

NOTES

Early Days in New Zealand

A few months ago when reviewing Archbishop Redwood's *Reminiscences of Early Days in New Zealand* we ventured to express the hope that his Grace might consent to favor us with a continuation of the interesting memories which brought us only as far as his appointment as a professor in Dundalk. The wish then voiced has been now fulfilled, and we have before us a second volume, as delightful as the first, in which we are told in the same facile style about the author's ordination to the priesthood, his appointment and consecration for Wellington his arrival in the home of his youth after an absence of twenty years, his welcome in the Dominion, and many entertaining and edifying incidents in his life as Bishop and Archbishop of Wellington. On the first page we are brought back to the year 1864 when Francis Redwood arrived at St. Mary's, Dundalk, where he taught others, and was taught himself by two sound theologians, Fathers Leterrier, S.M., and Father Pestre, S.M. In 1865 the future Metropolitan of New Zealand was ordained priest at Maynooth. In retrospect we see him confirmed at Lyons by Cardinal Bonald; receiving Tonsure and Minor Orders from Bishop Whelan at All Hallows; ordained subdeacon by Archbishop (later, Cardinal) Cullen in his private oratory in Dublin; ordained deacon at Armagh by Archbishop Dixon; and, after his ordination at Maynooth by Bishop Whelan, celebrating his first Mass (which was a High Mass) at the Marists' chapel in Dundalk. Then, back to teaching and study again—to serious study which had its fruit in a brilliant thesis for the Licentiate, in Dublin. It had another result too. Owing to intense application the young priest's health broke down, and he was ordered by a doctor to spend the winter in a warmer climate than Ireland—a providential circumstance which brought him to Rome where his mind was enriched and his imagination quickened among the churches, shrines, libraries, monuments catacombs, and treasures of art in the Eternal City.

Bishop of Wellington

In 1869 Father Redwood's superiors had already selected him as co-adjutor to Dr. Viard. In 1872 Dr. Viard died, and in 1874 the Holy See appointed Francis Redwood as his successor, at the age of 34, the youngest bishop in the Church then as he is now the oldest in time of consecration. The news of this elevation reached him on January 29, 1874, the feast of his Patron, St. Francis de Sales. The Archbishop thus describes his reception of the momentous tidings: "When on reflection I decided that obedience was the best proof of humility and the surest sign of God's will, I accepted the awful dignity and tremendous responsibility, trusting in God and the 'Star of the Sea.' I had never, as God knows, desired and never asked to return to New Zealand after my profession as a Marist. I put myself entirely into the hands of my superiors to go where they wished and do what they commanded, all the days of my life; my sacrifice of home and country was absolute, and, as far as dependent on me, irrevocable. And thus, in my poor person, was again signally verified the truth of the sacred words: 'An obedient man shall speak of victory.'" On St. Patrick's Day, in St. Ann's Church, London, Cardinal Manning consecrated the young bishop, who selected the feast of the Apostle of Ireland, because, he tells us: "I had witnessed for years the faith and virtue of the people whom his labors and miracles had converted from Heathenism to the Catholic Faith, which they have kept so heroically down to the present day and will keep for ever. I also considered that the bulk of my flock in New Zealand was Irish, and I longed for the blessing and assistance of their great Apostle upon my labors in their behalf." Here an Irishman may pause to remember with gratitude how nobly the Archbishop has served the cause of Ireland

from that day to this and how truly may it be said of him; *Hibernior Hibernis ipsis!*

Back to New Zealand

After the solemn day of consecration there was a brief period of rest and recreation, there was visiting of old friends and new, interviewing superiors and students at ecclesiastical colleges, and a tour through the beauty spots of Ireland in company with Father Ginaty, S.M., whose memory is still green in New Zealand. Then we have delightful vignettes of the long voyage across the world in the largest and newest P. and O. steamer afloat—the "Australia," 4000 tons and warranted to do her 10 knots! "At last, on a fine evening, we reached the Bluff, and I shall always remember the vivid impression of feeling myself once more really in New Zealand (after an absence of twenty years), produced by the peculiar smell of the numerous flax bushes near the landing-place. Then a run to Invercargill on a woefully deliberate train; then a cordial *cead mile failte* by Bishop Moran at Dunedin; then Christchurch; and so at last to Wellington where priests and people were eagerly waiting for their Bishop's arrival. The Canonical Reception over and the addresses read, what wonder that his heart yearned for a sight of the aged mother whom he had parted from twenty years before as a boy and was now to meet again as a bishop. And so, over the Strait and down the Sounds for the dearest welcome of them all: "I lost no time in answer to her longing. Accordingly, with my two brothers, I started on the small steamer 'Phoebe' for Picton. . . . At Picton my brother Charley's fine pair of horses and a carriage were in readiness. We soon did the seventeen miles to the ferry on the Wairau River, there being then no bridge. There were clouds of dust in parts of the way, stirred up by the number of conveyances which had brought people to meet me at Picton. A crowd of Catholics, with their Rector, Father Sanzeau, S.M., were on the Blenheim side, and, of course, in a fever of expectation, wondering what their new Bishop was like. My mother's heart was throbbing apace in expectance of her son, Frank, whom she last saw a boy, and now so changed and exalted?—her Bishop! . . . I had better not describe our meeting. There are moments in life beyond the power of speech to describe—and this was one." Later, as soon as duties allowed, Nelson claims him, and there, amid the scenes of childhood, Father Garin, Brother Claude Marie Bertrand, and other old friends were ready in their joy to say their *Nunc dimittis* on seeing the boy who had sailed away to France two decades ago once more among them as a bishop. The subsequent pages of the *Reminiscences* are full of vivid pictures of a Colonial bishop's life and labors in years when roads were rough tracks, when trains were few, and travelling on sea around the coast by no means an unmixed pleasure. But life was more spacious and perhaps the people were more lovable and simple, and there were abundant compensations for hardships endured in the service of God. There was rain in plenty and mud *go leor*, but it was not always bad weather and rough going, and the glory of summer seas made up for the lack of comfort of the little boats that tossed and rolled around the coast: "What, in fact, more fascinating and delightful than cruising in fine weather along some of the boldest and most sublime scenery to be found on the globe—mountains, rocks, and snowline in all their grandeur?" We must pass over many a page on which we would love to linger. We can only mention such important events in the history of Catholic New Zealand as the framing of the Statutes, the visit of Cardinal Moran, the founding of Catholic institutions, the opening of St. Patrick's College, which all appear in their proper perspective in the *Reminiscences*. Readers will turn to the pages themselves lovingly, and we have no wish to mar their enjoyment by inadequate descriptions of them. The book ends on this note: "May these *Reminiscences*, however, serve their purpose as illustrations and truthful graphic pictures of times and scenes and people dear to me and many, but times and people and scenes never to come back with the same features again." We congratulate His Grace on having given us a second volume worthy of the first.

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PETER MACK, DIRECTOR
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