

## Travelling in Winter is a Cold Business

—But it need not be so, if you equip yourself with a MOSGIEL RUG—the fleecy, warm, pure wool wrap that will keep you cosy and comfortable. . .

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## NEW CONVENT OF MERCY, WREY'S BUSH

### THE CEREMONY OF BLESSING AND OPENING

(From our own correspondent.)

His Lordship Bishop Verdon, who had been for five weeks visiting the parishes of Southland and administering Confirmation, arrived here on Friday, May 2, for the purpose of making a visitation of the parish, administering Confirmation, and especially to open the new convent. The Sisters of Mercy were established at Wrey's Bush about fifteen years ago. The late Father Walshe procured for them about twenty-five acres of land and the homestead of the run owned by Mr. Johnson. Lately, the dwelling was becoming inadequate for the purposes of the community, hence twelve months ago the generous people of this parish and their worthy pastor, Very Rev. Father Lynch, resolved to build a new and more suitable home for the nuns. The new building, which is of ferro-concrete, commenced six months ago, was ready for opening on Sunday, May 4. The pastor and people, especially some of the more energetic ladies, had been, for some weeks, making preparations for Sunday's ceremonies. A large number of people was expected. Visitors were looked for from the surrounding districts, and as the ceremonies would necessarily last for several hours the Children of Mary undertook to provide luncheon for all who attended. The weather conditions were not all that one would desire. The morning broke dull and showery, still the people were not kept back from coming. When the hour for Mass arrived, all the seats in the church were filled. The choir had been practising the Gregorian *Missa de Angelis* for some time and, for a country choir, acquitted themselves very well. The Mass was sung by the Very Rev. Dean Burke, who also preached the sermon.

The preacher took for his text, 1 Tim. iv., 8, and spoke of the benefits of the Christian religion. 'What good is religion? Of what benefit is it to me? Why should I put myself to so much trouble and expense for it?' Some one may ask. The preacher set himself to answer these questions, to show that not only the promises of the life which is to come, but also the blessings of the life that now is are all derived from religion. All our true civilisation and genuine culture, all that distinguishes Christian from non-Christian nations, Europe from Asia—all is owing to our religion. He showed how it gives the Christian all that he needs and all that he has of real worth—light to his feeble mind, moral guidance to his passion, worried will, solid consolation to his depressed spirit. Going into details, the preacher showed how religion has been the inspiration and the theme of the greatest men of the past 17 or 18 centuries, and the reason and source of all the institutions best promotive of benevolence and learning during the long centuries that have passed since the Christian Church was emancipated, and came forth from the Catacombs. He contrasted the religious darkness of heathen peoples and those groups and sects of post-Christians who, in our time have turned away from Christianity, with the knowledge possessed even by simple Christians as to God, as to man's soul, his bodily faculties and passions, his fall, the mysteries of Redemption, Sanctification, and Grace, as to the power of prayer, and of the wonder-working Sacraments, and as to God's providence and man's final destiny. He contrasted the errors of the old pagans and the vagaries of our neo-pagans, as to morals and conduct, with the sure guidance of the Sacred Scriptures and of Christian tradition, precisely explained by the authorised teachers of the Catholic

Church. He contrasted the despair and pessimism shown by materialists, agnostics, and atheists with the cheerfulness and buoyant optimism of the devout Christian. Passing from individuals to society, the preacher pointed out the wonderful effects of our religion on the world at large. It has been the mother of the great Apostles and missionaries of the nations, the teacher of saints and doctors, the inspirer of the heroic army of the martyrs, the school of the statesmen-founders of the religious Orders and the home of their multitudinous disciples, the garden of Paradise where ever grow those beautiful flowers of virtue—virginity, female modesty, chastity, obedience, humility, self-denial, love of labor, generosity, and charity—virtues unknown and impossible elsewhere. Our religion has been the softener and refiner of law, civil and criminal, national and international; the founder of true family life, the enactor of relations between husband and wife, parents and offspring, masters and servants, set up according to an ideal fitted to lift the weak and the poor to a plane of equality and brotherhood based on fraternal charity and respect for our human nature—an ideal peculiar to Christianity alone. And will those who toil and those who suffer, and those who are weak ask, What has religion done for us? And will those who are in power and bear rule ask what has religion done for the world and for civilisation? Why! it has done almost everything. Recall, said the preacher, all the multiplied and magnificent foundations of charity, religion, and education which for so many centuries have been the work, exclusively of the Christian Church—the hospitals, the churches, the monasteries, the schools, colleges and universities, the homes of benevolence and light and wonder at the fruitfulness of the Creed you recite, the moral laws and counsels you observe, of the prayers you recite, the Sacraments you receive, and the devotions you practise. Your religion, then, is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Religion is your possession most worthy of your admiration, effort, and enthusiasm. A grand vocation is yours in this new land. Your vocation is not merely to people this place, to make roads and bridges, to build farmhouses, villages, and towns all over the waste; it is much more and higher, to establish here the city of God over against the city of the world—the flesh and the devil, to save this country from vice and falsehood, from agnosticism and infidelity. It is your vocation, by word and example, by your uncompromising Catholic principles, by your self-denying lives and your high unselfish aims, to be witnesses and missionaries of the glories and triumphs of the Faith. It is your duty, by your generosity and unselfish labors to build up these churches and schools, these convents and colleges which will be the agencies for the propagation of the faith. Your part it is, as they do in all Catholic countries, to show the cross on tower and spire and gable-end, to make the standard of Jesus Christ wave over village and town and country hamlet all through this land. What a noble destiny, to be called to do battle for the True, the Pure, the Exalted, the Eternal and Immutible against ever-changing error, vice, mammon-worship, and the degrading pursuit of mere animal comfort. Rise, then, above the prevailing pursuit of excitement, movement, and bodily pleasure; rise above absorption in the petty personal interests of your little circle: rise to that higher plane which faith spreads before you. Be self-denying, unselfish, generous, uncompromising, and decided in your principles, and fear not; you will accomplish in this new land great things such as your fathers in the faith achieved in the past, great things such as are being done at present by your relatives and by those bearing the same family names as you, throughout the British Empire and the vast provinces of America. The Apostle might appeal to you more forcibly than he appealed to his Ephesian converts, 'I therefore beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called. . . . This then I say and testify in the Lord, that henceforward you walk not as the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, . . . who despairing, have given

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