

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

(West Coast Times, December 23)

The annual entertainment and distribution of prizes of St. Columbkille's convent schools, Hokitika, took place on Friday evening last, 19th inst., in the presence of a large assemblance of parents and prominent townspeople. As on all previous occasions the utmost taste was exhibited upon the arrangement and decoration of the large room of St. Joseph's school, the stage in particular being a marvel of artistic skill. The seats in front of the stage were occupied by the Rev. Father Martin, Hon. J. A. Bonar, M.L.C., Mr. Tymons, of St. Patrick's College, Wellington, and the Sisters of the Hokitika convent and the Sisters from the convents of the neighbouring towns of Kumara and Ross.

The entertainment commenced at half-past seven. It would be invidious to discriminate the merits of the young performers, particularly when each did the part allotted to her in a manner that must satisfy the most exacting critic. Suffice it to say that the following lengthy and attractive programme was gone through without the slightest hitch to mar the enjoyment:—Part I—Music in the Air (chorus), St. Joseph's singing class; Annie Laurie (piano solo), Mary Hartnett; The Sister of Charity (tableau and recitation), Mary Duggan and Clara Burke; To the Woods (chorus), St. Mary's singing class. Part II—Mamma's in de Cold Ground (piano solo), Mary E. Beveridge; "Charity" (tableau and vocal solo), Kate Davies, M. E. Beveridge, and Esther Aitken; Maiden's Prayer (piano duet), E. E. Beveridge and Esther Aitken. Part III—"Whittington and his Cat" (A drama in three acts), Whittington (a boy of poor but honest parents), Mary Duggan; Mr. Fitzwarren (a London merchant), Esther Aitken; Alice (Mr. Fitzwarren's daughter) Josephine Dowling; Captain Jack (captain of Mr. Fitzwarren's ship), Kate Davies; Cook (in Mr. Fitzwarren's house), Maggie Ward; John Thomas (a page), Lucy Daly; King of Barbary, Mary E. Beveridge; Queen of Barbary, Mary Hartnett; Interpreter, Lily Daly; (fairies) sunbeam, Clara Burke; starlight, Mary E. Shine; moonbeam, Ethel Harvey; silversheen, Mary A. Cameron. Il Trovatore (piano duet), Mary Hartnett and Mary Ellen Beveridge; Onslow Valse (piano solo), Kate Davies; Song of the Skylark (piano duet), Clara Burke and Mary Ellen Beveridge; Theme Allemand (piano solo), Mary Hartnett; Les Cloches du Monastere (piano duet) Kate Davies and Mary Hartnett; The Old Folks at Home (piano solo), Mary E. Beveridge; Music Entrancing (chorus), St. Mary's singing class.

At the close of the entertainment the prizes were distributed by the Rev. Father Martin, Hon. J. A. Bonar and Mr. Tymons, each with a word of congratulation and encouragement to the recipients.

After the distribution the Hon. J. A. Bonar said the warmest thanks were due to the Rev. Mother and Sisters for the pleasant evening's entertainment they had enjoyed. For his own part he must say that he was disappointed, for he had come with the intention of finding fault, for on all previous occasions he had nothing but complimentary terms to bestow upon everything he saw and heard. He found this occasion no exception to the rule, hence his disappointment. Another feature of those entertainments was that each succeeding year new faces have taken the places of the old, but the excellence of these exhibitions was not in the slightest impaired. It was some years now since he had the pleasure of being fellow-passengers from Wellington with the Rev. Father Martin and the Sisters, who were on their way from the older countries to open this institution. He felt then that they had undertaken a very arduous task, but they had succeeded beyond all expectations. His earnest and most sincere wish was that they may long continue in their good and meritorious work, and he concluded with wishing them, both Sisters and children, all the felicitations of the season.

The Rev. Father Martin said that although it was not customary with him to praise people in their presence, yet it was only due to the Sisters to say that the good works of the parish were progressing most satisfactorily under their fostering care. When he first contemplated bringing the Sisters to Hokitika he felt the magnitude of the undertaking, but once they were in our midst he knew that all would prosper. After the Convent here was established he knew that his own labours might at any time be done without, for the good work would be carried on by the Sisters. For those children who obtained prizes he wished to say that their industry merited the reward, but those who were not so fortunate should not be discouraged, but try harder next year, and they were sure of success. In conclusion, he would wish to one and all very many happy Christmases and New Years.

His Worship the Mayor said:—Rev. Father Martin, Rev. Mother, Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen, I cannot refrain from making a few remarks with regard to the splendid manner in which this performance has been carried out this evening and have to express my sincere thanks on behalf of the parents and audience to the teachers and children for the very creditable way in which they have carried out the programme and been the means of us all spending a most pleasant and enjoyable evening. The thanks and the gratitude of the people are due to the Rev. Father Martin for being the cause of establishing such an institution as this amongst us. I will tell you a little incident that occurred some thirteen or fourteen years ago. I met the Rev. Father Martin on this corner, in fact where this building now stands, and in the course of conversation he said he intended to build a convent here. I was surprised at the assertion and replied that it would be some time before the intention was carried out, but the rev. gentleman was of a different opinion and stated that it would not be long before it was built. Now what do we find—a convent standing here of great magnitude, fitted up for boarders, and everything complete for the moral, spiritual and classical education of young ladies, and it is within the grasp of every person, be they rich or poor, who wishes to embrace the opportunity. I consider that the Rev. Father Martin and the Rev. Mother and Sisters are the actual parents of all the convents on the West Coast, or it is through their perseverance and energy that those have been already established. There is one in Greymouth, one in Kumara, and one in Ross, and

there are at present Sisters teaching in Kanieri. I have personal reason to know the good they have done since the convents started. So with these few remarks, I now beg to wish the Rev. Father Martin and the Rev. Mother and Sisters a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and that they will live long so as to continue their present good work.

A similar ceremony was performed at Kanieri on Saturday. The programme was as follows:—

Thy Native Land (Chorus) Singing Class; Home to our Mountains (piano duet) Olive Beck and Thomas Gleeson; Christmas and the Children (recitation) Monica Hartnett; Silver Lake Varsovians (piano duet) Annie Hatch and Lizzie Burns; Death of Cock Robin (conversation) Infant Class; Liquid Gem (chorus) Singing Class; Moss Rose Waltz (piano duet) Lizzie Burns and Mary O'Neil; the Children's Choice (conversation) Margaret Hartnett, Clement Hanson, James Gleeson, Ruby Burns and Maggie Boyd; The Shepherd's Evening Song (piano duet) Annie Hatch and Olive Beck.

Christmas Play, Dramatis Personæ—Curiosity, Mary Head; Expectation, Helena Shaw; Fun, Alice M'Quilkin; Frolic, Annie Hatch; Imagination, Willie M'Cormack; Generosity, Annie M'Guigan; Charity, Margaret Hartnett; Santa Claus, Olive Beck.

God defend New Zealand, Singing Class; O.M.F.N. Schottische, Lizzie Burns.

(Thames Advertiser, December 19.)

The annual distribution of prizes to the pupils attending the convent select school, prior to the breaking up for the Christmas holidays, took place yesterday afternoon. There was a very fair attendance of children and visitors. The room was nicely decorated, richly variegated floral wreaths and evergreens being conspicuous amongst the other devices. There were also a variety of exhibits of plain and fancy work accomplished by the pupils. On the whole the exhibition was fully equal to its predecessors, which is saying a great deal; and although the number of exhibits was not large, the exhibits themselves were excellent, and reflected the greatest credit on the pupils. Too much praise, also, cannot be given to the Sisters of Mercy for the measure of perfection arrived at in the working up of the exhibition. Amongst the work, the following attracted the most attention, and each of the articles were much admired: Cushions—One worked in wine coloured plush by Miss O'Sullivan; one in crimson satin, by Miss Williams; and two in arasene (one on black cloth and the other on plush) by Misses Palmer and Garvey. There was also mantel-drapes in arasene (worked on black cloth) by Miss Twobill; and a pretty cosy, by Miss Payne. Amongst the macramé work was a drape by Miss Williams, and brackets by Misses Palmer, Twobill, Payne, Lawless, Hutchinson, E. McDonald, and Kenny. Then there were antimacassars in daggenet by Misses McDonald, Palmer, Twobill, Lawless, Payne and E. McDonald. There was also an envelope case worked by Miss Humphreys, and an excellent map of the North Island of New Zealand, executed by Miss O'Sullivan.

The following programme was gone through, each item being well performed: Pianoforte duet, "Schuloff's Waltz," (two pianos), Misses Twobill (2), M. McDonald, and Connolly; song, "The New Kingdom," Miss Koefoed; song, "Fairie Voices," Miss Cissy Garvey and eight others; pianoforte solo, "Her Bright Smile," Miss E. McDonald.

The Rev. Father O'Reilly presided, and expressed his great pleasure at being present. He complimented the performers on the creditable way they had all acquitted themselves. He also spoke in eulogistic terms of the way the children had all worked at their studies during the past year, which in addition to being very gratifying to the pupils themselves, was also a source of great happiness to the Sisters and to himself as well. He contended that a Convent school had an advantage over a Government school, inasmuch as at the former the pupils had religious instruction in addition to the secular. In conclusion, he hoped the scholars would enjoy their holidays, and do nothing but what was worthy in God's sight. Father O'Reilly distributed the prizes.

(Auckland Evening Star, December 24.)

The distribution of prizes at the Catholic schools in Hobson street took place yesterday, His Lordship Bishop Luck being the distributor. The prize winners in the parish schools received their rewards this morning. Bishop Luck spoke in the highest terms of the excellent progress made by the pupils, and of their good conduct in school. He hoped their conduct to their parents at home would equal that in school, and he felt sure little more could be desired. The prizes were first distributed to the little ones in St. Patrick's Infants' School. The children first went through a little programme of recitations, which they all performed very well, one little fellow of six years of age being especially good with his recitation on "Laudism." A floral drama was also performed by thirteen of the little ones, and they all knew their parts well.

From the infant school an adjournment was at once made to the St. Joseph's School, where the elder of the parish school children were presented with their prizes. Here again all was neatness and order, the little stage and the room being nicely decorated. The following programme was performed in good style by the children, who gave evidence of careful training:—Chorus, "Hail! All Hail," by the children; address to the Bishop, Mary Thompson; chorus, (from Flower Queen), the pupils; recitation, "Only Daisies," Annie Grubb; song and chorus, "Chiming Bells of Long Ago," pupils; recitation, "Festal Greeting," Laura O'Brien; chorus, Christmas Carol, pupils; drama, "Puss in Boots," pupils; prologue, Maud Donovan.

His Lordship then with a few appropriate remarks complimentary to the state of the school and to the conduct of the children, presented the prizes.

After the distribution of prizes the National Anthem was sung by the children, and they then broke up.

This afternoon at two o'clock there was a large attendance of pupils, parents, and friends in the schoolroom to view the work of the Convent High School, and to witness the distribution of prizes to