

ROME LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

January 31.

THE POPE AND THE POWERS.

For two months Rome has had cause for amusement, thanks to those specimens of humanity known in Latin countries as 'priest-eaters.' If any degree of success could be hoped for, an anti-clerical campaign on a small scale might relieve the feelings of chagrin of these people. They see nations and diplomatists clustering around the Papal throne much as they were wont to do in the halcyon days of the Papacy: they see the respect and deference with which the warring countries receive the proposals of Benedict XV.; in a word, they find the Pope acting as Pope, hence their little wrath. And hence the amusement they occasion for the Catholics of Italy.

But it is not alone against anti-clericals that the Pope has to contend in these days of turmoil: his Holiness sees even the semi-official organ of the Vatican compelled to rebut a charge of partisanship as regards the belligerents, and this coming from a source which of all others has least reason to formulate such an accusation.

SOME HEROES IN DUTY.

In these days when we are accustomed to read each morning of heroic deeds done before the mouth of the cannon or at the point of the bayonet, we are apt to forget other deeds not less heroic because they are far from the noise of battle. I refer to the self-sacrifice with which the Bishops of the Philippines toil for their people under circumstances that mark true heroes. All, or nearly all the Bishops in the Philippines are American or Irish, men never accustomed to the trying climate of that region. Hence the mortality in their ranks has been very high, both in the number of Vicars Apostolic and of Bishops. And therefore it has often been asked whether the Holy See is likely to recall Philippine Bishops after a certain number of years' service and place them in charge of dioceses in their native America, and this not only to reward the prelates but to prolong very valuable lives. To this question a satisfactory response can, needless to say, be given at this stage, though we have always to bear in mind the Church is a kind and benignant mother.

Queenstown

The concert given in the Town Hall on Friday evening, March 19, by the pupils of the convent school, assisted by leading local amateurs, was very largely attended, there not being a vacant seat from stage to entrance door (says the *Lake Wakatipu Mail*). Children's performances have such an irresistible charm about them, whilst the concerts given by this school

always have a special musical interest, so that it is not to be wondered at that the audience was a most enthusiastic one. The first appearance of the small boys was in a song and drill entitled 'The drummers,' in which the little chaps seemed to enjoy themselves as much as did their patrons. A dialogue 'Pussy and the mice,' was then charmingly given by the infants of the kindergarten. The more grown girls showed what their quality was in 'Sunshine and shadow,' an action song in which their movements were very graceful, considerable effect being gained by their robing in frocks of dainty coloring. Equally successful was their number, 'The gleaners.' The item which brought down the house was one programmed as 'Calls from the operas.' A regiment in cadet attire were ranged up to attention by their captain, who put them through a few orders; each 'Number' was then called on in turn to declare himself in a few lines of verse, which embodied a local hit of some kind. Very popular also were the choruses given later in the evening by the children, these being the stirring patriotic songs 'The old brigade' and 'Our territorials.' The foregoing comprised the contributions of the school children to the programme. The pianoforte duets given by other pupils were two in number. Misses M. McCarthy and Lee played 'Capricante' (Wachs) with much brilliance and finish, which Miss McCarthy was associated with Miss Gudgeon in a very musically rendering of bracketed duets, 'Grande valse brillante' (Huntten) and 'Galop brillant' (Behr). Mr. Edgar Shand met with a very good reception in his musical monologue, 'I met her on the stair,' and he was compelled to return and supplement this with another, 'The drama.' Miss Monica McBride gave a most charming rendering of the song 'Your little shawl of blue'; her other item was 'Somewhere a voice is calling,' the encore demanded to this being 'The dear little shamrock of Ireland.' Mrs. Curtis gave a highly acceptable rendering of 'At the fountain,' for which she received the plaudits of the audience. Mr. D. Macpherson once more proved what a valuable acquisition he is to the musical talent of the town. 'My kingdom' was his solo, whilst the vocal duet 'The battle cry' which he and Mr. J. C. McBride were associated in was a most conspicuous success, a repetition of it being emphatically demanded. Mr. G. Donaldson was responsible for a most amusing story entitled 'That's not what father used to say.' Mr. Donaldson later in the evening sang 'Shipmates o' mine' with fine sympathetic feeling. A comedy re-joining in the name of 'Cupid in the kitchen' concluded the entertainment. Included in the cast were Misses Julia McLeely, B. Richards, and Mr. J. McNeill. All three did themselves credit, especially the former, who sustained the part of the maid-of-all-work most cleverly. The accompanists of the evening were Misses Gudgeon, Lee, and McCarthy. Mr. Gavin took occasion to thank the audience on behalf of the Dominican Nuns for their attendance; also those ladies and gentlemen who had given the benefit of their talents to the programme.

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