

being also present. During the evening a nice gold bracelet was presented to Miss Kate Lonergan for her long and faithful services to the choir, from which she was now reluctantly compelled to sever her connection. The present was richly deserved.

Rev. Father Kehoe has come back from his short holiday, and has resumed duties in his parish of Parnell.

Last Friday evening a presentation of a purse of sovereigns was made in St. Benedict's Schoolroom to the Misses Coffey, who have so long and so ably conducted the school. His Lordship the Bishop, Right Rev. Mgr. O'Reilly, and Rev. Fathers Gillan, Darby, and O'Hara, and a large gathering of the parishioners were present. An address was read by the hon. sec. of the Church Committee, Mr. J. J. Daly. His Lordship referred to the excellent work done by the Misses Coffey, and Father Gillan, in charge of the parish, highly eulogised them. At the request of the Bishop Mgr. O'Reilly responded on behalf of the Misses Coffey, and thanked the generous donors for their handsome present and address.

Widespread pleasure was expressed with the able leader in the TABLET of last week bearing upon the Stoke persecution. The advice tendered to the Catholics to organise in defence of what they possess is timely. No time should be lost in putting the plan into operation; otherwise it will prove the old adage of locking the stable door after the steed has been stolen.

The collection now being made in St. Patrick's parish for the Stoke Defence Fund promises well.

[This letter arrived too late for insertion in our last issue.]

January 3.

Pontifical High Mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Cathedral by his Lordship the Bishop immediately after midnight on January 1, Rev. Father Hills, S.M. (Wellington), being deacon; Rev. Father O'Carroll, sub-deacon; Right Rev. Mgr. O'Reilly, assistant-priest; Rev. Father Corcoran, master of ceremonies. The large church was filled with a devout congregation, and quite a large number received Holy Communion. The choir mustered in strong force, under Mr. P. F. Hiscocks, and performed 'Van Bree's Mass.' Mr. H. Hiscocks presided at the organ. His Lordship, addressing the congregation, said that at the express command of the Holy Father they had all assembled there at that early hour of the morning to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to welcome the dawn of the new century. It was a living proof of their faith which caused them to come in such large numbers at the hour of midnight. It was an old saying that charity commences at home, and in the saving of their souls that charity was well extended. They should all promise that night to look back upon the past, and to blot out all that was not worthy and determine for the future to lead good and holy lives.

Midnight Mass was also celebrated at St. Benedict's before a large congregation. Rev. Father Gillan was celebrant, Rev. Father Darby deacon, Rev. Father O'Hara sub-deacon. A very large number approached the Holy Table. The choir from St. John the Baptist's Church, Parnell, under Miss Annie Lorrigan, ably rendered 'Weber's Mass in G.'

Last Monday at St. Mary's Convent Chapel a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of the soul of the late Monsignor McDonald, it being the anniversary of his death. His Lordship the Bishop was celebrant, Rev. Father Purton, O.S.B., deacon, Father Corcoran sub-deacon, Rev. Father O'Carroll master of ceremonies. There were also present Right Rev. Mgr. O'Reilly, and Very Rev. Dr. Egan, O.S.B., Rev. Fathers Hills, Darby, and O'Hara. Dr. Egan presided at the organ, and was assisted in the choir by several of the priests. The Sisters of Mercy and the children from St. Mary's Orphanage were also present.

In consequence of the branches of the H.A.C.B. Society not being unanimous in holding the annual meeting in Dunedin one week earlier the District Executive has decided to hold it on the date previously arranged.

The Right Rev. Mgr. O'Reilly presided at the annual distribution of prizes at St. Patrick's parochial schools, and presented the following for good attendance:—First, Mary Sheahan; second, Margaret Holland; third, May Greenan; and fourth, Mary McKenna.—The prizes won by the pupils at the High School, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, were presented by the Right Rev. Dr. Linnhan. There was a large gathering of parents and friends of the pupils, the schoolroom being crowded with visitors. The work done by the pupils, under the direction of the Sisters, during the year was displayed in one of the class-rooms. An amount of excellently executed fancy work was displayed, the styles including arrasene, applique, embroidery, point lace, and drawn thread work. Several oil paintings done by the pupils were also shown, landscapes, flowers, and birds having been painted by the pupils on canvas, wood, and tiles. The prizes this year were limited to a silver medal for the highest aggregate number of marks for all subjects, and the attendance prizes. The medal was won by Kate Rogers, of Standard VI., while the attendance prizes were won by Winifred Little, 1; Mabel Metcalfe, 2; Violet Locke, 3; Gladys Graham, 4; Lily Beehan, 5; Violet Speight, 6; and Madeline Forbes, 8. During the afternoon a number of musical items were rendered by the pupils, the following programme being gone through:—Instrumental duet, Misses Beehan, Rogers, Little, and Locke; chorus, pupils; address to the Bishop, read by Miss Gladys Foley; sextette, Misses Hartley, Metcalfe, McCabe, Brown, Foley, and Speight; choruses, pupils; recitation, Miss S. Graham; quartette, Misses McMahon, Corley, Little, and Rogers; vocal duet, Misses Quinn and Graham; song, Misses Beehan (2), Rist, Graham (2), and Duffin; recitation, Miss Rickettes; gavotte, Misses Forbes, Foley, Little, Dunn, and Master White; vocal duet and chorus, Misses Ormond, Beehan (2), Graham, Rist, and Duffin.

The McCormick Harvesting Machine Company built and sold 213,629 machines in the season of 1899. This is the greatest sale of harvesting machines ever made by one company.—*.*

HOKITIKA.

(From our own correspondent.)

January 3

On Sunday, December 23, some 40 children had the inestimable blessing of receiving their first Holy Communion. The children assembled at the convent and marched in procession to the church both morning and evening—crowds of all denominations assembling on the footpath to view the procession. In the evening Father Cooney, of Kumara, preached an impressive sermon to a large congregation. Our little church was tastefully decorated for the Christmas festival, and our energetic pastor, Father Le Petit, labored willingly to permit of all his congregation receiving the Blessed Sacrament on that great day.

TIMARU.

(From our own correspondent.)

January 7.

The New Year and century were ushered in very quietly in Timaru. With the exception of a few rockets and colored lights from the shipping and a well-sustained discharge of Chinese crackers from juveniles who should have been in bed, there was little display throughout the town to mark the death of the old year and century and birth of the new.

There was a large congregation at the Church of the Sacred Heart, when the Rev. Father Tubman celebrated High Mass at midnight. The choir sang La Hache's Mass, Miss Nellie Egan presiding at the organ.

On New Year's Day Timaru was *en fete*. The South Canterbury Caledonian Society held their annual sports meeting at their grounds, Potiti Point, over 4000 people being present. The different items on the programme came off very successfully, with the exception of the Irish dancing. It is to be regretted that every year there is a screw loose in the management as far as this item is concerned. On New Year's Day the jig was the only item of Irish dance on the programme, and yet it was not competed for until the end of the day, when fully three-quarters of the attendance had left the ground. To use a sporting expression, there is too much 'scratch' business about the Irish dancing at these gatherings—scratch dancers, scratch costumes, scratch music, scratch spectators, scratch management, scratch everything. It is high time that those who have a say in the management and who take, or should take, an interest in Irish dancing at these sports should see that at least the events are competed for before the gathering breaks up.

On the second day there was an improvement, yet one of the nicest exhibitions of Irish dancing at the meeting—a four-hand-reel—came off when almost everyone had left the ground. If the St. Patrick's Day Sports Association put only the Scotch reel on their day's programme and had it competed for when the meeting was breaking up, I do not think the management would be complimented over the transaction. The judging, viewed from a dancing point of view, met with general approval. However, allowing competitors to go on the platform 'anyhow' as far as costume is concerned, surely needs remedying. The practice of pulling off the coat is not at all fascinating. These preliminaries are not at all necessary, and should be put down by the judges. One competitor was dressed in a very becoming costume—swallow-tail coat, fancy vest, corduroy knee-breeches fastened with ribbons, grey stockings and shoes, but his dancing was of such a nondescript character that his name did not appear amongst the winners. His dress, however, might be copied with advantage. It is a pity that Irish dancing is not placed on a better basis, some regulation costume decided upon, and more consideration given to style and carriage.

The Rev. Father Tubman is at present on a visit to the Southern Lakes. The Rev. Father Regnault (Waimate) celebrated High Mass and preached on Sunday last and also officiated at Vespers. Being the first Sunday in the month the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration during the afternoon and in the evening was carried in procession around the church grounds, the various sodalities (the Children of Mary, Altar Society, Aloysians and Hibernians), the school children, congregation and choir bearing banners and lighted candles, taking part under the direction of the Rev. Father Aubry.

The Rev. Dr. Kennedy, of Measee Seminary, is at present staying in Waimate.

Madam Ryan of the Convent of the Sacred Heart left during the week for Sydney. General regret is felt at her departure—Madam Ryan being associated with the Convent almost since its establishment here. Madam Ryan has left many proofs of her skill as an artist amongst them being the beautiful banner of the Hibernian Society which was so much admired at the centenary procession recently held in Christchurch as to be pronounced the best banner in the procession. Miss Maggie Venning accompanied Madam Ryan and leaves here with the intention of joining the religious of that Order in Sydney.

Messrs. Walsh, McGrath and C. Venning, students at St. Patrick's College and Measee are at present visiting Timaru.

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