

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

(From the Taranaki Herald.)

The annual entertainment given by the pupils attending the convent schools, New Plymouth, attracted a large number of visitors on Wednesday, December 17, the large class-room in the building being crammed. The Sisters who undertake the work of instruction, whether in the higher or lower branches and with children of all classes, possess in a marked degree the faculty of well grounding their scholars in the useful branches of knowledge, and at the same time cultivating those more brilliant and useful talents which many of our New Zealand girls are gifted with. Everything that is done at the convent entertainment is distinguished by perfect taste, and by strict attention to details. The great desideratum in entertainments of this nature is that the musical performances should be sound as well as showy—an index, in fact, to what the pupils really know in their hearts; and that the “dramatic pieces”—if we can apply to them such a term—evince no tendency to stagy effect, but are merely practical examples of the progress made by the young ladies in their pronunciation, gesture, accent, and deportment. The industry of the pupils is also shown by the roomful of work displayed to the visitors. Pictures in oil and water colours, crayon drawing, Poonah painting, and shading in ink, all of which are artistic, and whilst in them the diligence of the scholars is shown, the painstaking instruction by the Sisters is most marked in everything that is exhibited. Not only are there ornamental articles, but useful and serviceable work as well is everywhere to be seen. It might be thought, perhaps, that the children's minds are diverted from their other studies, but the Sisters never allow fancy work to be touched except as a pastime, and the examinations of the pupils in their other studies show that the “useful” is never neglected for the “ornamental.”

The work of the pupils is very tastefully displayed in one of the convent rooms, and which, on entering, looks like a bazaar, so full is it of goods. We should like to mention every article we saw, and give the names of all the makers, but we are afraid our space will not permit us doing so. However, we will mention a few of the things that struck us as being worthy of notice:—Miss Lizzie Stevenson, of Babotu, a boarder at the convent, makes the largest display, she having more than fourteen pieces of work: A chair back and seat, banner screen, mantle drape, Poonah painting, wool work, embroidery, and stitching, all of which are really excellent. Miss May Dingle comes next in number of articles exhibited, showing a banner screen, cushions, black satin apron worked with coloured flowers in silk as a border, a beautiful piece of macramé work as a mantle drape, a crayon drawing, etc. Miss Clara Hammond has a gipsy table, the top being splash work, with a draping of satin worked with flowers, some bead-work pincushions, a macramé bracket drape, Poonah painting on velvet, etc. Miss Stella Cunningham has a large beadwork cushion, mantle drape, carpet slippers, etc. Miss Ada Coldwell has several cushions (wool-work on canvas, and floss-silk on satin) brackets and mantles; and her sister, Miss Floss Coldwell, has star frames in wool, silk-worked cushions, bracket drapes, etc. Miss Beatrice Mills' work consisted of useful articles in wool-work, socks, children's petticoats, slippers, daisy mats, satin apron with forget-me-nots worked as a border. Miss Jeffries had a handsome cushion, macramé bracket drape, etc. Miss Mary Cowan showed some cruel work on velvet and satin, muslin flowers, smoking caps, etc. Miss Searle, a little girl of ten years of age, showed great skill with her needle, both in her fancy and plain work. Miss Gill's work consisted of a neatly-finished cushion and embroidery work and stitching. Miss Ethel Ryan, amongst other things, showed a tea-cosie, crewel-work on velvet, etc. Miss Josephine Moore had four bead pincushions, a crewel-work bracket, also one made of wool. Miss Parker exhibited a very handsome mantle drape in arasée work. Miss Reynolds exhibited several prettily-worked cushions, bannerets of blue silk, etc. Miss Rosalind Wood had a piece of sampler work, which is only partly finished, being the date of the birth and death of her grandmother, the late Mrs. Inch. All the pupils had specimens of “white-work” to show, which consisted of ordinary needlework and embroidery on linen. The neatness of the stitching was the admiration of all the lady visitors present. The drawings and paintings on the walls show a marked improvement on last year's. We would like to mention them all, but regret our limited space prevents us doing so.

The large class-room was very prettily decorated for the entertainment, of which the following is the programme:—

Duet (4 pianos and organ), “L'italiana,” (Diabelli), Misses Rickerby, J. Oldfield, Cunningham, K. Oldfield, J. Moore, Hammond, Gill, and Dingle; song, “View from the Beach” (Moore), the pupils; recitation, “Lochiel's Warning,” Misses E. Oldfield and Cowan; solo (4 pianos, organ, and violin), “Orazione” (Thorne), Misses Gill, Hammond, Rickerby, Cunningham, (organ) Miss J. Moore, (violin) Miss M. Furlong; glee, “Gitana,” (Root), the pupils; duet, (4 pianos and organ), “Isle of the Sea” (Thomas) Misses Griffiths, B. Julian, G. Rickerby, F. Julian, Stevenson, Mills, R. Duffin, and Oldfield, (organ) Miss Cowan; recitation (comic), Miss Cowan; solo, (piano and organ), “Irish Diamonds, No. 6” (Pape), Misses Moore and J. Oldfield; song, “The Japanese Fan” (Cowley), junior pupils; solo (4 pianos and organ), “Whispers from Eriu” (Rockstro), Misses Cunningham, Hammond, J. Moore, and Rickerby, (organ) Miss J. Oldfield; Cantique Français, “Amour à Jus” the pupils (accompanied on the violin and organ by Misses Furlong and Oldfield); duet (3 pianos and organ), “Little Leaves No. 15” (Leslie), Misses Ambridge, F. Coldwell, Ethel Oldfield, C. Cook, G. Rickerby, and Searle, (organ) Miss Cowan; recitation, “The Arab's Farewell,” Miss Patterson; solo (4 pianos and organ), “Silvery Waves” (Wyman), Misses J. Moore, G. H. Rickerby, Cunningham, (organ) Miss Dingle; duet and chorus, “The Music of the Birds” (Glover), the pupils; duet (4 pianos and organ), “The Morning Pearl” (Blake), Misses Hammond, J. Moore, Cunningham, Dingle, Western, Rickerby, Gill, and Paul, (organ) Miss J. Oldfield; duet and chorus, “The Wild Waves,” (Glover), the pupils; solo (piano, organ, and violin), “The Bohemian Girl” (Ballé), Misses J. Moore, J. Oldfield, and M. Furlong; dialogue,

“Dame Durden's New Year's Visit,” Misses Cowan, E. Oldfield, J. Moore, Cunningham, and Dingle. Finale, “The Holiday Duet” (Glover), the pupils.

After the programme had been gone through, Mr. Smith, M.H.B., in thanking the ladies of the convent, and the children for the pleasant afternoon they had spent, expressed his pleasure at seeing the work exhibited in the adjoining room, which had been done by the children. He said he would make it his business to get the Jubilee Exhibition Committee to write to the ladies of the convent asking them to allow the articles to be shown at the Taranaki Jubilee Exhibition in March next. He said it was very evident that the children were being very carefully trained, which reflected great credit on the ladies of the Convent. The prizes were then distributed by Mr. Smith, who was assisted by the Rev. Father McKenna and the lady Superior. The company then separated, all expressing themselves as pleased with the entertainment they had been present at.

The annual entertainment and distribution of prizes in connection with St. Patrick's Boys' School took place in the large class-room in connection with the convent on Friday, and, as usual, the attendance was so large that it was impossible to find sitting accommodation for all. The walls of the room had been very prettily decorated with wreaths and festoons of flowers. His Worship the Mayor (Mr. J. Belringer) occupied the chair; on his left was Mr. Smith, M.H.B., and to his right the Rev. Father McKenna. The little boys, none of whom were over ten years of age, went through their pieces with praiseworthy correctness, showing great intelligence. The distinct pronunciation and emphasis with which they delivered the recitations were most creditable, and in some instances deserved still higher praise. Master W. Hart's comic recitation, “Vat you please,” was given with considerable humour. “The Man and the Monkey,” by Masters A. Hart and J. O'Neill, a most amusing and well-delivered piece, which caused much laughter, and in the scene between “Hubert and the Prince,” both Masters O'Donnell and Ryan showed considerable ability. Master M. O'Neill also delivered his recitation, “Bernado and Alphonso,” extremely well. The performances by the young ladies showed their great proficiency as pianists. The following programme was gone through:—

Duet (2 pianos and organ), “The Shepherd's Evening Song” (Blake), Misses Hammond, Gill, Sullivan, and Paul—(organ) Miss J. Oldfield; song, “Ring the Bell, Watchman” (Root), the pupils; recitation, “Vat You Please,” Master W. Hart; solo (2 pianos and organ), “Moonlight on the Lake” (Mack), Misses Hammond and Cowan; (organ), Miss Gill. Song, “Twey Write me a Letter from Home” (Hayes), the pupils; scene between “Hubert and Arthur,” Masters O'Donnell and Ryan; song, “Life on the Ocean Wave” (Root), the pupils; recitation, “The Man and the Monkey,” Masters A. Hart and J. O'Neill; solo (2 pianos and organ), “Silver Trumpets” (Vivian), Misses Rickerby and Cunningham; organ, Miss J. Moore. Duet, “The Harp of Tara's Hall” (Moore), Masters O'Donnell and Hart; recitation, “Bernado and Alphonso,” Master M. O'Neill; song, “God Save Ireland” (Root), the pupils; solo, “The Danube,” Miss J. Moore; drama, “Let He Laugh who Wins,” Masters O'Donnell, McLachlan, Moore, O'Neill, Hart, Callaghan, Flan, and King; finale, “Celestial Home,” the pupils.

At the conclusion of the performance his Worship the Mayor said he could not remember the time when he had passed such a pleasant couple of hours as on that afternoon. The boys had all gone through their parts, he might say, without a “hitch,” whilst the young ladies with their music had tended to make the time pass in a most agreeable manner. What he had seen and heard that afternoon had raised his estimation of the institution very high indeed, and convinced him that the pupils were being taught with care, which reflected the greatest credit on the ladies connected with the establishment. He had always taken a great interest in the education of children, and the first public position he held was on the School Committee of the town. Since then he had devoted considerable time to the subject, and therefore was in a position to pass an opinion on the working of an institution like the one carried on by the ladies of the convent. He congratulated them on the success they had achieved, and was pleased at everything he had seen. Turning to the boys, he said he hoped that they would not rest satisfied with what they had accomplished, but would go on and persevere with their studies, because on them would depend the future welfare of the colony. They should make a determined effort to get to the top of the ladder. There were already in the Parliament men who had been born in New Zealand, and in the future the whole of the government of the colony would be in the hands of those who were native born. It was, therefore, very necessary they should prepare themselves for that position by studying hard, so that if any of them should be called to take part in the government of the country they would be able to undertake the duties entrusted to them. He hoped they would continue to pay attention to their studies, to be diligent, and endeavour to be a credit to their teachers and parents, and they then need have no fear but that they will be sure to succeed in this life. He thanked the youthful performers for entertaining them that afternoon in such a pleasant manner, and again complimented the ladies of the institution on the proficiency of their pupils.

His Worship the Mayor, assisted by Rev. Father McKenna and the Lady Superior, then distributed the prizes to the boys.

The Sisters beg to return their sincere thanks to the following persons who have kindly contributed towards procuring the prizes:—Rev. Father McKenna, Dr. O'Carroll, Mr. and Mrs. Seffern, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Curkill, Mr. J. Hynes, Mr. Parker, Messrs Dingle and Corke, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Walker, Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill, Mr. Fischer, Mrs. S. P. King, Mr. Hart, Mrs. Fashleib, Miss Murphy, Mrs. Bafter, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Read, and Mrs. Claffey.

Mr. Seffern having made his annual distribution of sixpences amongst the boys, the proceedings came to a close.

(From the Thames Advertiser, December 10.)

An entertainment in connection with the Convent Select School was given in the Oddfellows' Hall, Richmond street, last night. There was a large attendance, each part of the hall being filled well