

Presentation to Mr. H. Cullen, Eiffelton.

One of the most enthusiastic gatherings ever held at Eiffelton (says the 'Ashburton Guardian') eventuated there on Tuesday evening, December 20, when a farewell social was tendered to Mr. Hugh Cullen and family, who are leaving after a long sojourn in the district to take up their residence at Alford Forest. The school-room, where the gathering took place, was artistically decorated, and the seating accommodation was taxed to its utmost capacity. The audience was representative of the district, many being present from Ashburton and elsewhere. In opening an excellent concert programme, which preceded a presentation, Mr. A. Moore, who presided, made a brief speech in which he traced his association with their guest and family for some years.

At the conclusion of the concert Mr. J. McLachlan, M.H.R., said that although he had attended at some inconvenience, still he was more than pleased to be present. In common with those assembled he regretted the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Cullen from the district; but when it was considered that the guests of the evening intended to better their circumstances, no one could censure them for severing their connection with a section of the community among whom they had so long resided. He felt sure he was only voicing the sentiment of all assembled in regretting the departure of the Cullen family from the district, and expressing a hope that their future would be marked with success. The speaker here paid a tribute to the kindly qualities of Mrs. Cullen, who was always ready to assist her neighbors in time of trouble or sickness, and who had at all times been a worthy partner of her much respected husband. He was pleased to see the Misses Ellen and Annie Cullen and Mr. P. Cullen present that evening. They were known as 'Cullen's orchestra,' having been at all times ready to place their talents gratuitously at the service of organisers of concerts and entertainments in the district. He felt that their departure would be keenly felt. He had much pleasure in presenting to Mr. Cullen, on behalf of friends and admirers, a handsome gold Albert chain, as a small token of the esteem in which he was held. To Mrs. Cullen he had also pleasure in handing an overmantel mirror, and it was his wish that both recipients would live long and enjoy good health and prosperity and each other's society for many years to come. Mr. and Mrs. Cullen would not, he felt sure, receive the gifts for the mere intrinsic value, but for the accompanying expression of goodwill on the part of the subscribers. The speaker then read the following letter from the Right Hon the Premier:—

'Dear Mr. McLachlan,—It is with pleasure that I learn from you that it is intended to make a presentation to my old friend, Mr. Hugh Cullen; and it is gratifying to know, as at Kumara and the West Coast, he has at the East Coast proved himself a deserving colonist, and deserving of the esteem of all those who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance. My great regret is that I shall be unable to be with you, and as an old friend to personally join in wishing Mr. and Mrs. Cullen and their family every happiness and prosperity in their new home. To yourself and those assembled, I wish you one and all a happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.'

Mr. Cullen, in thanking the donors on behalf of Mrs. Cullen and himself, said he would have to make use of an old hackneyed phrase in saying that the unexpected and handsome treatment he had received at their hands had, in a measure, robbed him of words in which to convey his thanks. He could assure them that the gifts tendered him that evening were accepted in a way that had moved the subscribers to show their appreciation of the past services he and his family had rendered the district, and that those gifts would be highly treasured in days to come was unnecessary on his part to mention. In conclusion Mr. Cullen said he desired to publicly acknowledge the receipt of a cheque for £50 that had been tendered to him by Mr. J. C. N. Grigg, as an appreciation of a service to the district he (the speaker) was not aware of.

Mr. D. Thomas, who had known Mr. Cullen for upwards of 25 years, also added his meed of praise, and said that it was an evidence of the esteem in which their guest was held to find among those present the Very Rev. Father O'Donnell and the vicar of Lowcliff.

Several communications are unavoidably held over. The Religious of the Sacred Heart are about to open a convent at Melrose, Wellington, where at present only a limited number of pupils can be taken. Application is to be made to the Rev. Mother Superior at Timaru...

THE FAITH IN JAPAN.

The Rev. Thomas J. Campbell, S.J., writing in 'Benziger's Home Annual,' contributes an informing article on the state of Catholicism in the dominions of the Mikado. Most Catholics are aware that in the middle of the sixteenth century St. Francis Xavier left the field of his apostolic labors in India fired with the desire of converting the inhabitants of Japan and the other Eastern islands to Christianity. The record of the heroic labors of the saint and a few companions is one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Church. By the end of the century, says Father Campbell, 750,000 converts had been made. Then the era of persecution commenced. In 1612 William Adams, an English sea captain, secured the confidence of the Emperor Daifosama and persuaded him that the Catholic missionaries were political emissaries of Portugal, bent on preparing the way for the conquest of Japan. In the persecution which Daifosama began, and which was continued by the Shoguns, hundreds of thousands—men, women, and even little children—suffered death in the most cruel forms for the faith they had adopted. Christianity was overwhelmed in the deluge of blood, and for centuries no effort availed to raise again the ruined Church of Japan. For two centuries

Japan Remained Closed to Foreigners. But at length, in consequence of the ill-treatment of some shipwrecked American sailors by the Japanese, a squadron of American warships entered the port of Tokio, and as a result of their demands certain Japanese towns were opened to the trade of foreign nations. The treaty by which this concession was granted was concluded in 1854. With the traders the missionaries also entered. The Catholic missions to Japan were entrusted to the Fathers of the Society of Foreign Missions. The work of the Catholic missions was, at first, beset with many difficulties, and its progress was necessarily slow. But the unexpected discovery of some important remains of the older Church at length offered the laborers a brighter prospect. How that discovery was made Father Campbell tells us in graphic fashion. Father Petitjean, one of the Japanese missionaries, had succeeded, after many efforts, in building a small church at Nagasaki in 1865. 'The church had hardly been opened a month when, on March 17, something extraordinary happened. On that day, after Mass, the priest was kneeling in his little church, somewhat dejected at heart, for his efforts did not seem to be as successful as he hoped. Suddenly he found three women kneeling alongside him. They bluntly told him that they thought their religion was the same as his. Father Petitjean had never seen them before, and was quite taken aback by three questions proposed by the strangers: 1st. Have you a Pope? 2nd. Do you pray to the Blessed Virgin? 3rd. Are you married? To the first two questions the priest, of course, answered in the affirmative; negatively to the last. "Then we are like you," said the inquisitors. To his amazement, the missionary found that there were

Groups of Catholics scattered through the country, who had handed down the faith from father to son during almost three centuries; mutilating the doctrine, of course, to some extent, but preserving substantially what had been the treasure of their martyred ancestors. Baptism and marriage were the only sacraments they could administer, but through these two channels God had poured forth His Grace in marvellous abundance. Around Nagasaki alone—which will be remembered as the principal scene of the old martyrdoms, 2500 of these Crypto-Christians were found. In one place there was a settlement of as many as 1000 Christian families. Twenty-five other groups were found in various localities. There are at present four dioceses, Tokio, Osaka, Nagasaki, and Hakodatie, with 55,450 Catholics, a small number now when we consider that there were at one time 2,000,000 Catholics. Scarcely ninety years elapsed between the arrival of Francis Xavier and the last persecution, which was supposed to have completely blotted out the Church; and, nevertheless, in that extraordinarily brief period,

Those Marvellous Results were achieved which not only furnished 200,000 martyrs, but made other countless thousands faithful to Catholicism after it had apparently disappeared from the world, as far as they knew.

Mr. P. P. Fleming, of the postal department, who has been transferred to Dunedin, has received the following resolution from St. Mary's Church committee, Christchurch:—'That the thanks of the committee be tendered to you for the way you have worked for the good of the Church and greater glory of God while acting as a member of the committee.'