

is a complete departure from any hitherto seen here, and will no doubt prove a great attraction. The tableaux will be representative of the title of the festival. In the first place will be shown a vision of Columbus, followed by others dealing with the discovery of America, the birth and progress of the great western nation. The subject lends itself to a great range of dresses, from the picturesque garb of the American Indians to the rich costumes of the Court of Spain. The festival is to be in aid of the building fund of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, South Dunedin.

The annual musical and dramatic entertainment by the pupils of the Sisters of St. Joseph was given in the Foresters' Hall, Port Chalmers, on Friday evening. There was a very large attendance. The programme was a lengthy one, including instrumental items, dialogues, action songs, vocal solos, glees, etc. These were all rendered most capably, reflecting the painstaking care of the teachers and also assiduous practice on the part of the various performers. The entertainment was opened by an instrumental duet ('Waves of the Ocean,' four pianos) by the Misses Anderson, Hart, Borlase (2), Hughes, Drake, Manning, and Master Manning; followed by a chorus ('Through Erin's Isle') by the pupils and choir; song and chorus ('A soldier and a man'), by Master Hart and senior boys; dialogue ('The children's choice'), by Misses Arbour, Simpson, Johnson; and Masters Albertson, and Johnson; song ('Christmas holly berries'), by the girls; dialogue ('The Wonderful Scholar'), Masters Mackie, Mulany, and Carey; instrumental duet ('Scotch airs'), by Misses Anderson, Mulqueen, M'Cann, Dorrington, M'Dermid, Varney, and Masters Mead, and M'Dermid; action song, ('Dolly, Dolly'), by junior pupils; dialogue ('Scene in the Beach School'), by Masters Carey (teacher), Flynn (2), Lippart, Varney, O'Neil, Mulany, Amalfitano, Albertson, and Smith. The first part of the entertainment concluded with a drama, 'The Duchess of Mansfeldt,' the principal characters being taken by the Misses M. Borlase, Hart (2), A. Borlase, E. Dorrington, and M'Dermid. The second part opened by the pupils singing the chorus, 'Dunedin from the bay,' followed by songs and solos. The entertainment closed with the farce 'Procrastination,' in which the principal characters were taken by Masters Hart, Mackie, Mulany, Mead, Moir, and Varney. During the interval the Rev. Father Hearn complimented the pupils on their performance, and thanked the audience for their attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the views expressed by correspondents.]

A SUGGESTED FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION

To the Editor.

Sir,—In your issue of October 18, you very truly and appropriately say: 'The bringing up of youth is a sacred trust. Catholics will not fail of sacrifice for it. But it needs pushing in its political aspect. And this is not to be achieved by the timid silence and inactivity that are liable to be interpreted to mean loss of faith or hope in our cause, or a sense of inability to present it adequately before our fellow-countrymen, or a lack of trust in their sense of justice, or a tame acquiescence in a national wrong.' Whether one or more of these interpretations account for the 'timid silence and inactivity' of recent years, the pushing of the Catholic claims in the political aspect is, as Mr. Scott observes in his letter, now 'moribund.' He might have gone further and said that it is dead, right out. At the last elections, you heard not a word in the candidates' speeches of our cause; not a candidate troubled about sounding Catholics as to their claims; not an Orangeman thought it worth while to put a question, at an election meeting, on the subject; not a Catholic, I fear, gave the Education Question a thought in deciding for whom to vote. The political agitation in favor of the Catholic claims was regarded as dead. An occasional shot fired off from the 'Tablet' office can hardly be called agitation; it indicates, at most, that there remains cause for agitation, and that one of the agitators is still living.

Hence Mr. Scott's proposal to be up and doing—doing something 'definite, feasible'—comes as a refresher. It brings a sense of possibility of relief from the dark prospect of having eternally to pay for work done for the Government—for work for which the Government ought in right and justice to pay. I trust it will help to arouse us from our ignoble condition of 'tame acquiescence in a great national wrong.'

It is clear that Catholic votes are too few to influence the Legislature. That the Catholic voice may be heard in Parliament, converts to our cause must be made in large numbers from outside. Mr. Scott points out a way—easy and simple enough, yet hitherto untried—wherein strong hopes may be entertained of making these converts. No doubt, there is a vast number of people in the Colony who are not secularists, who are anxious for a Christian education of some sort for their children, who are as much alive as we to the evils, moral and religious, necessarily arising from a godless, non-Christian system of education. May not this vast mine of influence be utilised, if properly approached and prospected?

This suggestion of Mr. Scott's seems excellent, conciliatory, trusting—to approach the official representatives of the large Protestant bodies who, in common with us, desire Christian education; to approach them with the view of creating a mutual good understanding of claims, and of establishing a joint committee, by whom questions of agreement and difference might be discussed and means of common action devised. But would the heads of the Protestant bodies fall in with the proposal? Mr. Scott, who has had favorable opportunities to know, thinks they would. This point can be settled only by making some advance. In case of failure, there would be no loss of dignity, and no harm, but good only, resulting. New life would accrue to a dead or moribund agitation. Those venerable men, in synod assembled, would for once, at all events, hear our views put 'viva voce' before them. The secular papers would discuss the episode and so help to spread an acquaintance with these views. We should show ourselves alive and able to present Catholic principles before our fellow-countrymen, whilst at the same time displaying a feeling of confidence in the honesty of purpose and sense of justice of those differing from us. We should show ourselves not open to the charge of unwillingness to join in social movements or combine with others for the common good. Neither could it be said that the Catholic Church is a great prop of secularism and godlessness in the Colony, in as much as she either neglects or opposes the efforts of the Protestant denominations towards introducing Christian ideals and principles into our educational system.

It is obvious that the longer active agitation is deferred the more difficult will the way of success become. Under the present godless system, large numbers of children are now, and will be, brought up in religious ignorance and indifference. These will turn out agnostics and practical atheists. Every decade of years brings a change for the worse—an advance in the direction of naturalism and the worship of two deities, Mammon and sensual pleasure. These 'after-Christians,' as Mr. Devas calls them, will—whether as voters or as members of Parliament—turn a very deaf ear to proposals made them in regard to the religious education of their children. A religious education—the idea will be all nonsense to them. Immeasurably better, therefore, to deal in this matter with those who still believe in the Bible and hold to some of the familiar forms of Protestant Christianity. These 'after-Christians' are proving themselves a poor lot. Look at them in France; look at them in the United States of America.

It is a significant fact that of the tens of thousands who have come over to the Church in England and America for the last sixty or seventy years, scarce one has come over from infidelity. Our converts have come from Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, and Methodism. On every account, then, it is better to deal with those who retain Christian ideals and beliefs than with those who have cast them off. But we know whither godless education tends and with what rapidity it produces its irreligious results. Therefore, there is little time for drowsy inactivity. The circumstances point to the maxim: 'Whatever thy hand can do, do it quickly.'

Mr. Scott need not be afraid, I fancy, that his proposal will be disregarded by those who are interested in seeing poor Catholic parents relieved of the heavy burdens now pressing upon them through our unjust education laws. He will be gratified to find that his proposal will afford food for discussion, with a view to action, in newspaper correspondence, in Catholic Society meetings, at private reunions, and especially at the Clergy Synods to be held at the centres, two or three months hence.—I am, etc.,

WILLIAM BURKE.

Invercargill, October 29, 1906.

To the Editor.

Sir,—It is impossible to read the able letter written in your columns on 'A suggested forward movement on the education question' without being impressed with the fact that Mr. Scott is thoroughly in