

MASTERTON

ARRIVAL OF THE VICAR-GENERAL.

A REMARKABLE DEMONSTRATION.

(From an occasional correspondent.)

We give on page 53 of this issue some account of the extraordinarily enthusiastic welcome accorded to the Very Rev. Dean McKenna, V.G., on his return from Europe and America. On the eve of our going to press the following further interesting particulars are to hand.

The people of Masterton (writes our correspondent) had been eagerly looking forward to the arrival of their parish priest after his tour of the world. Once the date of his arrival became known they left no stone unturned to give him a proper reception. Hence, since his arrival they have been most enthusiastic in their expression of welcome, congratulation, and sympathy—welcome to his parish; congratulation on his promotion; sympathy in mourning his mother's death.

Before leaving for the 'Old Land' he was treated to a concert in the Town Hall at which his parishioners marked the silver jubilee of his parish-priestship by handing him a substantial purse of sovereigns. He then faced the citizens of Masterton to receive from them an enthusiastic 'bon voyage.' At that meeting no one could fail to perceive the hold he had on the hearts of his own people, and the sympathy and appreciation which non-Catholics manifested in his efforts at contributing a citizen's part to the progress of this town, both educationally and religiously.

During his absence these feelings of admiration were greatly augmented at his promotion to the dignity of Vicar-General of the archdiocese. His arrival at Masterton station on the 26th ult. was perhaps the most marked event in the history of Masterton. The platform was crowded: Catholics and non-Catholics, priests and laity, assembled in numbers to do him honor; and no sooner had he stepped from the train than the cheers of the people which Mr. M. C. O'Connell called for for the Vicar-General of the archdiocese re-echoed for many minutes. A procession of motor cars was immediately formed; and as they proceeded through the town the greetings of the townsmen and the cheering at every corner lent a triumphant tone to that procession. All halted at St. Patrick's school-ground; and then followed a scene which, if second to the one at the railway station in voice production, was certainly not second in spontaneity or orderliness. The children were filed in order; and at the appearance of the V.G., Master Hodgins called for three hearty cheers for the new V.G. of the archdiocese, which were heartily rendered by 180 junior voices, and re-echoed by about 600 adults who formed the procession or awaited its arrival at the school grounds. Then the first address of welcome was read by Master Hodgins.

The Vicar-General in reply paid tribute to the work done by the children and teachers, and thanked them cordially for their expression of welcome. In referring to their success in sports he admitted that the 'length of a bee's knee' was a problem which their teachers must solve for him; otherwise he could not realise the danger in which sporting records were placed by them on St. Patrick's Day. In conclusion, he gave them holidays until the following Monday.

This completed the first part of the day's programme.

The Mayor's Welcome.

On the night of the 26th a concert in the Town Hall, which had been got up by the parishioners, gave a number of his friends an opportunity of meeting him. An escort was again provided. The Caledonian Band made its appearance and its members headed the procession, rendering some very appropriate pieces on their way to the hall. Then followed a concert which would at any time have done credit to our local talent. At an interval an address of welcome from the Dean's parishioners was read by the Mayor. In his preliminary remarks, the Mayor, in a very concise

manner, gave expression to the feelings of the local residents. His utterances of congratulation and sympathy were clearly and effectively expressed; but the climax came when in his expression of welcome, shaking hands with the Vicar-General, he said: 'As Mayor of this town and on behalf of the people I offer you a hearty welcome home to Masterton.' This morning you have been brought in triumph from the railway station. The people have been honored in the new dignity to which you have been raised, and for which you have been so eminently qualified; for apart from your labors in religion and education, which speak for themselves, you have been intimately connected with every progressive movement that has been made in Masterton for the last thirty years. On behalf of your own flock I have great pleasure in reading the address of welcome. (The address appears on page 53 of this issue.)

The Mayor then read a letter from the headmaster of the Masterton District High School (Mr. W. H. Jackson), regretting his inability to be present.

THE DEAN'S REPLY.

The Very Rev. Dean McKenna, on rising to reply, was greeted with applause. He said if his lips could only give utterance to what his heart felt, he would be very eloquent that night. During the quarter of a century which he had labored amongst them he had seen many things for which both he and they should be thankful. His entrance into Masterton that day was a triumphal one, and one of which any man might well feel proud. The address just read expressed the wish that his health had benefited by his trip, and they had only to look at him to see that it had, and he returned with renewed vigor to again take up his work. They had referred to the death of his mother, and he could assure them that she had been much gratified by the presence of her two sons in what he might term her dying hours. The honor conferred upon him—his appointment as Vicar-General—was also referred to in the address, and he would like to state that in accepting that dignity he was also accepting a great responsibility. He would, however, carry out his high duties to the best of his ability, and in this he was sure he would have their support. Mr. Coradine and those who presented the address, had referred in flattering terms to his *locum tenens*, and he could say that though he was sure he had left the parish in good hands he did not expect to see the work so well done as what he found to be the case.

The Very Rev. Dean said he was delighted to be back in Masterton. He had always done his best for the welfare of the town, and he hoped to see it continue to progress. He intended to continue in the future as he had done in the past, and when the end came he hoped they would be able to say he had done his duty.

He expected they would now want to know something of his trip. The speaker then gave an interesting account of the journey from New Zealand to Ireland and the various places of interest visited *en route*. The way they cleared the land for the purpose of extending the city of Vancouver was, he said, a revelation. The engineering feat which had taken the railway over the Rocky Mountains, and the growth of American towns, was something to marvel at. The grandeur of the mountains, he said, was wined out of one's mind by the dreariness of travelling on the prairies. There were miles and miles—hundreds of miles of plain—with no fences, and only a house here and there.

In America, said the Dean, the Catholic Church was making wonderful progress.

They visited the Falls of Niagara, and anyone, said the Dean, who visited that wonder of the world, must marvel at it for the rest of their lives. There his old enemy got a hold of him, and gripped him in a bad place—by the toe. After a number of days, however, he loosed his grip, and they were able to proceed on their journey to New York. From there they crossed the Atlantic in the Olympic, and at once made for Ireland, and were soon at the speaker's native place in Kilkenny. Ireland always called to her