

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

June 23, 1885.

You, sir, have seen the decision of the Canterbury Board of Education in the matter of the scholarships, and commented upon it sharply. Little remains for me to say about the matter. I will only remark that the chairman, at the close of a very one-sided discussion, put the whole mind of the Board into a nut-shell. He said that he remembered when the Board confined the scholarships to its own scholars. The reasons for that course seemed to him to be unanswerable. This he did, of course, without stating them. The Board's practical comment on this statement, which it supported, was to pass a resolution of those reasons, each of which is most answerable. Firstly, the State system is in danger for want of funds; secondly, the State scholars must not be allowed to compete with better-to-do children and learning in better schools; thirdly, the State is the cheapest and best of all systems. The first is "great without regard to justice"; the third answers the second, or the second the third, it does not greatly matter which—the country pays its money and can take its choice; the second is blind to the fact that however much the possibly competing schools may be better than the State schools, the great majority of scholars in them are not better off, but worse off, than the children attending the State schools. No less a person than the Colonial Treasurer supplies an answer to the third, in the shape of an increased demand in his Financial Statement of some £30,000 for the cost of education. The third, also in common with the others, ignores two facts about which there is no question in the minds of men who are well informed and well intentioned—viz., that the proved cheapest systems, and the proved best, the only ones proved by their results to be worthy of the name of education in its best and highest and holiest sense, are not secular; and that the money for these scholarships, as well as for the whole system, came from the pockets of the whole community, of these who are shut out as well as those who participate. It is fortunate for the cause of justice that this powerful educational authority is impelled to give a sample of the reasons which it can bring itself to regard as unanswerable. To complete the burlesque, the only member who objected during the discussion took the ground not that there is injustice, but that the Board ought to have consulted Parliament, and then helped to pass the resolutions which was done "unanimously."—*Sic volo sic jubeo*.

The Financial Statement has stirred up wrath in the Free-trade camp amongst us, without exactly transporting the Protectionists into the seventh heaven of delight. The importers of boots and drapery do not like the tariff at all for obvious reasons, and those who are retailers as well as importers foresee a recourse to the local manufacturers when their stocks get low and their orders have ceased to land them in a loss. The latter, perhaps, is a little mythical; that is the other side of the question as it strikes those of the consuming community who pay their bills. The retailers who have been driving a trade in boots and draperies made on the spot send up soft hymns of praise. There is one man who had a cargo of coal on Friday which he thought he would get through the Custom-house on Saturday, when he went to sleep on Friday night. He did not think Sir Julius would be hard on the coalmen. On Saturday morning he set about his postponed business. "Have you read the Statement?" "Both the Statement; got something else to do." The smile indicating superiority over people who neglect their business to read politics in the morning went with him into the presence of the Customs officials. It was quickly dissipated by a demand for £47 10s. Remonstrance, ruefully energetic, failed to induce those inexorable public servants to abate one jot of their demand. Thus it comes to pass that there is amongst us one disbeliever in the genius of Vogel. Many tea-dealers, and not a few wine and spirit merchants who had well-directed suspicions, and acted on them upon Friday night, are enchanted with themselves. It is a feeling their customers do not share with quite the same enthusiasm. On the whole, the public has not had time to make up its mind about all the points of the new policy. As far as I can gather, however, there is a general feeling of disappointment that so great an increase of taxation should be required. "The pill is well gilded, perhaps better than anyone but Sir Julius could have managed the process, but it is, nevertheless, too big to swallow at once—we reserve to ourselves the right to make a wry face," as a distinguished journalist observed once of the first Vogel-Stout combination. That seems to be the general feeling here. The public, you see, realises with a little shock that Vogelism, whatever else it means, does not imply substantial reduction of taxation.

Your remarks on the article in your London contemporary, entitled "We Catholics," and Mr. Maskell's reflections on the same subject have reminded me of some conversations at which I have been present. I have sometimes heard it said that in the United Kingdom the Catholic body has never turned out a first-class statesman, or a leading lawyer, or a prominent novelist, or a great soldier, or a foremost worker in the great army of science, or the world of art. I have heard Catholics make the statement to Catholics who ruefully acquiesced. With such names as Lingard among historians, St. George Mivart among the scientific men—the name of the man who is stemming the great tide of Evolution with most masterly reasoning based upon the accurate researches of a comprehensive brilliant genius—as its Aubrey de Vere among the poets, standing in some respects admittedly above the Laureate, with Allies towering among the essayists and the great galaxy of Irish names quite unnecessary to mention this statement. And its unqualified admission are wonderful. The curious thing is that Catholics are in many instances given to talking in this deprecatory way. Some have gone so far as to blame the Catholic systems of education for their supposed failures. Catholics, they say, are kept too strict at their schools. "Look at the liberty allowed in the great English public schools, and see the results." They need to be fond of so testing us. But this belief has been a little dispelled by the failure of its chief apostle, who earnestly

and conscientiously set about reforming the English Catholic system by practical example of something different and failed. Abroad, too, the Catholic system of education is even more strict than in England, and there is no want of Catholic statesmen, soldiers, men of science, literature, art, jurisprudence, and commerce. In America the Catholics, trained as they are elsewhere, come to the front likewise in numbers out of proportion to the bulk of the Catholic population. The wonder is that Catholics, whose advantages in the higher education are less than those enjoyed by their contemporaries of other denominations, have done so much, not that they have done so little. I am not, sir, combatting the assertion of your London namesake and contemporary that there is apathy among Catholics. He writes of what he has ample means of knowing. My object is to show that something of the spirit he denounces has penetrated to this country—as, indeed, you seem yourself to suspect, and your correspondent, Mr. Maskell, has very distinctly affirmed. It is a spirit peculiarly dangerous in this Colony, where the Catholic body has not the material wealth or social position, or educational advantages which will help our brethren in the Old Country to recover from the effects of mental indolence, apathy, indifference, shamefacedness, call it what you will. That Catholics can come to the front, in spite of their disadvantages, in these colonies, we have examples in the colonial careers of Sir C. Gavan Duffy, the late Sir John O'Shanassy, in Victoria, and Sir F. Weld and poor John Sheehan, who died the other day. The last marred the bright promise of his early years in some degree, but he stands, nevertheless, a brilliant example of what a Catholic, without any advantages but those to be had in this Colony of our adoption, can do with ability and perseverance. The first necessity is for Catholics to cultivate a feeling of pride in the achievements of their brethren at Home and abroad, instead of the depreciatory notions to which I have made this rambling reference. That better feeling of just appreciation will convince them of the necessity for removing the disadvantages under which they labour. That this can only be done by combination and mutual help, it requires no ghost to tell us.

We have amongst us literary societies formed for this purpose, and working out their objects with more or less success. How these societies are prospering in your part of the country, you, sir, know better than I can. Mr. Maskell has told your readers that Wellington possesses a society which is fairly successful. In Christchurch, where Mr. Maskell himself did so much to establish the first Catholic Literary that ever saw the light in New Zealand (I speak under conviction to the best of my belief), success, I regret to say, is not at present waiting upon the Society's efforts. It is, I fear, a case of the apathy, or whatever else may be the name of the strange feeling which makes Catholics regard themselves with hopeless discouragement. An effort is now being made to organise the Society into new life. That effort deserves the sympathy and support of every Catholic in the city.

ENTERTAINMENT IN DUNEDIN.

THE second concert in aid of the Christian Brothers' building fund took place in the Garrison Hall Dunedin, on Friday evening, and like the first, was largely attended. The performance commenced with a selection from "I Puritani," played extremely well by St. Patrick's Brass Band, who afterwards gave the "Olive Branch" waltz with an equally pleasing effect. The Pupils of St. Joseph's Convent Schools sang in chorus "I Love the Merry Spring Time," "Our Own Dear Home," and, by special request, "The Meeting of the Waters," arranged in three parts, and without accompaniment; which had been so deservedly admired at the first concert—and which lost nothing by repetition—the little girls again acquitting themselves with great credit. Master T. Lynch recited "Fontenoy" impressively, and Master F. Heley, a very little fellow, made an oration—"The Young Orator"—in a most intelligent and amusing manner,—being obliged to respond to a loud and unanimous encore. "Cooch the Piper" was recited by Mr. T. Bracken, in the effective style for which he is distinguished; and Mr. J. B. Callan read the scene between Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant and his son, so as to delight the audience. The instrumental solos were a brilliant fantasia on Irish airs, charmingly played by Miss O'Driscoll—who in response to an encore gave "The Wearing of the Green," and a selection from "Ernani," performed with much skill and taste on the clarinet by Mr. W. Corrigan, accompanied on the piano by his brother, Mr. A. Corrigan. Miss Walker sang very sweetly as a solo "The Song for me," and Miss Woods was heard to advantage in "Gates of the West." This young lady also took part in "I Saw from the Beach," sung as a duet with Miss Murphy, and in the glee, "Those Evening Bells" with Misses Murphy and O'Driscoll. The duet "Gipsies We," sung by the Masters A. and F. Murphy, was deservedly appreciated by the audience, who favoured the singers with an encore. "Buttercups and Daisies," sung by Misses Drumm, Sheedy, and Blaney (2) was also very prettily rendered. The pupils of the Christian Brothers' school sung in chorus with excellent effect "The Sleighting Song," and "O'Donnell Abu," and Misses O'Driscoll and Walsh gave a duet—"Rich and Rare were the Gems she Wore."—The laughable farce "The Birthplace of Podgers," was played with spirit by Messrs. P. Carolin-J. P. Hayes, W. Power, R. A. Dunne, M. Trestone, J. J. Dunne, W. Pearson, W. Hall, J. Dundon, W. Fitzpatrick, and Masters T. Drumm, and L. Pavletich—who each gave an intelligent representation of his part.—The entertainment concluded with the New Zealand Anthem, sung by the pupils of St. Joseph's and the Christian schools Brothers' and accompanied by St. Patrick's Band.

Colonial Pat Dolan, of Devil's Lake, Dakota, writing to the *N. Y. Sun*, says to the spinsters of North America:—"The great American Northwest, the world's womanless wonderland, still holds out 10,000 arms of invitation and welcome to feminine home and husband seekers from every region and clime beneath the sun."