

HIBERNIAN SOCIETY, WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

March 18.

Last Sunday the members of St. Patrick's and St. Mary's (ladies) branches of the Hibernian Society, with representatives of the St. Aloysius' and Sacred Heart branches, approached the Holy Table in a body at St. Mary of the Angels' Church, Boulcott street, at the 8 o'clock Mass. There was a large attendance, and it was a most edifying sight to see some 200 members receive Holy Communion. Mass was celebrated by the Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M. (Provincial), who also addressed the congregation, and complimented the members on the excellent muster, and for that act of the faith which was implanted in Ireland by the Saint whose feast they were to celebrate on the following Friday. No matter what nationality, St. Patrick was honored all over the world—in London as well as Dublin, in Rome, Paris, Madrid, Sydney, and Wellington. The Irish people wherever they went carried the faith with them, and under the most trying conditions and persecutions they kept it alive. The more they suffered persecutions the more they clung to the faith and cherished it. The more they were scattered the more that faith spread. Unlike the people of France, Spain, and Portugal, they were not discouraged. He therefore exhorted them to remain steadfast, to be not ashamed of Ireland, but when St. Patrick's Day came let them all wear the shamrock and glory in that land that gave birth to so many saints and scholars.

After Mass the members adjourned to the Marist Brothers' School, where breakfast was laid. Bro. J. J. L. Burke, V.P., in the absence of the president (Bro. W. J. Feeney), occupied the chair, there being also present Very Rev. Dean Regnault, Rev. Father Venning, S.M. (chaplain), Bro. Martin Kennedy, K.S.G., P.P., Rev. Brothers Justin and Virgilius, Bros. J. E. Fitzgerald, M. Bohan, P.P. (founder of the branch), and Mr. A. H. Casey (president of N.Z. Federated Catholic Clubs).

Bro. Burke briefly addressed the gathering, and complimented the members on the excellent display made. He was proud to preside at such a gathering, and thanked Dean Regnault and Father Venning, Bro. Kennedy, P.P., and Mr. A. H. Casey for their attendance and interest in the work of the H.A.C.B. Society. He also thanked the Marist Brothers for their kindness in granting the use of the school for their breakfast, and also the members of the ladies' branch for their valuable assistance in preparing the tables, etc. He then asked the Rev. Father Venning, as chaplain, to address them.

Rev. Father Venning said it was indeed a very edifying sight that morning to see such a body approaching the Holy Table, and he, as their chaplain, was proud of them. He trusted they would also turn out on St. Patrick's Day with the same numbers. He exhorted them to ever venerate the memory of Ireland, to remember even if they were New Zealand born that they owed their faith to Ireland. He trusted the society would continue to prosper.

Very Rev. Dean Regnault said he could not say more than what he had said to them at Mass. He congratulated them on their turn-out, and he trusted they would be able to make a similar display on next Friday. He also exhorted them to be ambitious, to aspire to the highest offices in the land. Catholics, he pointed out, were very backward in this respect, and he instanced the older countries where Catholics held aloof from the high positions, and as a result the Government of France, Spain, and Portugal got into the hands of Freemasons, Socialists, etc. Consequently the Catholics, who were in the majority, are now ruled by a minority of these people, all this being attributable to the backwardness of the Catholics in public affairs. He therefore trusted that they would do all that was possible to prevent such a state of affairs in New Zealand. In concluding, he wished the society every success.

Bro. Martin Kennedy, K.S.G., P.P., also congratulated the members on their muster, and said he was pleased to hear of the rapid strides the society was making in the Empire City. He trusted that every Catholic in the Dominion would ere long join one or other of the Catholic societies—St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Club, or the Hibernian Society. It was not only the advantages to be gained by joining these societies, but it was also necessary from the point of view of organisation, which was so badly needed amongst Catholics at the present time. Touching upon the Very Rev. Dean's remarks anent the backwardness of Catholics in taking part in public affairs, he pointed out that there were many present at that function who were quite capable of taking up the highest positions in the land, and he trusted, therefore, that each one present would do his best to further the Catholic cause, to be ambitious, and to aspire to the highest positions. Referring to the Hibernian Society, he said it was doing great work among our Catholic people. Everyone should belong to a friendly society, so that when sickness or trouble came they would be able to avail themselves of the benefits provided. The H.A.C.B. Society was a Catholic society, and could only admit Catholics to its ranks; it therefore behoved every Catholic to support the society which provided the same benefits. In concluding he wished the society every success.

Mr. A. H. Casey (representing the Catholic clubs) briefly addressed the gathering. He complimented the members on their attendance. As a token of the good-fellowship that existed between the H.A.C.B. Society and the Catholic Club, he instanced the successful celebrations of St. Patrick's Day which had been carried out conjointly by both bodies in Wellington for the past few years, and also the fact that the Club executive had always encouraged the members of the club to join the H.A.C.B. Society, and would continue to do so. He was very pleased to learn of the progress of the H.A.C.B. Society in Wellington, and of the energy of its officers, and while not wishing to single out anyone he could not let the occasion pass without reference to the secretary (Bro. Hoskins), who was mainly responsible for the record attendance that morning.

The District Deputy (Bro. J. W. Callaghan), in moving a vote of thanks to the visitors, said that Dean Regnault was heart and soul with the society. He remembered first meeting the Very Rev. Dean at the Timaru meeting of the society in 1904, where he made a notable speech. The best thanks of the society (he said) was due to Dean Regnault, who, he trusted, would long be spared to continue his good work for the society. Continuing, Bro. Callaghan stated that chaplains are, as a rule, very busy men, but although Rev. Father Venning was an extra busy man, yet there were very few meetings he missed, and the branch was to be congratulated on having such an energetic chaplain. He thanked Bro. Kennedy for his interest in the affairs of the society and for his words of encouragement, and trusted that members present would profit by his remarks. In connection with Mr. Casey's remarks, he was able to bear out all that Mr. Casey had said anent the encouragement of club members to join the H.A.C.B. Society. He regretted that one familiar figure was absent from the function, he alluded to the late Mr. J. J. Devine, who had always been a friend to the society, and was always present at its functions. The motion on being put was carried by acclamation, after which one of the most successful functions of the branch terminated.

PRESENTATION TO FATHER FANNING,
DARFIELD

(From an occasional correspondent.)

March 23.

On Tuesday evening a very large and enthusiastic social gathering was held in the Darfield Catholic School for the purpose of saying farewell to the Rev. Father Fanning, M.S.H., who is about to take a holiday trip to his native land, Australia. Mr. F. Narbey reviewed the work of Father Fanning since he came to Darfield, about three years ago. Rev. Fathers Fanning and Tyler, immediately after their ordination, took charge of the parish of Darfield, which under their able administration has made great progress. The school in which they were holding that meeting had a long-standing debt of £100. This, he was pleased to say, had been paid off; the presbytery had been remodelled, the church thoroughly renovated, and the church grounds and fences put in thorough order. Their work did not end in Darfield, but extended to Glentunnel, where a beautiful church had been erected which was a credit to the district and to Fathers Fanning and Tyler, and which now had only a small debt on it. From personal knowledge he knew that over £1000 had passed through their hands since they came to the parish, all of which had been spent in improvements. They had also organised two bazaars which had both been a great success. Mr. Narbey then referred to the pastoral work of Father Fanning, whose spiritual ministrations and words of sympathy and condolence brought comfort to the sick and suffering. These were works they could not pass over, and those acts of kindness would not be forgotten, and they were there that night to thank him and to show their appreciation and gratitude. Mr. Narbey then read and presented the following address:—

'Dear Rev. Father,—Deep feelings of love and gratitude have brought us here to-night to wish you "God speed" on your intended trip to sunny Australia, the land of your birth. Since your advent amongst us, dear Rev. Father, you have ever shown the zeal and love of a true pastor for your flock—untiring in your ministrations, surmounting every difficulty incidental to the life of a priest, portraying in your sacerdotal character all the virtues of the Sacred Heart of your Divine Master and Model. Although we rejoice that you are about to enjoy a well-earned holiday and meet once again your beloved parents, still we shall miss you very much, and will daily pray for your speedy return with renewed health and strength, to labor amongst us in God's holy service for many years to come. In loving gratitude we beg you to accept the accompanying little gift as a small token of our deep affection and esteem.

'From your devoted parishioners—

WILLIAM CLINTON, JOHN DUNNE,

JAMES GILL, F. NARBAY,

'On behalf of the parishioners of Darfield.

The address was in book form, bound in morocco, and artistically illuminated, and was the work of the Sisters of the Darfield Convent.