

CHRISTCHURCH BRANCH OF THE IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE.

The third monthly meeting of the Christchurch Branch of the Irish National League took place at their rooms on Thursday, December 6th, and, considering the state of the weather on the evening of that date, the attendance was as large as could be expected. Several were present from Papanui, Kaiapoi, and other distant places, and letters of apology were received from many who could not possibly attend.

Mr. Nolan, the president, after complimenting members on the promising state of the League, as evidenced by such a respectable attendance, referred at some length to the large sums of money which have been collected in various parts of New Zealand towards the Parnell Testimonial, and pointed out that it would be a disgrace to Christchurch if more interest in this matter was not shown than had hitherto been manifested.

Mr. Leahy, while fully realising the correctness of the remarks made by the president, and the importance of attending to the matter alluded to as soon as convenient was against the League, for the present, taking any steps towards raising funds by opening subscription among its members for the Parnell fund or any other, as nothing is so annoying and would prove so injurious to the League, especially at this youthful period of its existence, as an unceasing appeal to its members pockets; that the benefit to be effected for Ireland by collecting money is simply secondary to what can be accomplished in other ways, and if members appeared every meeting night, besides paying regularly their monthly subscriptions, this is all that should be expected at least for a time.

Mr. J. C. Corr expressed himself much gratified at seeing so many present and with the enthusiasm displayed generally. It had always to him been a subject of regret to notice such a want of union among Irishmen in Christchurch, but he hoped that those whom he was now addressing would remain together and act as one for a common purpose. He thought that on meeting nights something should take place besides reading minutes and the ordinary business of the; society some amusement should form a part of each evening's programme, such as songs, readings, and lectures, calculated to foster a national spirit, and to counteract the baneful influence of the anti-Irish feeling so common in these colonies. For his own part he proposed to give the younger members of the League, of whom he was pleased to observe such a number around him, a series of addresses for the purpose of making them thoroughly understand the nature and object of the great political movement now taking place in Ireland, and in which they were taking a part by enrolling themselves as members of the League.

Some remarks having been made with respect to appropriating to the Parnell fund the various sums of money obtained for the purpose of sending a delegate to the Convention at Melbourne, Mr. O'Malley proposed that they should be refunded to the parties who contributed. As, however, the right of the persons subscribing this money to determine as to its disposal, was fully recognised by the meeting after some discussion, it was decided to hold over the final settlement of the matter until some future time.

The treasurer next read the balance sheet and made the gratifying announcement that he had obtained a receipt from Mr. Joseph Winter, treasurer of the Irish National Federal League, Melbourne, acknowledging the reception of £100 forwarded to him from Christchurch.

At this state of the proceeding Mr. Nolan requested permission to resign his office as president of the League, alleging his own incompetency, and that there were many belonging to the League better qualified to fill that position than he.

Mr. J. Mahalm, however, proposed that the resignation of Mr. Nolan should not be accepted, which proposition was seconded by Mr. Corr, and duly carried.

Mr. Mahalm further proposed that, in addition to a president, there should be a vice-president, and that Mr. D. O'Sullivan be appointed vice-president, which was decided on when a motion to that effect was put to the meeting; and after the names of ten gentlemen who were wishful to become members of the League had been handed in to the secretary, and a resolution passed that the League should assemble once a fortnight instead of once a month, the meeting closed.

R A N D O M N O T E S.

THE IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE.

WHEN I read Mr. O'Sullivan's able letter on the above subject, I felt that he made a mistake in not associating political Catholics of the upper ten among those whom he would exclude from the branch meetings but in face of your correspondent Plebeian's remarks I do not see how the difficulty can be got over. Yet if a number of Catholic Irishmen form themselves into a branch association, they will have the right to elect whomsoever they chose, and I am strongly of opinion that the political, respectable, utterly genteel Catholic is a far more effeminate and dangerous friend than the non-Catholic demagogue. From the latter you may obtain a *quid pro quo*, but from the former nothing but timorous caution, as in an undertone he tells you in the words of the old song:—

"I love you well, but let no one know it,
I love you well, but I dare not show it."

And why not? Because he may lose caste among those whose smile is dearer to him than the deep, fond love of brave and true men. He would like to act the patriot if it were only a little more respectable. And yet with what infinite disgust such gentility is looked upon by honest Englishmen and Scotchmen. Still their absence from Irish movements gives the enemies of our country a good handle for abusing Ireland. If they united boldly and fearlessly with their countrymen, they would naturally be at the head of a very formidable

political engine with which they could advance their own cause without losing a tittle of their popularity or respectability. No matter how their respectable (?) acquaintances might sneer, they would feel that they possessed power and influence which would be useful to any cause they might espouse, but disassociated they stand alone "The Teuton's jest, the Celtic's scorn." Since they will not unite with us for the sake of "ould Ireland," it is better for us and Brin's cause we should keep aloof from them. "We are now to do our country good" if we only keep together, and with a will; but we must also work systematically and intelligently, and in order to succeed put up with abuse and even ill-will. Our cause is just, and we must plod on patiently, but cheerily, doing the best we can. I do not think it would be wise for us to do anything in the way of settling this point until the return of our delegates, but leave the matter in their hands to be dealt with at their discretion. Indeed, it would be an act of folly on our part to elect delegates, and ere they returned, take it upon ourselves to settle this question. It would seem as if we had not confidence in them, and it is better to relegate the whole thing to them than have this innovation receive even the shadow of a reality.

REGISTRATION.

With or without this Irish question we must look to the registration of our voters. I believe a number of small committees should be formed in every district and in every street to look after it. The Catholic population is estimated at a seventh of the whole of New Zealand. If so, the Catholic voters must be, if registered, from a fourth to a fifth, because, as a general rule, the Catholic does not marry as early as the non-Catholic. The Catholic must see a prospect of supporting a family ere he encumbers himself with one, consequently there are, proportionally, more Catholic men. If the committees are formed and do their duty, they will see that they are far more numerically strong on the electoral rolls than they have any idea of. In many places where the rolls have been attended to the results have been astounding. If our people were once to avail themselves of the franchise they would find that all this wrath and fury now so often levelled against them would subside, and, in the end, wholly disappear.

OUR PLAN OF ATTACK.

Last year I pointed out that by taking advantage of the party lines in New Zealand, we would be able to oust Ministers at our will, but, yielding to your superior knowledge, I refrained from further discussion. Having given the subject much consideration since, I am still confident it would be the only way in which we could give each party a crushing defeat. The very fact of one Ministry being ousted on our votes would make their successors willing to compromise with us for a retention of their seats. After all, as Artemus Ward says, "There is a deal of human nature even in Ministries," and you know love of office is very natural to politicians.

EDUCATION COMMISSION.

I have read with pleasure the report of the Commission on Education, and was glad to note that there was a general feeling among all Christian societies that denominationalism was making its way among them. It will be news to your readers, perhaps, to know that the Anglicans are opening an infant day school of their own in Wellington. The beginning is small, but as a sign of the times it is portentous.—Mr. Shrimski's boast that the Jews believed in secular education, and that there were no conversions among them were *sworn* a little too soon, as even Jewish secularists are fast joining the Salvation Army. I will send names as soon as they receive their stripes; as yet there are only a half-a-dozen privates, but if rumour be true you will ere long see some of them going to headquarters in Dunedin, that is if you ever take a peep at them at drill. So much for this vaunted education which is literally bringing all its votaries to a level at Salvation Army meetings and Freethinking, Atheistical, scoffing plays. This is equality and fraternity with a vengeance.

CHLT.

The affair of Canon Bernard, who fled from Belgium with the funds of the Diocese of Tournai, and came to America, needs some explanation. Mgr. Dumont, Archbishop of Tournai, showed insubordination to the Holy See, and was deposed. Mgr. Du Rousseaux was appointed in his place, and recognized by the Belgian Government. Mgr. Dumont then claimed before the civil tribunals the palace and its contents, and certain funds alleged to be his private property. He obtained an order to have the Diocesan offices and safes sealed. He found them empty—the new Bishop having directed Canon Bernard, the treasurer of the Diocese, to remove the funds to a safe place. The Canon took them to America. After some negotiation with a representative of Bishop Dumont, Canon Bernard gave him a large sum, claimed as the late Bishop's private property. Canon Bernard was extradited at Havana. He was kept in prison a year, and has just now been released on the ground that he was acting in good faith, and that what he did in America is outside the jurisdiction of the Belgian courts. Canon Bernard, while in America, had transmitted to Bishop Du Rousseaux the money necessary for the needs of the Diocese. The Procureur du Roi has appealed against the judgment of the court which gave Canon Bernard his liberty.—*London Tablet*.

Why Mr. Gladstone should say Italy has no hymns, is arousing some gentle comments on the great Premier's poetic knowledge of our country. Several Roman hymns are to be had all over the Christian world just now. Dr. Passalenti, Chaplain to the Italians in London, writes to us: "Mr. Gladstone has no occasion to point out that the Italians have no hymns; I have just sent to him a book with one hundred and fifty hymns in it, a more extraordinary work of love than Germany and England can give. I have thousands more to send if I choose, but those sung by the children at the school, Onslow street, Furrington road, and at the church, Bream's-buildings, Chancery lane, by my congregation, will be enough to show the Prime Minister that the Italians are born poets, and have no such spiritual wants.—*Italian Times*."