

THE BISHOP OF AUCKLAND IN VICTORIA

AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME IN HAMILTON

(Abridged from the *Hamilton Spectator* of July 17.)

The Right Rev. Dr. Cleary, Bishop of Auckland, who was for many years stationed in Hamilton, and who left here about thirteen years ago to visit New Zealand, paid a flying visit to Hamilton on Saturday, and was welcomed on arrival at the railway station by a large number of his old parishioners. The Very Rev. Father Shanahan and other priests were also present. After the usual formalities the party were driven to the presbytery, where the toast of the Bishop was proposed by Mr. White, M.L.C.

The Very Rev. Father Shanahan, and Messrs. J. Ahearn, T. M. Kennedy, H. Walker, and Butler made eulogistic speeches, paying a high tribute to the impression left upon the whole community by Father Cleary during his seven years' work in Hamilton.

The Bishop in responding said that it seemed to him that all through his life he had been picking up a good many jewels of memory, affection, and friendship, and among the most precious he certainly counted those gathered by him in this parish of Hamilton. He knew of no brighter or truer friendships or any that he appreciated more highly. But there was one that was more cherished than the others—that of his old pastor and life-long friend, Father Shanahan. He was the great attraction which had brought him (the Bishop) here, and it would bring him from a long distance. Clinging around his memory were other items of friendship which he cherished. His memory of those old times of which he had been reminded was still fresh, and that was one of the beautiful things in connection with his visit. It was pleasant to see again so many who had been associated with him in various ways. Mr. Kennedy and Mr. McGinniskin had been sporting friends, who had led him into pleasant—though, perhaps, dubious—paths of sportsmanship. He was particularly glad to find that Father Shanahan seemed to be immortal. In Ireland some years ago a car-driver was being pestered by two lady passengers as to what he thought their ages were. At last he said: 'Well, Ma'am, I don't know how old you are, but whatever age you are, you don't look it.' That was the case with their old friend, Father Shanahan—whatever age he was, he did not look it—and he trusted that their pastor might be spared to be with them many years. He had to thank Father Shanahan for his kind thought in bringing so many valued friends to meet him, and he thanked them and the gentlemen who had spoken to the toast for the over-complimentary and over-flattering words they had used.

This concluded the proceedings.

Presentation of an Address.

Prior to the commencement of service last evening at St. Mary's Church, the Very Rev. Father Shanahan invited the Bishop to come to the front of the altar rails, in order to receive an address of welcome. On the previous day a number of his old parishioners had assembled at the railway station to welcome his Lordship on his return to the place where he had spent seven years in assisting the people in their spiritual necessities, and where his priestly life and work had made a deep impression. They could not let the occasion pass without welcoming him to the church, where he had so frequently officiated and had prayed for them, and they for him. During that time his wise judgment, suggestions, and advice were always valued; he could lead the people without their knowing that they were being led. Since he left Hamilton, the period had been fraught with great questions and serious problems. Doctrines had been brought forward which were not in accordance with the teachings of the Church, and his Lordship had ably explained the absurdities. They had every reason to look forward with hope to his episcopacy, which they trusted would be of long duration. He would ask Mr. E. J. White to read the address.

Mr. White then read the address, which was as follows:—

'May it please your Lordship,—We, the members of the congregation of St. Mary's Church, gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded by your visit to Hamilton to extend to you a hearty welcome, and at the same time express our warmest congratulations on your elevation to the episcopacy. The kindness of heart and nobility of character at all times shown by you during the years you labored in our midst won the affection and admiration of all whose privilege it was to receive your spiritual consolations, and it is very gratifying to the Catholics of this parish to find that your zeal and ability have gained the due appreciation and confidence of the Holy See. We have followed with great interest your journalistic career in New Zealand, and rejoiced to find that your rare literary attainments have enabled you triumphantly to vindicate the cherished principles of our faith and to confound those critics who are ever seeking to misrepresent and misconstrue the aims and aspirations of Holy Church. That you may be long spared to fulfil your exalted duties in the highest offices of the Church will be the constant prayer of the Hamilton people.'

The address was signed on behalf of the congregation by representative members of the church.

His Lordship's Reply.

The Bishop in replying quoted an eastern parable, which was to the following effect:—When the Lord first created the earth it was soft and fluid, and He placed the mountains on it to make it firm. The angels asked was there anything as strong as the mountains? The Lord replied: 'Yes, iron is stronger than the mountains, for it can pierce their hearts and cut their sides away.' The angels asked if there was anything stronger than the iron. The Lord said: 'Fire is stronger than iron, because it can melt it.' The angels asked was anything stronger than fire. The Lord said: 'Yes, water is stronger than fire, because it can quench it.' The angels again asked was anything stronger than water, and the Lord replied: 'Yes, wind is stronger than water, because it can ruffle the surface and smash the water into the rocks.' Again the angels asked was there anything stronger than wind. The Lord replied: 'Yes, there is one thing that is stronger than wind and water and fire and iron—that is the kind heart that does not forget.' He had been reminded of that parable very forcibly by the welcome given him the day before, and again by the beautiful address presented that evening—the kind hearts of the congregation that did not forget. Their kindness was stronger than the wind that ruffled the water, stronger than the fire that melted the iron, harder and more enduring than the iron, more immense than the mountains that kept the world firm. He thanked God Who, after his years of service here had given him this experience of kind hearts that did not forget. He thanked them with all his heart for the kind words they had addressed to him, and for this beautiful and gracious expression of the kindness of their hearts, as given yesterday and repeated that evening. He thanked God also that in this parish of Hamilton he had been enabled to spend the happiest years of his life. Wherever he had wandered about the earth he had always kept a cherished spot in his heart for the people of Hamilton. And, as he had said the previous evening, right in the centre of his memory was the recollection of his old pastor and friend, and clinging around him like diamonds set in a beautiful ring, were many precious hearts whose memory he would preserve right to the end of his days. He thanked them and their pastor for their kindness in the past and the memories of the present, and he hoped that those memories would live and fructify and endure as long as he and they remained on earth.

The Bishop then delivered a sermon, in which he dwelt on the wonderful vitality of the Church, in spite of the series of persecutions to which it had been submitted from the days of Nero down to the present time. Over and over again, in different ages, its enemies declared that the Church was dead or dying, but it had triumphed over all its trials. Since the accession of the late Queen Victoria there had been an enormous increase of Catholic churches in Great Bri-