

lost babes; it was not to impeach the wandering and degraded father; but it was to bring back and stiffen the waverers.

Mr. Dillon, in the course of his speech on the subject, said:—It had been alleged that the children had been spirited away by a priest. He did not believe there was a single word of truth in that, though that was one of the many things put before the House. He believed that the children were taken away by their own father perfectly legitimately; at all events, he had good reason to believe, although he could not state that on his own knowledge, that the priest had nothing whatever to do with taking away the children. If the children were removed by their father it was perfectly legally done, and for that the Chief Secretary and the Lord Lieutenant could have no responsibility, because as long as the children were in the custody of their own father what could the Government do? Nothing had been said to prove that the children were not removed by their father, who had a right to remove them. Next there was the alleged desertion of the wife by the husband. It was alleged that McCann deserted her under the orders of the priest, who persecuted the husband until he left his wife. Not one tittle of evidence had, however, been laid before the house in support of that. It was a monstrous thing that for political purposes that debate should have been inaugurated by hon. members who had not produced one shred of evidence to support their allegations. It was alleged that although a priest had broken up this family Mrs. McCann did not know the priest's name, and that none of the members who had made the allegations knew his name. He (Mr. Dillon) did not believe that assertion. Hon. members were afraid to state the name for fear of a writ. He was in a position to say that if they were to-morrow to name the priest a writ would immediately be served, and machinery would be put in motion for investigating this case to the bottom and in all its details, much more effectively than it could be done in a debate in the House of Commons. He would now turn to what was rather a painful aspect of the case—and he must protest against the statement that because he and his friends gave such evidence as was placed in their hands rebutting the charges made against people in Ireland and the Catholic people of Ireland in this case, they should, therefore, be held up as attacking and hounding down this unfortunate and wretched woman. They were no more hounding down the woman than Unionists were hounding down the man. Hon. members had come into that House and read an ex parte statement made by the wife charging her husband with every form of cruelty and outrage; and yet when Nationalists made statements on the other side they were told that they were acting in a most ungenerous, unchivalrous, and cruel way towards a woman. The people who were acting cruelly and ungenerously were the people who dragged

This Sordidly Wretched Dispute

into the press and into that House. There was a letter which he was told and believed was in the handwriting of McCann himself. That letter was in his hand, and hon. members could see it; but the address had been torn off. It was a long document, giving a horrible history of a sordid, disgusting family life. In the very first sentence the husband said:—'As the husband of the woman in the recent Belfast trial, I desire to say that the priest had no more to do with the case than the editor of the *Irish News*; and to show you how utterly impossible it was for me to live in the same house with this woman'—and he then went on to give a hideous picture of their life for several years. He found it impossible to live with her. He writes that her letter—or what was supposed to be her letter—to the Lord Lieutenant was all, or nearly all, 'a pack of lies.' He writes that he is not a cruel-hearted man, as the Presbyterian minister would have people to believe; Mr. McCann was as well entitled to be heard in that House as his wife was, although he (Mr. Dillon) did not think either of them was entitled to have those ex-parte statements read in that House. The letter went on:—

'She says I asked her to change her faith on account of the way the priests were rating me. I never said anything of the kind. I did ask her to get married so that we could like like Catholics. She says that during the first thirteen months there was never a dispute about religion; but there was never a day went by without a dispute. For instance, she would have meat for me on Friday. She would put back the clock to make me late for Mass. She ridiculed the priests and religion, cursed the Pope, and sang hymns all day.'

Mr. McCann's letter sounds more genuine than Mrs. McCann's. He claims that he is neither a drinker nor a smoker; and he gave up smoking because his wife would not allow him to smoke; that he paid her all his wages every week except a shilling or two; and yet his wife abused him for not giving her enough. She also accused him of keeping another woman. She attacked his mother and father, and called them outrageous and most opprobrious names. She went into the country to her mother's to be confined; and Mr. McCann says that when he went there she told him that the child was still-born and buried, and asked him to go for some drink; but when he returned she told him the child was alive. Finally there was the evidence of the priest, confirmed by this letter, that when the unfortunate man took the child in his arms and brought it to be baptised, this delightful woman followed him into

the Catholic church, and pulled away the girl whom he had got to hold the child as godmother, and when he interposed she got hold of him in the church and pounded him with her fists, and the police had to interfere; and that, finally, she went home and broke the windows of her own house.. That was not a picture of a home of happiness and peace into which this diabolical man, this Mephistopheles, the Catholic priest, entered, and for the first time was the cause of disturbance and dispute. Apparently this was a domestic tragedy dragging on for years; and he (Mr. Dillon) did not pretend to adjudicate upon the relative merits and demerits of Mr. and Mrs. McCann. They seem to have been an ill-mated pair, and, like many a man who went as a peacemaker, the priest had been unfortunate. The priest tried to make peace, but failed; and it was a gross and scandalous thing to attack him on the ground that he interfered with a happy home, and brought discord where peace had reigned before. He did most sincerely say that he believed firmly that this case was an electioneering case, and that the public would never have heard of Mr. and Mrs. McCann had it not been for the elections. It was nothing short of an outrage to bring the matter before the House of Commons.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

March 25.

The Rev. Father Ainsworth, S.M., who has just completed his second novitiate, has been appointed to Boulcott street.

A successful euchre party in aid of the funds of St. Anne's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was held at St. Anne's Hall last Wednesday.

Mr. John Coyle, J.P., who last week was appointed acting-secretary to the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, was this week appointed to the position permanently.

The Rev. Father Bowe, of Carterton, is at present laid up as the result of an accident. The Rev. Father Harnett is attending to Father Bowe's duties in the meantime.

It is estimated that 5000 people were present at the St. Patrick's Day celebrations at Newtown Park, whilst between 2500 and 3000 attended the Irish national concert in the evening.

In the amended list of Trinity College of Music examinations for the Lower Division (grade 2), Miss Olive Kilsby, of the Otaki Convent, secured fourth place with 80 marks.

The Rev. Father Bouzard, who is on a holiday visit to New Zealand, visiting his relatives, was in town last week with his brother, Mr. Nicholas Bouzard, secretary of the Carterton branch of the H.A.C.B. Society.

Encouraged thereto by the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy and Captain T. Martin, the St. Anne's Cadets are forming a drum and fife band. Mr. Brookes, of the Dresden Piano Company, has promised to provide the instruments, and a competent instructor has been appointed.

The meeting of the General Chapter of the Marist Order commenced at St. Mary of the Angels' last Wednesday at 9 o'clock, when Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M. (Provincial). The members of the Chapter number fifteen, and come from different parts of the Dominion. The Chapter had not concluded business when this letter was written.

On last Tuesday evening at the residence of Mr. Otto Krohn, Island Bay, the Rev. Father W. D. Goggan, S.M., who has been in charge of the second novitiate for the Marist Fathers at Island Bay, which was closed at the end of February, was the recipient of a purse of sovereigns from the parishioners of Island Bay on the eve of his departure for Nelson, where he assumes charge. Mr. P. J. O'Regan made the presentation on behalf of the parishioners.

The ladies' branch of the H.A.C.B. Society held their quarterly meeting last Wednesday, Sister K. Robinson presiding. Several candidates were proposed, and Mrs. T. G. Macarthy was elected a life honorary member. The Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M. (Provincial), was present at the meeting, and complimented the members on the progress of the branch, and on the general Communion and successful functions in connection with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, which, he said, were very creditable to the members of the Hibernian Society.

The Very Rev. Mgr. Fowler, of Sioux City, U.S.A., on Sunday last at the half-past 10 o'clock Mass at the Sacred Heart Basilica, preached an impressive sermon on the life of St. Joseph, and in the evening, before a large congregation, he graphically described the election and coronation of Pope Pius X. He also made an urgent appeal for funds for the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The society is concerned, he said, not only in relieving poverty and distress, but in bringing back to the Church those who have fallen away. There were many bad Catholics in their midst, and many indifferent Catholics; these must be brought in.

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