

The Late Mr. M. Segrief, Wellington

A Solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of the late Mr. M. Segrief was celebrated at St. Anne's Church, Wellington South, on Saturday, October 22, at 10 a.m. Rev. Father T. B. Segrief, S.M. (a son of deceased), was celebrant, Rev. Father Connolly being deacon, and Rev. Father Gondringer, S.M., subdeacon. The music of the Mass was very devotionally rendered by the boys of St. Patrick's College, under the conductorship of Rev. Father Ryan, S.M. Rev. Father Schaeffer, S.M., presided at the organ, and played the "Funeral March" at the end of the Mass.

The funeral took place on Sunday afternoon at 2.30. From St. Anne's Church, in which deceased had spent so many hours of his life, to which, though almost blind and mortally weak he had groped his way for his last Mass but two days before his death, and where his mortal remains had kept vigil, he was borne forth between stout ranks of members of the Hibernian Society, like a chieftain passing to his eternal rest. There was a large concourse of people of all denominations, including ex-mayors of the city, citizens in high positions in the Government services and in mercantile life, representatives of all the religious Orders of Wellington, and a large number of priests. As a token of special respect the members of the Hibernian Society formed the van of the funeral procession, marching in serried ranks as far as the Basin Reserve. When the funeral reached the cemetery there was already gathered around the grave a very large concourse. Rev. Father Segrief officiated at the interment. A number of beautiful floral tributes were laid on the grave. Numerous expressions of sympathy received from all sides gave testimony of the warm place the late Mr. Segrief held in the hearts of the Catholic people of New Zealand. May his soul rest in peace.

AN APPRECIATION (By A FRIEND.)

It was with sincere regret that the Catholics of Wellington learned on Friday, October 21, that Mr. Matthias Segrief had passed away that afternoon. Mr. Segrief, who reached the ripe old age of 88, was born in Skerries, Co. Dublin, Ireland. In his youth he served in the mercantile marine, and all through his life he retained a deep interest in "the men who go down to the sea in ships."

Mr. Segrief left Ireland for the Victorian goldfields in 1861. Almost immediately upon his arrival there, he felt attracted, as did so many of our early pioneers, by the glowing accounts which came from New Zealand. Setting sail for the new El Dorado, he eventually reached Wellington in 1864, and here he finally settled. During his long residence in the capital city he was engaged in business with various steamship companies: at first with the Panama Steamship Co., then with Captain Williams's Co., later with the Union Steamship Co., and, until two years ago, with the Shaw, Savill, Albion Co. In these various business connections he built up for himself a reputation for integrity and conscientiousness that won him the esteem and entire confidence of all who came into contact with him.

Though he took no part in politics, local or national, he always evinced a deep and clear-sighted interest in every movement that made for the betterment of his fellow-men. He belonged to the Hibernian Society, in whose activities he took a share and showed a keen interest to the end of his long career.

Mr. Segrief had been in failing health for some six months, and three months ago he suffered an attack of heart failure, which it did not appear possible for him to survive. Aided, however, by a splendid constitution, and a belief in prayer that no illness could daunt, he rallied and seemed to be on the road to complete recovery when his end came rather suddenly, but very gently and quietly, on October 21.

The death of Mr. Segrief recalls that of his beloved wife, which occurred in September last year. Rarely, indeed, has the Church in New Zealand seen such a perfect combination of the just man and the valiant woman of the Bible, as was exemplified in their joint lives. With

them disappears yet another of those splendid pioneer Catholic families who have helped to build the Church strong and firm and secure in this new land. Coming in their youth from the "Isle of Saints," and bringing with them the choicest qualities with which the Irish race has enriched the moral treasure-house of the world, they laid here the foundations of a monument more enduring far than brass or marble. Blessed with a numerous family, out of which, according to the best traditions of their race, they gave their son to the priesthood and one daughter to religious life, they lived their lives according to the exact pattern of the Scriptures. Around them, as the years grew on, as around two giant oak trees of the forest, there gathered their children and grandchildren, and an ever-widening circle of friends and admirers. Crosses were not spared them, but they only seemed to spur them on to greater heights of self-sacrifice, and to cause to shine the more resplendently the beautiful fabric of their lives. In the serenity and placidity of their demeanor, in their perfect acquiescence in the will of God, in the simplicity and the naturalness of their piety, and in their staunch adherence to their faith and their thorough practice of its counsels as well as of its precepts, they set an example that was an inspiration to all who came to know them. Their faith was so interwoven with their daily lives, that the latter seemed more like a page out of the Old Testament than as an exhibition of our modern whirlwind life.

Their going leaves a great gap in the Catholic life of Wellington. The poor of the city mourn them, for in them they found not only generous givers, who never turned a deaf ear to the cries of the afflicted, but also sympathetic friends who shared in their sufferings. The priests of New Zealand mourn them, for their home stood wide open to every *sagart aram* who would cross its threshold, and none ever crossed it without being made conscious of the high honor he had bestowed on that Catholic home by his mere presence there.

The Catholic institutions of the city mourn them, for they found in them their staunchest supporters, who ever delighted in sharing with them the bounties of Providence.

The Church mourns them, for to such lives she can point with pride as a justification of her teaching that naught counts in life save to do God's Holy Will—and His alone.

To all they have left memories sweet and helpful, urging them on to imitate the perfect beauty of their own lives. And so, being dead, they yet remain with us—

"Alike are life and death,
When death in life survives,
And the interrupted breath
Inspires a thousand lives."

Side by side they stood before the altar three score years ago; side by side, in perfect harmony, they trod life's path, and now, after a severance of twelve months, their union is made perfect in death.

Ripe in years, riper in wisdom, ripest of all in sanctity, the father of the family breathed his last quietly and gently, in his hands the familiar beads, on his lips and face the peace of the just, which is God's last blessing to his faithful servants. Across the troubled sea of life he had at last made the port of his Eternal Home. On his tombstone, not unfittingly, might be written Stevenson's words—

This be the verse you grave for me,
Here he lies where he longed to be:
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Those who live wickedly in the Church of God, and keep on going to Communion, thinking that thus they may be cleansed, should know that this can give them no help toward newness of life.—St. Isidore.

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