

adorn every Christian country in the world, the high intellectual culture, the unparalleled success in every branch of science, languages, fine arts, are facts that speak volumes for themselves, but there is something which enhances all these and surpasses all in our estimation, viz., the gentle blending of Christian virtues with the highest cultivation of natural talent.

"Yours is truly a noble work, a work which implies a great amount of patience, abnegation and zeal, without any hope of earthly reward except that which the conscientious discharge of duty procures. We most thankfully entrust to your care—not our temporal wealth—but the minds, the hearts, and the souls of our children, fully conscious that you will show a mother's care and love towards them, that you will educate them in the true sense of the word.

"Our secular Government, like almost all the others Governments of the day, would have us send our children to the ready prepared feast of secular cramming, profane teaching and atheistic education, but, taught by experience the ways of their poisoned viands, we reject their invitation. Our line of conduct is clearly marked out for us by our love for our children, by the warning voice of our beloved Bishops, by the heroic struggles of Catholics throughout the world, and by the voice of our Holy Father who occupies the chair of St. Peter. God, the creator of all things, has implanted in our hearts an instinctive love for our children—a love which would not merit the name if it interested itself only with the welfare of the body regardless of the most noble part—the immortal soul. This is the great secret, the motive power of our endeavours to build and maintain our Catholic Schools. We love our children and earnestly desire to see them attain the highest degree of intellectual culture whereby they will be enabled to fill their honourable place in society but especially we wish to see them virtuous children. We are convinced that the godless State schools are not institutions in which a really sound and Christian education can be imparted to our children. Why cannot our fellow colonists see the injustice of obliging us to support schools for their children from which we can derive no benefit.

"Dear Rev. Mother and Sisters, again wishing you a most hearty welcome, we beg to sub-scribe ourselves, on behalf of the congregation, your devoted servants,

"JOS. WARD.  
"THOS. REDWOOD.  
"A. CASEY."

An address to the Sisters of Mercy from the Catholic children of Blenheim, read by Miss Ellen Leahy:—

Dear Reverend Mother and Sisters.—We, the undersigned, on behalf of the children, assemble around you on this lovely and propitious morning to offer you our humble little greetings on this your first appearance amongst us, to pay you the small tribute of our young and tender hearts' affections, esteem, love, and gratitude on so important and joyful an occasion. For today is a great and festive day for us all. We hail, therefore, your arrival in our midst. Your presence to-day is the forerunner of peace and happiness; accordingly we bid you, dear Sisters, a thousand welcomes—aye, a "*cead mille falthei*," we salute you as the shepherds of old greeted their "Guiding Star." The olive branch was not more welcome to Noe and his family in the ark than you are here to-day. Moreover, we sincerely thank you, and shall ever feel deeply indebted to you for the great favour, the noble sacrifices you have made in coming to dwell with us in Blenheim. Those are small expressions of our inmost thoughts; nevertheless they are earnest, pure, sincere, and loving. Do, Sisters, please, accept them as a token and mark of filial respect from your future children. We group around you like fondling babes at the feet of their mothers, full of confidence, mingled at the same time with great veneration for the fond Sisters who will help in moulding and forming our future destiny. We feel now all our timidity, bashfulness, and nervousness disappear as we gaze on your humble and self-denying form, gentle hand-maids of the Lord, mild, chaste, and charitable. Ladies fair, a celestial ray of holy joy beams on your holy countenances, you look like strangers to this world of care. We appear to prejudice you, pardon us for doing so, but we imagine a heavenly charm spreads itself wherever you go. Trouble never apparently settles on your calm and self-possessed features. Thrice happy our lot, and great indeed our privilege in thus having you to dwell in Blenheim, to be our second mothers, and friends, and best of educators. Many of the grown-up ones will envy our good fortune, and many will say "I should like to be young again, a child once more," in order to be under the fostering care of the nuns; in order to get a solid and sound instruction, as well as a thorough knowledge of the arts and sciences. Yes, last night we watched the rising moon-beams bright. Last night we dreamt of your coming. Your name has become a household word,—the topic of our conversation by day and our dreams by night. To-day, thanks to God, it is a reality. This morning we longed to see the sun mount hill, dale and valley, in order, as it were, to hasten your advent amongst us. We are delighted, we are overjoyed to see you. We are quite conscious of the permanent great blessing you will be to the locality. We hope those few kind sentiments from us shall soften down the natural pain you must have experienced in breaking up your home in Wellington, in separating from your dear companions there in religion, in severing as it were, those bonds of sisterhood, those sacred ties of high and holy aspirations and charity. Besides the manifold blessings of education, we have another great consolation before our minds, and it is this—should the hand of Providence be pleased to afflict us, then indeed we know you will visit us, smooth down our lowly pillow, ease our bed of sickness drop a word of balmy hope into our breasts, to cheer us on our way. For the future we can hear your gentle tread, soft as angels footsteps. Finally, we pledge ourselves to you, as faithful, and respectful, and obedient children. Once more we welcome you to Blenheim, and wish you, dear Sisters, long and happy days in our midst, and shall ever remain your dutiful and devoted children in Christ.

Signed on behalf of our companions.

"ELLEN LEAHY,  
"BRIDGET MAHER.  
"LOUISA MURPHY.  
"KATE D'EFFY.  
"ZOE REDMOND."

At 6.30 p.m. solemn vespers took place, during which a second sermon was preached by the Very Rev. Father Sauzeau on the true religion, showing that our happiness here and hereafter consists in knowing and serving God in spirit and in truth, and that from the want of it follow an innumerable train of human miseries, such as murders, suicides, persecutions, tyranny, and all sorts of crimes; that true religion makes men better, more virtuous, good citizens, good members of society and good, edifying fathers and mothers, and therefore that education must be founded and supported by religion to render it estimable; accordingly, Diderot himself, a rationalist, and many others of the same class, would have his daughter instructed in religion in order to make her better; and that the ultimate end of intellectual study should be to cause us or enable us to become more effective combatants in the great warfare which never ceases to be waged between good and evil. The rev. preacher was listened to with close attention by all. Father Lewis was agreeably surprised at the large sum that was realized—over £100. For it must be remembered that a month from this date £200 were raised. So that £300, and £120 collected by Mother Caecilia herself from non-catholic friends, go a great way in paying off the entire debt.

### THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

The following is taken from the *Evening Star's* report of a debate on education held by the Dunedin Parliamentary Union on Saturday evening:—

Mr. F. W. Petre said that before any amendment of the Act was made, the question of aid to schools other than Government schools should be considered. It was a well-known fact, and one which was clearly demonstrated in 1883, before the Commission which sat in Wellington, that there were a large number of children being educated in this Colony at the expense of a particular body of people. It was well known that the Catholics of this Colony were at the present moment educating something like 7,500 children in schools which would compare favourably with the Government schools, and they had this advantage—that in them conscientious training was paid some attention to. The cost of these schools up to 1883 was £156,000, which included not only the cost of buildings, but the cost of purchase of sites; and the approximate cost of conducting the schools was at the rate of £2,120 a-year, or £3 15s a-head. This was cheaper than the rate at which children were educated in the Government schools. The Catholics had challenged the Government from time to time to prove that the education given was quite up to the mark, and there had been a few inspections with very favourable results. The statement that the denominational system of education was inferior to the Government was without the slightest foundation. The reports of the Education Departments in England and Canada and India proved the reverse. The education given in the denominational schools of not only Catholics, but Protestants, was in every way satisfactory, and did not suffer by comparison with that given in Board schools. Out of the Colony's population of 500,000, 70,000 were Catholics, and in spite of the many drawbacks which they laboured under they had established excellent schools. In justice their views ought to be considered, and it was a disgrace to the Colony that session after session of Parliament, when their petitions were sent to the House, they were thrown into the wastepaper basket.—(A voice: "No.") The Commission which had sat to take evidence was composed of rabid opponents of any recognition of Catholic claims, and when a lot of unquesionable evidence had been taken it was proposed not to print it. He would move as an amendment "That provision be made for aiding other schools than Government schools under Government inspection."

Mr. R. L. Stanford seconded the amendment. He considered that the Education Department was the most difficult one that the Government had to manage, and that private schools were far more likely to achieve the best results. Mr. White should have proved that the question of education was entirely a political one. He believed that if a poll of the population of the Colony could be taken it would be found that there was a distinct majority against the present system.—("No.") He advocated the "payment by results" system, which would relieve the Colony of a great portion of its present burden, and tap those gracious springs of private goodwill and liberality which were always choked and dried up as soon as the State stepped in with its withering touch.

It is announced that the Queen has granted four pensions of £50 a year each to the Misses Power, of Merriem-square, sisters of the late Frank Power, whose tragical end in the Sudan is still fresh in the public memory. Mr. Power was for some time a member of the staff of this journal, and few Pressmen were better known in Dublin. When Edmund O'Donovan set out on what unhappily proved to be the last of his adventurous missions as a war correspondent, he was accompanied by Power. O'Donovan left Khartoum with Hicks Pasha's army, which was subsequently annihilated so utterly that not a single man survived to tell the tale of the catastrophe that befell it, and Power escaped the general disaster through being so enfeebled by illness that he was unable to advance with the troops. In the siege of Khartoum he played an important part, and it was only when the defence of the city was drawing to a close that he attempted with Colonel Stewart to make good his way down the Nile. A few days more and the safety of the travellers would have been assured, but their steamer was wrecked and they themselves slain. Mr. Power's letters to his mother and sisters make, next to Gordon's own book, the most interesting record of a memorable and fatal siege.—*Dublin Freeman.*