

noticed a most benignant smile of compassion on the countenance of our Blessed Lady as, turning to the venerable old man who now stood near her, she said, "Beloved spouse, say a word to the Judge for that poor child." For the first time I then clearly perceived that the venerable patriarch was none other than good St Joseph. The saint at once stood before the throne of his divine foster-son, and said, "O supreme Judge of the living and the dead, when on earth you ever loved and obeyed me as a most dutiful son, I ask you, therefore, in memory of that love and obedience to spare this (my client's) soul which you have redeemed with your own precious blood." The great Judge at once left his throne, took St Joseph by the hand, and, seating him by His side, said, "Beloved foster-father, you never refused my mother or myself anything we needed on earth, you shall never be refused anything you ask in my kingdom. For your sake I pardon the soul of this child. As he was ever fond of you in his lifetime, the joys of heaven shall be his for an endless eternity. Nevertheless, as I am Infinite Justice and as there are still on his soul some lesser faults unatoned for, it is my decree that he shall go for a time to the cleansing fires of purgatory to be there purified as gold in the furnace."

(To be concluded)

CONVENT PUPILS' ENTERTAINMENT AT REEFTON.

(Inangahua Times, April 8.)

THE unpropitious weather did not prevent a large audience from being present in the Princess Theatre on Friday evening to witness the great tragedy of the French Revolution as portrayed by the pupils of the Convent School. Misses J. Harold and Wilkinson filled the leading characters, King Louis and Marie Antoinette respectively, and they did them justice. Miss Walebe doubled the characters of Marie Theresa and the Abbé Edgeworth, and did well, though the latter is essentially difficult for a lady. Miss Doherty left no room for criticism in her impersonation of King Louis' sister, Madame Elizabeth, and the same may be said of Miss A. O'Neill's representation of Marie Antoinette's sister, Madame Royale. As Gipsy Queen, Miss McAnley left no reason for even the most captious to find fault with, and Miss Molloy made an excellent Maid of Honour. Miss Moore did well as Danterre, the officer upon whom devolved the painful duty of conveying the royal victims to the guillotine. As the King's cousin, Egalite, Miss Maud Bourke seemed quite at home, and the same applies to Miss Barkley as the Dauphin. Miss Stringer amused the audience highly by the manner in which she acted as "Biddy," the Irish gipsy girl. The remaining parts were all faithfully borne out by Misses E. Garth, Wilkinson, Monteith, McMabon, Breen, Gin, and Molloy. The gipsy camp chorus was listened to with the closest appreciation. The vocal and instrumental part of the programme gave ample opportunity to the young ladies to evince their accomplishments in these respects, and they fully bore out expectations. Miss E. Hindmarsh was heard to great advantage in the vocal solos, "Star of Bethlehem" and "The Christian Martyr," the clear cadence of her voice more than compensating for a slight nervousness which was noticeable at first. Miss Shanks sang the "Captive Greek Girl" with much expression, and was the recipient of several floral tributes. Miss Doherty deservedly earned the applause she received for "The Touch of a Vanished Hand." The chorus in character by the High School pupils was a treat to listen to. Mention should also be made of the violin solos by Master Priest, who had to respond to an encore. The pianoforte duet by Misses Grath and McNamara, and Misses O'Neill and Barkley, also showed evidence of careful tuition and natural aptitude. The evening's entertainment concluded by a one-act farce entitled "The Omnibus," in which Misses O'Neill, Doonan, O'Shea, Corbett, McGuire, McGrath, Cameron, Searight, and Evans took part. The last-named young lady as "Pat Rooney" amused everyone, and cannot be too highly praised.

On Saturday evening the attendance was somewhat smaller, and the entertainment if anything better. The choruses were splendid, and the young singers excelled themselves in the scarf dance. The rhythm of their movements was perfect, and they kept capital time all through. Misses Hindmarsh and Shanks again favoured the audience with vocal solos, and "The Omnibus" was successfully repeated. A new feature was the drama in one act "The Golden Thimble," in which the leading characters, Countess de Rowstoff and Madame Berton, were taken by Misses Binihan and McGrath. The remaining parts were taken by Misses Molloy (2), McGillicuddy, and Kelly. A beautiful tableau of the angels by the High School pupils, brought a very successful entertainment to a conclusion.

The Rev Father Bolland thanked the public for their patronage in a few hearty words, and in doing so paid a well deserved tribute to the good Sisters, who, he said, were unremitting in their zeal to perfect the minds and hearts of their pupils. It was generally recognised as a boon to the community to have the Sisters in its midst, and as they spent their time for the public good, he was glad to see that their labours were rewarded with due appreciation.

CATHOLIC NEWS.

(From the Catholic Times.)

A Christianity Exhibition, to be held during the International Exhibition at Paris in 1900, has, it is stated, been sanctioned by the Sovereign Pontiff and the Archbishop of Paris. The idea is to represent the whole history of the eighteen Christian centuries by *fac similes* and panoramas, to perform the Obersmmergau Passion play, and to hold a Sistine Chapel musical service, with all the accessories; but the suggestion has, at present, received no definite shape.

The question of adopting special means for promoting the progress of Catholicism in Wales has been under consideration at the Vatican. The project of detaching the Welsh portions of the Shrewsbury diocese, uniting them with the Welsh parts of Newport and Menevia, and erecting the whole into a Prefecture Apostolic has, it appears, been carefully examined, and the Holy Father has, it is said, expressed himself in favour of it. So far, however, there has been no official confirmation as to the adoption of the scheme.

In his Lenten Pastoral, Mgr Sourrien, Archbishop of Rouen, declares that to replace 32 priests of his diocese, who died in 1894, the current year will only furnish 5. Much the same thing is observed, it is said, in several dioceses, and it is attributed to the action of the military law. It is not merely a question of *séminaristes* returning to the seminary after leaving the barracks, but of their aptitude after their military experience to persevere in the priestly vocation. It would appear that many of them have been rendered unfit for the sacerdotal life.

In his Lenten Pastoral his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, after referring to the evil influences in London, says: "Beyond our own there is a population, to be counted perhaps by millions, that has fallen away from Christ, has never been baptised, has never heard of the Woman and her Child, and of their mission to our race. The work to be undertaken among them is like a mission to the heathen, while the difficulties it presents are more obstinate, and the whole manner of procedure is more embarrassing."

The marvellous energy and zeal for the propagation of the Faith which has always been a particular feature among the sons of St Francis is eloquently proved at the present time by the following statistics, published by the missionaries' official *Bulletino*, of the number of Franciscans who have recently started for the distant countries where they preach the Gospel and scrupulously follow the rule laid down by their founder; Brazil, 80; the Holy Land, 22; Constantinople, 1; Upper Egypt, 5. Besides those who accompanied the new Apostolic Prefect, Mgr Miréle da Carbonara, two more have started for the Krythraean Colony; five have gone to Albania, one to Tripoli, nineteen to Bolivia, and twenty to the Philippine Isles.

A very curious and touching little scene was witnessed in the Vatican on Saturday morning, February 23. The Holy Father was in his private study, when a poorly-clad Indian of about thirty-three years of age was admitted to his presence, thanks to the kind intervention of Monsignore Mery del Val. He prostrated himself before the venerable Pontiff with true Oriental reverence, and when Leo XIII. himself helped him to rise, seemed almost about to faint with joy and gratitude. The interview lasted some minutes and the poor Indian left the Pope's presence the happy possessor of several medals, relics, and pictures which he kissed again and again. It has been proved beyond a doubt that this Indian is a direct descendant of one of the chiefs baptised by St Francis Xavier. He has, it appears, for years cherished the idea of one day coming to Rome to see the Holy Father and only allowed himself the strict necessities of life in order to save sufficient money for the journey. At last he has accomplished the desire of his life, and, after visiting the Sovereign Pontiff, started on his homeward journey on the following day.

His Eminence Cardinal Logna writing in his Lenten Pastoral of the National Education System says:—It is incurably vicious in principle. By excluding every definite idea of religion during the working hours of the school; merely permitting God and His interests to appear for a few spare moments, often not permitting Him to appear at all, it tends of its very nature to impress the child that temporal concerns should hold the chief place in his estimation, while his spiritual interests are of very secondary importance. It jealously excludes from the school every thing which would serve to keep the Divine Presence before the child's mind or permit it to rise, even for a moment, above material things. It even cramps the child's mind and impedes real intellectual development; for to carry out this system it is necessary to employ colourless and insipid books, to teach half truths and to altogether exclude most important subjects of instruction, such as the study of either sacred or profane history. The keeping of this important question to the front need not interfere with the most energetic efforts to secure the right of self-government, or any other right necessary for the welfare of the country. On the contrary, the training of the young, not only in secular knowledge, but in the principles of virtue and religion seems to be an indispensable preparation for the right of any measure of freedom extended to them.