

B.A., LL.B., supported by Mr. M. Richmond, B.Sc., LL.B., President of the College Debating Society.

His Excellency was briefly welcomed by the chairman, who referred to the boon conferred on the society by the gift of his Excellency.

The competitors (the number of whom had been reduced to ten by vote of the students at a previous meeting), were each allowed ten minutes to discourse on the life and work of any character of history. The following spoke in order named:—Mr. H. Banks, on William Pitt; Mr. J. Graham, on Napoleon; Mr. F. A. de la Mare, on Sir Peter de la Mare; Mr. R. Mason, on Sir George Grey; Mr. F. P. Kelly, on W. E. Gladstone; Mr. G. V. Bogle, on Joan of Arc; Mr. G. F. Dixon, on Lord Shaftesbury; Mr. J. A. Brailsford, on General Gordon; Mr. C. B. Collins, on Edward Gibbon Wakefield; and Mr. E. J. Fitzgibbon, on Daniel O'Connell.

The speeches were generally of a very high order, but those of Messrs. Fitzgibbon, Kelly, Graham, and Banks were far before the others. Mr. Fitzgibbon was received with enthusiasm, and delivered a really excellent oration. With his rich, melodious voice, and a most impressive manner, he had little difficulty in holding his hearers from his opening words, giving a simple narrative of O'Connell's life, and at the same time displaying in a tactful and artistic manner a general view of the Liberator's character. At times he reached the highest standard eloquence, and concluded with a peroration that electrified the audience. On his concluding he was enthusiastically applauded.

Mr. Kelly, too, made a very fine speech. He also possesses a very pleasing musical voice, and with a quiet, unassuming style, at once won the hearts of the audience. He dealt in a very sympathetic way with the life of Gladstone, and his effort was accorded most hearty applause.

Mr. Graham dealt with Napoleon as a man of action, but his oration was too much of the dramatic order and did not create such an impression as those of the speakers previously referred to. Many of the other speeches were far above the average, that of Mr. Banks on William Pitt being characterised by elegance of diction and fluency.

The medal was awarded on the votes of the students, and, while a scrutiny was being made, Mr. M. Richmond proposed a hearty vote of thanks to his Excellency. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joynt, Registrar of the New Zealand University, and carried by acclamation.

His Excellency announced that the voting showed the placed competitors to be—First Mr. Fitzgibbon, second Mr. Kelly, third Mr. Graham. The result was received with extraordinary enthusiasm, the popularity of the verdict being manifested in hearty cheers by the students for the winner.

His Excellency, in making the presentation, congratulated Mr. Fitzgibbon on his victory, one which in his opinion was thoroughly deserved. He was pleased indeed that the son of an Irishman should win what was originally an Irish medal. There was another scene of enthusiasm, at the conclusion of which his Excellency thanked them all for the kind references to himself. He gave the medal for two reasons—First, to connect the name of Plunket with the college of which he had laid the foundation stone; and he considered that of all the debating societies existing in New Zealand there was none that deserved more encouragement than that one, placed as it was in the midst of Parliament and the law courts. The second reason—and one which was more to his heart—was that his ancestor owed a great deal of his success in life to the fact that, as a member of the Historical Society, he was permitted to attend the debates in the House of Commons whenever he wished. He was greatly pleased that so many had come forward to compete for the medal.

The result of the contest is of particular interest from the fact that the first and second men are well known members of the Catholic Young Men's Club in Wellington. Mr. Fitzgibbon hails originally from the West Coast, and has during his stay closely concerned himself with the doings of the local club. He was also instrumental in founding the Catholic Young Men's Federation, of which he has been president for the last two years. He has had a brilliant career at Victoria College, and is now studying to complete the final section of his LL.B. degree. Mr. Kelly, who is a Hastings boy, is also a popular and energetic member of the Young Men's Club, and one whose college career has been particularly bright. He gives great promise as a speaker, and is regarded as a likely 'Plunket medalist' next year. His performance on Saturday might well be characterised as brilliant. Their fellow-members are naturally proud of their success, and the Club, the Literary Society, and the Federation have placed on record

their great pleasure and appreciation. It is to be hoped that other Catholic young men will follow in the path on which Messrs. Fitzgibbon and Kelly are making such headway.

PALMERSTON NORTH

(From our own correspondent.)

September 17.

Mrs. T. White, of the Occidental Hotel, died on Monday last fortified by the rites of Holy Church, after a prolonged illness.—R.I.P.

The first issue of the parish magazine was in the hands of subscribers on Sunday last, and proves to be a very useful record of parish work as well as other local and useful information.

A benefit social was held in the Zealandia Hall on the 8th inst by the many friends and well-wishers of Miss Oulling, who was recently burnt out, amongst others, in the Cuba street fire. The proceeds realised all expectations, and should prove very useful to that enterprising young lady.

The social and concert held in the Zealandia Hall on Wednesday last to reduce the debt on the new convent turned out a great success, notwithstanding the many other attractions the same evening. Patrons were well pleased with the evening's enjoyment and pronounced the concert portion of the entertainment well above the average. The following ladies and gentlemen contributed items to the programme. Mr. E. Higgins, 'The meeting of the waters'; duet by Misses 'Garrity and Clifford, 'Tell her I love her so' (encored), Mr. Preston, 'Terry' (encored); Mrs. Russell, 'Once'; Mr. McCarthy, 'The gallants of England' (encored); Irish jig by Mr. John Hurley and son; Mr. V. Dallow, 'River of years'; Miss Clifford, 'Going to market' (encored); Mr. J. Giorgi, 'The deathless army' (encored); violin solo by Mr. T. Kitchen; Mr. Russell, 'Boatswain's song'; Mr. Preston, 'Off to Philadelphia' (encored). The accompaniments were played by Mrs. Burke and Miss Hurley and Mr. J. Sidford. The refreshments were very generously supplied by the ladies of the parish, and were presided over by Messrs. Hickey and McWilliam.

CROMWELL

(From an occasional correspondent.)

September 16.

The annual concert of the convent pupils is always eagerly looked forward to by all classes of the community, on account of the excellent repertoire of singing, music, and exercises provided. On Thursday evening, the pupils faced the largest audience ever gathered in the Athenaeum Hall, it being densely packed to the doors. The girl pupils of St. John's School sang the part song, 'Bella Napoli, with fine effect. The goodnight drill was a treat to witness, the precision with which the little dots recited their respective pieces and went through their exercises being very creditable. A pianoforte duet by Misses Martha and Ivy Mitchell, and a pianoforte solo by Miss Maud Mitchell were excellent items, a pianoforte duet in the second part by Misses Ida and Master Morris being also very good. Mrs. Morris sang 'The beating of my own heart with fine effect. The gem of the evening was the vocal duet, 'The wild rose,' by Miss Ivy Barker and Master Clarence Barker. A perfect storm of applause greeted them at the finish, and they had to respond to an undeniable encore. Mr. John McKechnie danced an Irish jig and Highland fling in his inimitable style. 'Scarf fantasies' by Misses K. and C. Thomas, M. and T. Mitchell, S. and C. Scoles, and F. Hayes was a very artistic performance. A drama, 'The Carnduff Legacy,' was staged, the characters being sustained by Misses Cahill, M. Mitchell, K. Thomas, Maud Mitchell, Maggie Cahill, F. Hayes, K. Burnie, and Mr. D. Cahill. The performers were all letter-perfect, and displayed considerable histrionic ability. A farce, entitled 'Pranks,' followed in the second part of the programme, and created considerable amusement, the characters being impersonated by Misses M. and S. Cahill, M. Mitchell, S. and A. McNulty, K. and F. Thomas, D. McNulty, and Mr. D. Cahill, all of whom acted admirably. The chorus, 'The good-night of the jovous reapers,' by the pupils was splendidly rendered, and brought the most successful concert held here to a close. At the interval the door prize, consisting of a superbly painted firescreen, was drawn for, Mrs. J. Tizard proving the fortunate winner. Rev. Father Hunt in an appropriate speech thanked the Sisters of the convent, the pupils, and all who had so generously assisted in making the concert such a success, the sum of over £30 having been taken. The accompanists were the Misses Jolly, Cahill, and Mitchell, who acquitted themselves in their usually artistic style.

Hancock's Imperial ALE and STOUT.

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