

of their adoption. It was also a benefit society, and he exhorted every young man and woman, and indeed everyone eligible for membership, to join the Hibernian Society. The manifestation by the members this morning was most edifying and encouraging to himself, and to the priests and people of Auckland. The Hibernians thus showed their love for the faith of Patrick, and he hoped they would always continue to do so.

At Vespers his Lordship the Bishop again attended the Cathedral, accompanied by Rev Father Paul Kehoe. The Hibernians formed the guard of honor, which stretched from the presbytery to the Cathedral. As the Bishop passed the members closed in rank and followed him up the centre aisle to the front seats near the altar. A large congregation was present, and Right Rev. Monsignor Brodie, V.G., preached the panegyric on Saint Patrick. He showed the state of Ireland in pagan times immediately prior to the advent of Patrick. He then went on to speak of his bloodless victory over the whole of Ireland, the latter's ready acceptance of Christianity, and the tenacity with which her sons and daughters had held to it, whether in opulence or poverty, in happiness or persecution. A more insidious foe now pressed upon them, and oh the sorrow of it, when the sons and daughters of Patrick proved false to his teachings. He enjoined on all present, particularly on the Hibernians, to hold fast the principles of St. Patrick. They had a noble mission to-day; let them perform it with credit to God, to St. Patrick, and to Ireland, and the result would be that they would live and die worthy members of holy Church. It was an excellent discourse, and would produce a lasting effect on the congregation, who listened with evident attention.

IRISH NATIONAL CONCERT

HOKITIKA.

The Princess Theatre held an enthusiastic audience when the above concert eventuated. An excellent programme was given—in fact, the entertainment was the best submitted in Hokitika for a very long time past. Besides leading local amateurs and Mr. K. S. Dillon, of Greymouth, Miss Coughlin, of Melbourne, and Mr. R. J. Harrison, of Greymouth, assisted very considerably towards the success of the concert. This young lady's violin solos were indeed a treat, and those who were fortunate enough to be present enjoyed the music immensely. The audience demonstrated its approval in a whole-hearted manner, and Miss Coughlin had to submit to well-deserved recalls for each of her items. Mr. Rex Harrison added to the attractiveness of the programme, his appearance always being greeted with the plaudits of patrons. Mr. K. S. Dillon in his recitation, 'Fontenoy,' roused the audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm, his effort being a particularly fine one. Mr. Dillon was, in fact, a host in himself throughout the evening, all his items meeting with very flattering receptions. Mrs. Staveley gave a number of vocal numbers artistically, and encores were demanded in each instance. Mr. Charles Duncan contributed a vocal solo in the first part of the programme, for which he was recalled. Miss L. Preston, in her song 'Believe me,' appeared to be a trifle nervous, but in her encore number this young lady was more successful. The Dominion trio, Messrs. C. Gibbons (flute), C. Ogden (violin), and R. Heyes (piano), gave an enjoyable item, their performance being given in good style. Mr. Gibbons in the second half contributed a flute solo, 'Il Trovatore,' his rendition being artistically given. Mrs. S. W. Richardson, in her song 'Dublin boy,' was heard to advantage, as was the case in her encore number. Mr. Lionel Broad scored a big success in his vocal solo, 'Off to Philadelphia,' and he was recalled twice. Mr. Tom Stopforth sang in excellent style 'A toast to Erin,' and in his second effort he was equally successful. Several pianoforte solos were given by Mr. R. Heyes, his masterly performances meeting with well-merited applause. In the latter part of the programme Miss Coughlin, by special request, favored the audience with two recitations which proved quite as enjoyable as this

young lady's violin solos. The concluding item on the programme was an Irish jig by Miss Freitas which was well received. The accompanists during the evening were Mrs. Dillon, Miss Higgins, A.T.C.L., Miss A. Daly, A.T.C.L., Miss Solomon, Miss Stopforth, and Mr. R. Heyes. During the interval Mr. H. Williams thanked the various performers for their kindness in assisting towards the success of the entertainment. He mentioned that they were honored that evening by the presence of his Lordship Bishop Grimes.

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

A REFORM WANTED THIS SESSION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—One cannot help being alarmed by the number of assaults on women, and especially young female children, which are constantly being recorded in our newspapers.

In Wellington recently I noticed that at the Supreme Court there were four separate cases of indecent assault on children; the ages of these little girl victims (one was just out of babyhood) were 4½ years, 8 years, 11 years, and 13 years. Their assailants were convicted and sent to gaol; but they will all be free men in about six years' time. One of the men had been convicted before for the same offence, his second victim being the little girl aged 4½ years; and this man will be free again! In a splendid country like ours, populated by a superior class of people, and noted for its advanced legislation, the increase in the number of these assaults is a bad feature and a reflection on our laws for the protection of womanhood, and future motherhood. Without a doubt our laws for their protection are obsolete when compared with the laws of other countries; even the English law is in advance of ours.

In certain States in America, Australia, and South Africa (and it is also recorded in the laws of Moses) the punishment for indecent assault on females is the death penalty. He of Nazareth also seems to have inferred that the penalty for offending children was death. If the severity of the laws in the above countries is causing the scum of their population to drift to New Zealand it is plainly our duty to place our laws for these cases on a par with the laws of those countries by urging our legislators to make the death penalty the punishment for these horrible, inhuman, and unnatural assaults which were commented on in our Parliament a few years back. It is said that children assaulted are physically, and in some cases mentally, ruined for life, apart from their innocence being blighted. Then there are many cases of assault not reported, as the victims' parents, through family pride, shrink from publicity and police court proceedings.

In one New Zealand city I am told that a mission sister who keeps a day school for little children had to get the police to order away low fellows who came round with lollies when the school came out. Long sentences harden prisoners; flogging is a dead letter, owing to 'health reasons.' Abolish the death sentence for murder, if you wish, as it was abolished for robbery; but those crimes are not on the same plane as brutal attacks by these human ghouls on defenceless children of the poorer classes, who are lured away with a few lollies. Womanhood was unsafe in New South Wales until capital punishment was brought in. During the South African war capital punishment prevailed. Juries on these cases would perform a real benefit if they recommended capital punishment to be placed on the Statute Book, because a brutal crime deserves brutal punishment. When visiting America recently I enquired if there were many of these assaults recorded, and I was informed that such cases were rare. Should the Government refuse to consent to the death penalty for such criminals they should at least be declared habitual criminals.—I am, etc.,

A NEW ZEALANDER,

Wellington, March 9.