

ment by results" as we have several times sketched in these columns—a system which would leave greater freedom to all those who are anxious to combine religions with secular instruction by making the State the equal distributor of all public grants for secular instruction only, and would allow each separate educational organisation to give what religious instruction it pleased. This would be an absolutely impartial system; but, after all, the State schools would be necessary to supplement the imperfect efforts of private enterprise and religious zeal.

Catholics would be well satisfied with 'an absolutely impartial system' such as this.

V. A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE.—The whole question of the Catholic claim is, on the part of Catholics, a strict matter of conscience and of religious principle; on the part of the State it is, at root, a question as to the extent to which the demands of conscience shall be recognised in legislation. The whole tendency of the past hundred years has been to enlarge and legalise rights of conscience. Thus, in English-speaking countries generally, Quakers and other conscientious objectors (atheists included) are now released from the former obligation of taking oaths on various occasions. The curious conscientious scruples of Mohammedans were respected at Calcutta in July, 1897, even at the risk of the continuance of the bubonic plague. In 1908 the Indian Government likewise compelled the Mohammedans to respect the susceptibilities of the Hindus in regard to cows. Quakers in the United States are exempted, on grounds of conscience, from the duty of defending their country—a duty which, on occasion, the civil authority may justly require and enforce. Varying measures of legislative protection are also accorded, in this and most other countries, to the 'conscientious' objections of anti-vaccinationists. The State should, in its legislation, protect liberty generally, except where such liberty might degenerate into license or disorder, or be an invasion of the just rights of others. Freedom in matters of conscience, as in other matters, is deemed to be in possession, and adequate cause should be shown where it is taken away, or diminished, or the area of restraints upon it enlarged. In the connection here under consideration, a wide liberty is in possession over the greater part of the Christian world. Over all Australia, and in a great part of New Zealand, there existed a wider liberty of conscience in the matter of religious education than at present prevails. The conscientious right of Christian taxpayers to have their children educated religiously was recognised by State grants to denominational schools. All this has been stopped by act of Parliament, and the only free or State-aided education that now prevails in these new countries is (as already shown) free education forced upon the consciences of the people by (in effect) fines, and based upon a form of sectarian Secularism or Agnosticism. It is for the defenders of this new, experimental, and comparatively localised system to justify this invasion of rights of conscience as best they may. To do so they must demonstrate one or other of the following propositions:—(1) That State aid to religious education is, of its nature, opposed to the true end and aim of the life of the child. (2) That State aid to religious education is opposed to the principles of true pedagogy or child-training. (This second proposition is intimately bound up with the first). (3) That State aid to religious education is, of its nature, opposed to those principles of good order which it is the bounden duty of the civil authority to guard. Let it be well borne in mind that such evils as the advocates of the secular system may allege against religious education must be shown not alone to be of first-class gravity: it must, moreover, be shown that they are inherent thereto, and not separable from it, by the operation of skilled and statesmanlike legislation. They will, moreover, have to reconcile their assertions, in this connection, with the conspicuous success of State-aided systems of religious education, such as that which prevails in Germany, the foremost nation in the world in matters educational.

VI. A PARTING REQUEST.—I entreat the thoughtful reader who has been patient enough to follow me thus far to bear the following points well in mind:—(1) This is a discussion between secular and religious education—between Christian principles in education and a form of dogmatic secularism in education. (2) This is not, except in an indirect and incidental way, a discussion between one scheme and another scheme of religious education. It is high time for all the friends of religious education to try to understand each other, and not to waste their energies in the aimless internecine strife, which has enabled a form of Secularism to capture the public schools. (3) Before discussing schemes, details, or side issues, it is most desirable either to agree upon, or to thresh out, the principles of philosophy and of pedagogy (child-training) upon which this whole question ultimately turns. Otherwise, the discussion would degenerate into a mere tangled wrangle. (4) The chief object of all discussion should be to evolve light, not heat.

There are, of course, practical difficulties in evolving a scheme of all-round religious education. But the present writer believes that they are relatively unimportant, and that they could be solved here, as they have been solved elsewhere. The faith that educates the moral conscience and the will of children holds the key of the future. So, in effect, said Mr. Amasa Thornton, writing on the religious difficulty in education in the *North American Review* for January, 1893. 'Although a Protestant of the firmest kind,' added he, 'I believe the time has come to recognise this fact, and for all of us to lay aside religious prejudices and patriotically meet this question.'

## St. Patrick's Day in Auckland

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

On the morning of St. Patrick's Day all were astir in the city and suburban parishes at an early hour. The rendezvous was at Sir George Grey's statue, where by 9 o'clock the children of the Cathedral parish, St. Benedict's, Ponsonby, Parnell, Newmarket, Otahuhu, and Onehunga met. The marshals, Mr. John Patterson, J.P., and Mr. Hubert Nerheny, assisted by Rev. Father Edge, soon had the concourse of children in order around the statue. When his Lordship the Bishop arrived all sang 'Faith of Our Fathers,' accompanied by the Garrison Band, the whole conducted by Mr. P. F. Hiscocks. The Bishop then imparted his blessing to the assembled children from the steps of the statue, after which the head of the procession moved off down Queen street, which by this time was lined on both sides with interested spectators. The dimensions of the procession will be gauged when it is stated that the children walked three deep, and it extended from Queen street wharf to the Grey statue. The Garrison Band was at the head, followed by the members of the local branch of the H.A.C.B. Society; then St. Patrick's, Parnell, St. Benedict's, Sacred Heart, the children from the Ponsonby and Takapuna Orphanages, First Battalion Band, Newmarket, Otahuhu, Ellerslie, Onehunga. With banners and bannerettes waving in the sunshine, it was a grand spectacle. At the ferry two of the largest steamers of the fleet were waiting, and on to these the whole body marched in regular order, without the least confusion—no easy feat for the marshals and those in charge of the various parishes. It was estimated that 5000 marched through Queen street. Across the water at Devonport the same good order prevailed at the disembarkation. Here, too, at the marine suburb the whole population seemed to have turned out. From the ferry they marched to the Takapuna Jockey Club's course. Refreshments in abundance were given out to the children, after which various sports were provided for them. About noon his Lordship the Bishop came on the ground, and later on it was computed that there must have been 10,000 persons present. The sports committee provided an excellent programme, the principal event being the Marathon Race from Lake Takapuna to the course, around which the competitors had to run eight times. The excitement over it was great, which was heightened by means of a megaphone, through which the concourse were apprised of the start and the positions of the contestants before they entered the course and came into view. The distance was eleven miles, and was won by A. Rogers. An interesting item was the champion drill competition for squads from the schools. This was again won by the pupils of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Surry Hills, who have now won the banner three times, thus retaining possession of it. The judge complimented the winners on their splendid exhibition. Sacred Heart parish children were second. Everything went on smoothly and well, and the tastes of all were catered for abundantly, and the committee was complimented for the excellent arrangements and success of the celebration. Before the shades of evening fell the vast crowds were safely landed on the city side of the Waitemata.

The Irish national concert was held in St. Benedict's Hall. Directly the doors of the big hall were opened the crowd surged in, and very soon every seat was filled, and many could not even get standing room. The following was the programme:—Part I.: Chorus, 'Let Erin remember,' children of the Catholic schools; song, 'An spalpin fanac,' Mr. Owen Pritchard; quartette, 'Hymn to the Pope,' May Erin's faith ne'er languish, Misses C. Lorrigan, Duffin, Tobin, and Mrs. Hiscocks; song, 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' Miss Florence Quinn; chorus, 'Tho' the last glimpse of Erin,' orphan children; song, 'Come back to Erin,' Miss Colita Lorrigan; trio, 'The low-back car,' Messrs. Egan, Pritchard, and Hiscocks. Part II.: Chorus, 'The minstrel boy,' children of the Catholic schools; song, 'Killarney,' Madame Casier; chorus, 'Steer my barque to Erin's Isle,' orphan children; quartette, 'The dear little shamrock,' Messrs. Egan, Adeane, Hiscocks, and Pritchard; song and chorus, 'God save Ireland,' Madame