followed and swept the foreshore carried out to sea the debris caused by the storm. The convent and presbytery were blown down but the schoolroom and the house occupied by Capt. Alphonso (skipper of the mission boat St. Francis) were left standing. Great damage was done to the mission gardens and to the banana and coconut plantations. In his letter, which was dated March 16, Father Gsell said no lives had been lost, and every one belonging to the mission was safe and well.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

On April 9, 1919, his Grace the Archbishop of Sydney set the keystone of the western tower arch of St. Mary's Cathedral. He was assisted by Rev. Father John O'Gorman (Adm., St. Mary's Cathedral), Mr. Hennessy, sen., Mr. Hennessy, jun., and Mr. Ptolemy (overseer). In memory of this event it was decided at the meeting of the executive committee on April 25, that the following inscription be placed in a position capable of being seen within the Cathedral: "The keystone of this tower was set by the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Archbishop of Sydney, on April 9, 1919."

No words can picture the heroic self-sacrifice and perseverance of the Sisters of the various religious Orders in their battle against the influenza scourge (says the *Catholic Press*). To quote the words of one of the Sisters herself, when inquiries were made at the hospital, they are having "a terrible time of it." Yet, unflinchingly, they face the dangers of the wards, overcrowded with the sick and dying, bringing comfort and solace, and through their unremitting care and skill nursing back to health many a person who has hovered on the brink of death. They are working night and day, with scarcely a moment's respite. It says much for the great effectiveness of the nursing Sisters that most of the influenza patients are restored to health after a certain length of time spent in the hospitals, and it has been explained that the majority of the cases that proved fatal were desperate ones when admitted to the hospitals, and it was practically too late to do anything for them. Several of the Sisters have contracted the disease in the performance of their duty, and on April 16 Sister Isidore, of the Nursing Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, Lewisham Hospital, died. In her last illness she was attended by Rev. Fathers T. Phelan, P.P., and W. L. Byrne. She made her final vows on her deathbed, and, fortified by all the consolations of religion, passed peacefully to her reward. Sister Isidore was a native of Melbourne, and was 30 years of age.

On Easter Monday, when he officiated at the blessing of the new presbytery at Katoomba, his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Archbishop of Sydney, received a most cordial reception. After voicing his pleasure at being present, he referred, in serious vein, to the troublous state of the world at present, in spite of the end of the war and the daily meetings of the Peace Conference. He deplored the disunity, and said what was wanted for the welfare of the world was a guidance and mutual goodwill, so that society might not be divided into opposing classes, but would live family-like, each having an interest in the other. Each family was a unit, and God had established it, therefore there should be mutuality of existence. Even legislators, no matter what might be their design, must keep their

hands off the family. They could protect and encourage, but they must not interfere with parent and child, husband and wife, for it was by these and through these society was to increase. Good families meant good society; neglected families meant degenerate society. Might was not right. The war proved that, but might would probably have prevailed had a Supreme Providence not intervened. Where man failed, Providence had proved supreme. His Grace then traced national hatreds right from the birth and crucifixion of Christ down through the ages to the present day. Even to-day justice and mutual sympathy had been displaced by expediency and diplomacy. It was to be regretted, but it was a fact, and society would never be re-established properly without the preservation of justice, mutual sympathy, and charity among all men and nations. Differ if you must, but don't condemn—that was God's right."

VICTORIA.

At the third annual congress of the Catholic Women's Social Guild, held at the Cathedral Hall, Fitzroy, on Saturday and Sunday, April 19 and 20, Miss Anna Brennan, B.A., LL.B., who occupied the chair, stated that there was a pressing need for advanced educational work by women in the best interests of the community. In opening the congress, the Very Rev. W. J. Lockington, S.J., said that the remodelling of national and individual life, the changed modes of thought, and the failure on all sides of once generally accepted ideals, made it imperative that women should have a primary place among those who were laboring for a better world. Many men, who knew no better, looked askance at what they called the new woman, but the only new thing about her was her determination to insist on man rectifying some of the many abuses under which she had labored for so long. The new movement did not exactly aim at greater freedom for women, but at more restrictions for men. Women had to fight all along for education and economic independence, and now she was fighting for legislative action. She wished to make man respect God's laws better, and in this she need not sacrifice any of her gentleness. Referring to the duties of women, Archbishop Mannix said that the people were the governors of Australia, and the country was just what the people made it. Women should never neglect the primary and fundamental duty in their own homes, but they should lend a hand in every good work that came their way. There were some, he knew, who said that the line should be drawn against the intervention of women in public affairs, but he thought they were quite wrong. It was the duty of adult persons of both sexes to do all they possibly could to advance the well-being of the community, municipally and politically. If women held aloof and confined themselves to the home and benevolent work, they would leave to others the shaping of Australia's national life, and thereby perhaps leave something material undone.

QUEENSLAND.

The final meeting of the Rockhampton St. Patrick's Day Celebration Committee was held on April 21. His Lordship Bishop Shiel presided, and after the reading of the financial statement, reviewed the position generally. He said that the celebrations this year netted about £340.

During the course of his sermon at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane, on Sunday evening, April 20, the Very Rev. P. M. Lynch, C.S.S.R., paid a glowing tribute to the Catholics of Queensland, their Archbishop, and priests. He expressed himself as being delighted with the scenes of piety displayed during Holy Week, and the large numbers who went to Confession and Holy Communion.

A notification in this week's issue of the *Tablet* gives the dates of spiritual retreats for ladies to be conducted at the Sacred Heart Convent, Timaru.

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