

minister will shortly be established at Timaru; and the Rev. W. Hogg has been appointed to labour in the northern district of Canterbury, the Rev. W. Kirton being stationed at Kaiapoi, where a manse will shortly be built. The Congregationalists have greatly increased in number and influence; they have erected, as a temporary expedient, a stone chapel in Cathedral Square, where they have obtained a section of land, on which they intend at some future time building a church, when the present structure will be used as a school-room. The Roman Catholics have built a new church on the Ferry Road, which is a pleasing, graceful edifice; it is open for Divine Worship, and has lately been consecrated by Monsiigneur Viard, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Wellington. All these denominations frequently hold public meetings, and lectures, &c., are delivered under their auspices.

Several charitable institutions have been either founded or increased in extent during the past year. The Orphanage, the Lunatic Asylum, the Female Home, and the House of Refuge are amongst the number. The Hospital, after being for a short time under the management of a Board of Governors, has repassed into the hands of the Government, as the experiment of the former management was found not to have succeeded.

With regard to crime, we can claim no immunity for Canterbury. The sessions which have been held during the past year do not show a larger amount of crime than might fairly be looked for from our increased population, and the influx of a gold mining population. In Christchurch, the number of cases for trial at the December session was far below the average, and of very slight importance. Some serious cases of cattle stealing have occurred during the year, and the offenders sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The cases of petty larceny have been very much on the increase; these probably arise, as Mr. Justice Gresson remarked in a recent charge to the jury, from the high price of provisions and a scarcity of employment.

The Volunteer movement has been making great progress; we have now in Christchurch and the country seven companies of Rifles, about five hundred strong, who are becoming well drilled, and execute the manœuvres in a very creditable style. A corps of engineers and one of yeomanry cavalry have also been formed, and the commissions of the officers gazetted. It is in contemplation to establish an artillery battery for the defence of the harbour of Lyttelton.

The river Waimakariri has long been a source of great difficulty, as it was so frequently diverging from its banks, occasioning thereby a very serious loss. Many plans have been suggested for remedying this evil, and it is to be hoped that some scheme will have the effect of preventing a recurrence of it; but the outlay will be very considerable, to say nothing of the vast amount of money already wasted on futile expedients.

A wonderful improvement has taken place in the general aspect of all our towns. Lyttelton, Kaiapoi, and Timaru have all made rapid strides in the acquirement of the necessaries, and even many of the refinements, of life. But perhaps the greatest improvement is noticeable in the capital, where new buildings of every description, and adapted for almost every imaginable purpose, are rising on every side. The new Council Chamber will be a very handsome building, being constructed of stone and ornamental in style. We have already alluded to the ecclesiastical buildings, so we will just mention a few of the new structures destined for secular purposes. The various banks have commenced to transact their business in buildings which would do credit to any town. The Union Bank of Australia has a handsome location (to use an Americanism) in Hereford-street; the Bank of Australasia possesses a fine stone building in Cashel-street, but the Bank of New Zealand, although owning a valuable central site for a bank, still fondly clings to the old time-honoured shanty in Cashel-street. Then we have the new Town Hall, a massive stone structure, more remarkable for apparent durability than elegance of design. A Custom-house has been built together with a Telegraph Station; but we are told that a new Custom-house and Post-office are looming in the distance. The long-talked-of Gaol and Court House only exist as yet on paper, but the money has been voted for their erection, which is one step towards their becoming a reality. The Immigration Barracks have been removed from their old site, and the place which knew them of old knows them no more, for the new establishment in the Lincoln road is now open. The new Lunatic Asylum, also in the Lincoln road, has been for some time in operation; unfortunately the number of persons requiring shelter within its walls has been for some time painfully on the increase. The merchants' stores are a great addition to the city; several of them are decidedly ornamental, whilst others are of a plain, business-like structure. The site of the great fire in Colombo-street is again occupied by a handsome row of shops, mostly tenanted by the former proprietors. The plate-glass mania, once so prevalent in English towns, has reached Christchurch, and we have now windows of large size, some of which are being decorated in a very conspicuous, if not elegant, style. The ladies have not been overlooked, for we have as fine and as tempting looking warehouses for haberdashery as *Punch* could desire for what he calls "lady-traps." Again, the minor conveniences of life are rife amongst us. Communication, thanks to Cobb's coaches, is now greatly facilitated between the more distant parts of the province, whilst in the city itself we have cabs and hackney carriages, whose drivers seem to have the same extraordinary notions of distance and of the value of fares as their brethren at home. An Act of the Provincial Council was passed to regulate the movements of these gentry, and it is to be hoped will prove effectual in so doing. We have now several manufactories in active operation; soap works, breweries and mills have long been established, and are sources of much commercial activity. Machinery has been started for the preparation of the *phormium tenax* into pulp for paper; it has long been vainly tried for the purposes of fibrous manufacture. Three iron foundries are now at work here, and specimens of iron manufacture of a large size have been turned out from them.

There is also a large saw-mill, where a considerable quantity of timber is prepared and dressed. Hotels, baths, and cafés have become institutions in the city; at some of the latter, *petits soupers*, in the style of the restaurants of London and Paris are provided for those whose epicurean tastes tend in that direction. One great improvement is evident in our large towns, and that is the excellent pavement now almost universally laid down. The footpaths in most of the streets are now asphalted, and those who are familiar with the shingled *trottoirs* which of old caused so much annoyance, can well appreciate the alteration. Speaking of the streets, we must not omit to notice another decided mark of advancement, the introduction of gas. This will obviate one great inconvenience. In former times it was almost a work of danger to traverse the streets; the evil was palliated by the introduction of a few glimmering kerosine lamps. Now, however, the mains for gas are laid down in all the leading thoroughfares, and by the time our almanac is in the hands of our readers, gas will probably have become an institution.

Plantations are being made in almost every direction; the Government Domain will in time be one of the prettiest public gardens in the southern hemisphere, whilst the Town Belts will in the course of a few years form a charming vista, something on the principle of a Parisian Boulevard. Villa residences are being erected in the suburbs, and the lawns and greenhouses begin to give the place an almost English appearance. Indeed, it is difficult for one newly arrived to realize the fact that he is in a land sixteen thousand miles from England, and which only a few years ago was a primitive wilderness. Several new townships have been laid out, and others are in the course of formation. Thanks to the energy of our settlers, they are to be seen springing up all around, especially in the case of Leithfield, which owes its foundation to the indefatigable efforts of the gentleman from whose name its appellation is derived.

During the twelve months just elapsed, we have had several serious fires in Christchurch. The most terrible one occurred on June 4th. The fire commenced in the stores occupied by Messrs. Matson and Torlesse, and great damage was the result. The premises of Messrs. Axup and Co., Brooke and Co., Matson and Torlesse, Cooper, Morton, Bloom, Green, Fuller, Wheeler, and Blundell were totally destroyed. The loss was estimated at £12,000. The whole amount of insurances effected was £3,800. The firemen worked with a will, and fortunately no lives were lost; but the damage done to property by fire, water, and hasty ill-judged removal, was very great. An inquiry as to the origin of the fire was held, but without any satisfactory or definite result. Another fire took place during the same month, at the Golden Fleece. It was fortunately extinguished without any loss of life or serious injury to property. An inquiry into the cause of this fire proved fruitless. Two persons were brought before the Resident Magistrate's Court, as the supposed incendiaries, but, after a careful investigation, they were discharged, no proof of guilt having been substantiated against them. Three more fires also occurred: the one on the premises of Mr. Hadley, in Colombo street, in the month of August, when the stables contiguous to the house were destroyed. Another in September, when the premises of Mr. Younghusband, better known as the "Little Shop," were consumed. And the last in Cashel street, when the warehouse of Mr. Burnell and two adjoining houses were burnt. This was on October the 2nd. The result of these fires was to draw public attention more closely to the establishment of an efficient Fire Brigade. Two public meetings were held on the subject, and the consequence is that Christchurch now possesses a most effective Brigade, an Ordinance of the Provincial Council having been passed to insure its more perfect and complete organization.

Among objects of minor importance, but which serve to evidence the general advancement of the Province, we may mention the progress which has been made in acclimatization. A considerable portion of ground has been laid out for the purpose of forming a zoological garden. This is thickly planted with trees and shrubs, and promises in time to rival the gardens in the Home Country and in the other colonies. Mr. Johnston has been appointed curator of the gardens, and already several specimens have been procured for them. Swans, both black and white, have been obtained, and some of our favourite old English singing birds have been added to the number of specimens, either by purchase or by donation. Some gold-fish have been brought from England, and amongst other singular importations, a pair of foxes have found their way here.

The Pastoral and Agricultural Society has been working very effectively for the improvement of such articles as come under its more immediate supervision. An exhibition was held in the grounds in the month of November, and was a decided success, though pronounced by competent judges to be somewhat inferior to the last one held. However, there was a fine show of horses and cattle; the sheep, owing to the prevalence of scab, and also because the shearing was on, were not so numerous as on previous occasions. Canterbury has always been noticeable for the love of flowers evinced by its inhabitants. We have now an efficient and earnest Horticultural Society, the result of whose labours in the promotion of the delightful pursuit of gardening was proved by the success of the last exhibition held under their auspices during the course of the year. Flowers of every sort and hue were shown there which would have done credit to the growers of any country, some of the rarest, as well as some of the oldest favourites being included. Nor were the vegetables over-looked, for there was a display of these which would have gladdened the heart of a vegetarian. Some lectures have been given by the members of the Association on the topic of Horticulture, and its progress in the Province. Nor have we during the past year been unmindful of subjects of a higher order. Our Philosophical Institute is already "a great fact," and we have had some lectures delivered which were distinguished by a considerable amount of talent, especially that by Mr. Travers on acclimatization; the papers by Dr. Haast and Mr. Buller were very valuable additions to our stock of knowledge on the subjects of which they severally treated.