

Correspondence.

[We are not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents.]

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS' FUND.

TO THE EDITOR N.Z. TABLET.

SIR,—At the solicitation of many patriotic Irishmen of this district I beg to bring under the notice of your readers the necessity of redeeming the pledge given by the New Zealand delegates at the Melbourne Convention, relative to the "Payment of Members' Fund." Now, that the general elections are drawing near, it is incumbent upon all who have the interests of the National policy at heart to bestir themselves in this matter. By the Melbourne *Advocate* may be seen the activity that prevails in the other colonies, and it would ill become the Irishmen of New Zealand, who have been ever foremost in supporting any movement that aimed at the amelioration of their kindred's condition in Ireland, to be wanting at this important crisis.

At a meeting of the Kumara Branch of the Irish National League held last Sunday, the following resolution was unanimously agreed to:—"That a committee consisting of seven members, with the President and Secretary, be appointed from this meeting for the purpose of canvassing for subscriptions towards the Payment of Members' Fund." The following members were then chosen—Messrs. Gilbert (President), Moran, Hayes, Tansey, Burke, Murphy, Clune, Wall, and Duggan (Secretary). They intend to hold their first meeting next Sunday, after which energetic action will be taken, and, from past experiences, they have every hope that a generous response will reward their efforts.—I am, etc.,

PATRICK DUGGAN,

Kumara, Oct. 7, 1884.

Hon. Sec. Kumara Branch I. N. L.

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own correspondent.)

October 21, 1884.

FATHER LE MENANT'S career in this district continues to be successful, as the parish priest informed the congregations on the two Sundays that have passed since my last letter. On those occasions he expressed the utmost gratification at the conduct of his parishioners. Out of the hundreds of persons visited by the missionary and himself, not one had refused; not only were the contributions on a larger scale than had been anticipated, but they were largely accompanied by expressions of regret at the inability of the donors to be more substantially generous. These signs of co-operation in the great work which had brought the rev. missionary amongst us, Father Ginaty dwelt upon with considerable heartiness. The work of preaching the cause has not, of course, been neglected by the rev. missionary for that of collecting. The former may be called the sowing, the latter being only the reaping. The soil, it is unnecessary to remark, must be, as the parish priest appears to regard it, of considerable excellence, otherwise so much fruit would never be produced by the special methods employed. One day he preaches of the faith which overcometh the world, and in that faith we are shown beautiful reasons for wishing to see the higher education established in the midst of our people in these Southern seas. By such institutions is the faith implanted and rooted firmly, so that an antidote to the prevailing materialism of the day is established in the shape of a race which regards this world but as the stepping-stone to the next. Such men are acquainted with the value of time, which they economise to the greatest advantage for the discharge of their religious, domestic and social duties. These are they who go forth into the world to represent Catholicity with knowledge, wisdom, experience, and patriotism. The college we are establishing in Wellington shall be the nursery of these virtues, which spreading will elevate the Church in the eyes of men, even of the material prosperity of her children. If the beauty of faith gave the rev. missionary reason, the hideousness of infidelity did not pass him by without contributing to his stock of arguments. In a lecture of considerable power he dealt on the causes of the spreading infidelity of the day. These are four—materialism, frivolity, intellectual pride, sensuality. The world moves without any thought of God, strives after its material rewards, and obtains them. Mankind is essentially frivolous in these days to the point of national decadence, as may be seen from these two modern records of life—the newspaper and the novel. The first is full of the chronicles of amusement of all kinds, and is never done with the glorification of the professional amusers who help the people to pass their time unprofitably, and has but little space to devote to serious things or the men who are engaged on the serious business appertaining to the most serious work of man's life here below. The second, when it is not immoral or scandalous, is frivolous and shallow—a quantity of printed matter containing no instruction, aspiring to no higher object than amusement. Intellectual pride lives, and has its stronghold in the man of science, so called, who, without solid attainments, claim for themselves the infallibility which they deny the head of the Church, declare that there is no harmony between science and revealed religion, and become the leaders of the infidelity of the day. They are worshipped by numerous followers even more ignorant, vain, and shallow than themselves. Sensualists there have been in all ages and histories, from the days of Felix, who rejected the teaching of St. Paul because the morality which the holy and fearless apostle enjoined upon him was not to his taste. Similarly, the sensualist has always risen up against the Church of God.

Where shall we find the remedy against these four gigantic evils? We shall find them in colleges, where faith is inculcated as the antidote to materialism and serious pursuits take the place of the frivolity into which harmless necessary recreation is fast degenerating. We shall find them in colleges where true science is taught, and correct history, with philosophy, Christian antiquities, theology and Canon

law; where men are taught not only that there is the greatest harmony between science and revelation, but that the greatest scientists in all ages have been children of the Catholic Church, where piety is inculcated as well as knowledge. In this way shall remedies be supplied against the four great causes of infidelity, which remedies being under the guidance of the Church cannot but be effectual in the highest degree.

There was another side to the subject which did not escape the rev. missionary. It might be said by the evil disposed that subscribing to a college at Wellington was subscribing to a college that belonged to another district, and that subscribing to a college at all was merely helping to provide education for the sons of a particular class. The answer was twofold. In the first place, it is the intention of the bishop to establish one day a college at Christchurch, for which an estate has been set aside; when the time comes for building the college the estate will do it, so that the people of Christchurch will not be called upon to subscribe. Thus, by subscribing now to Wellington, they are subscribing for themselves. In the second place, it is perfectly true that education is not to be advocated as it is in these times for the sake of the promotion in life which it is supposed to bring with it. That theory, which unsettles the minds of an entire population, ignores the great fact that there are, have always been, and must ever be, distinctions in society. Whatever happens to individuals, the great mass of mankind is destined to go through life in pretty much the same station as they enter it. The fortunes, the fames, the rewards are to the few; the dull round is the lot of the many. Whoever loses sight of this in an education scheme will be disappointed. It is true, therefore, that the children of the majority will be unable to enter colleges and universities. It is also true that Catholic education, such as has been described as to be given at St. Patrick's College, and such as is to be had in all Catholic universities, colleges and seminaries, is, when bestowed upon an individual, bestowed in a manner to benefit the religion he professes and the community to which he belongs. If the rev. missionary has not made that clear, he has spoken for nothing. Moreover it is a fact found scattered through all the pages of history, that in the humblest cottages there blazes an intellect sometimes equal in brilliancy to the greatest. To provide openings for intellects so situated the College of St. Patrick would provide foundations, according to the plan followed by the Church in all ages. Such were the arguments by which the rev. missionary replied to two objections, which are strong, as against any system of education that is not animated by religion, that is not, in other words, Catholic. That he succeeded in demonstrating that these objections are useless against the Catholic system, the progress of the collection is amply proving. Good soil, good seed, good cultivation; in these three phrases we can sum up the progress of this most enterprising mission.

MASTERTON.

October 15, 1884.

LAST Sunday was a real letter day for the Catholics of Masterton, when about thirty children approached the altar to receive Holy Communion for the first time. The scene presented to us on that occasion would, doubtless, never be witnessed by us here were it not for the unceasing exertions of our worthy pastor, the Rev. Father Treacy.

Father Treacy came to this parish about January last, and found that there was no Catholic school, the church was over £1,000 in debt, and only a small bare cottage remained for our new priest in which to provide himself with the necessaries of life. But, true to his race and his country, he appealed in earnest to those who have always at heart the comfort of their "Soggarth Aroon," and the people soon repaired the cottage and provided for the Father's wants, and now he has got a neat and comfortable home. We have now got a new school built solely by the priest's exertions, who made a house-to-house collection, and received, as he announced in the church, the handsome sum of £150, which was increased to over £200 by the proceeds of a concert.

The proceedings of last Sunday, then, were the happy result of our new school, and, to use the priest's own expression, he "paid away the first dividend on their money" on that occasion. There are now over 70 children attending the Catholic school in Masterton. Let us hope the people will rally round the good priest and give him the means of carrying on the good work, and thereby show that even in the midst of godlessness a hope still remains of preserving the religion of our fathers, and that when the present generation will have passed away, a few will still remain to show that our churches were not put up merely for the exigencies of the present.

Perhaps St. Patrick's Church was scarcely ever so full at it was at 11 o'clock Mass last Sunday, when both Catholics and non-Catholics came to see a first Communion, being the first time such an opportunity occurred in the Wairarapa. The Rev. Father took the opportunity to explain the devotion of the Blessed Sacrament, and went on to show how God in his excessive love invites the faithful to partake of His own adorable body and blood, and finally seeing the perversity of mankind, threatens them with exclusion from His Heavenly Kingdom as a punishment for their disobedience. The Rev. Father's address, which was listened to with marked attention, seemed to produce a vivid impression on all present.

After Mass, the children were treated to a nice breakfast in the school, at which Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Tobhill presided, who spared no pains in securing the children's happiness. This is not the first time these ladies have given valuable assistance in Church matters. In a concert lately given for the "School Building Fund" they worked with extraordinary energy in disposing of tickets, etc. The breakfast being over, and the children having spent truly the happiest morning of their lives, returned to their homes thanking the priest and people who had provided them with a school wherein they are taught the knowledge of God and how to serve him in this life, and thereby prepare for an eternity with him in heaven.

FINNOUGH.