

is eagerly looked forward to, for the guests all know they are in for a right royal time.

It was a large and happy party that was assembled at Mr. Casey's beautiful grounds a few days ago, and the shady lawn fringed with a picturesque border of willows, furnished a delightful setting to the bevy of bright, happy faced little maidens, numbering over sixty, of all sizes and ages. And even the babies were allowed to participate in the outing, two infants in arms being largely in evidence, and finding no lack of willing nurses in their older sisters, for they are all linked together by one common bond. In their dainty white frocks with pale blue ribbons they were a pleasure to look at, and were undoubtedly a credit to Sister Mary Francis, who has had charge of them for the last four years, and who is, indeed, a mother to them in every sense of the word. The genial host and hostess, with their five cheery daughters (another daughter, Sister Mary Marguerite, from St. Mary's Convent, being also present), were untiring in their efforts to amuse their young guests, and a lengthy programme of races, for which a prodigious number of prizes was given, whiled away a very pleasant afternoon, the youngsters entering merrily into the various novel and amusing contests arranged for their delectation. The little guests were regaled with an abundance of good things, sweets, cakes, and soft drinks galore, and they appreciated to the full this part of the programme. In the course of the afternoon the children adjourned to the verandah and sang several songs with beautiful melody, one of the Sisters accompanying them on the piano. A group of the smallest children also sang a couple of action songs with much credit to themselves and their instructress.

Looking round on the joyous scene, with the merry party giving themselves up to the abandonment of happy childhood, surrounded with comfort and pleasure, oblivious of what they had been saved from, the writer endorsed the sentiment of the little son of the late Mr. Spurgeon, who, when he was taken to a similar gathering, gave vent to his feelings in the remark, uttered with deep fervor, 'Oh, father, don't I wish I was an orphan!'

Some of those present are engaged in situations in different parts of the city, but got a holiday for the occasion. One young lady who was amongst the guests, and has known no other home but the orphanage, for some years at least, is to be married shortly.

It is nearly sixty years since the Sisters of Mercy began their work of love in Auckland, and in that time hundreds of children have been cared for, tended, educated, and given a chance to battle for themselves. In 1850 only five orphans claimed their attention; now between the Boys' and the Girls' Homes, the Sisters have nearly 200 children under their protection, and their influence for good is lasting, serving them in good stead in later years. Poor little things, deprived of their natural protectors, they would have but a sorry chance if thrown on their own resources, but a merciful Providence, in the shape of these Sisters, takes them in hand, and helps to fit them to fight life's battle, to take up life's burdens, and lead good and healthy lives. Strengthened physically and morally by the course of instruction and kindly treatment they receive at the home, they are able to make their way in the world, always looking on the Orphanage as their haven, and striving to maintain the high standard set them by the Sisters.

'It is only right we should try to make them happy when we can,' said Mr. Casey to the representative of this journal, who was present; 'poor little things, some fatherless, some motherless, some worse: they have no one to make a direct call on, they are robbed of their rightful dues through no fault of their own, and we are glad of an opportunity to show them a kindness. The average children nowadays in the shelter of their homes get so many luxuries and good things that one is hard pushed to know how to entertain them, but with the children of the Orphanage it is a different matter. They are pleased with any little treat prepared for them and their whole-hearted enjoyment and gratitude more than repay one for any trouble.'

Prior to their departure, the host and hostess were warmly thanked by Sister Mary Francis for the pleasant outing they had afforded the children.

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