

St. Patrick's Convent School, Lawrence

The breaking-up of St. Patrick's School for the Christmas holidays (says the *Tuapeka Times*) was preceded by a very pleasing little function. The afternoon was beautifully fine and there was a very good attendance of parents and friends. The Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary presided and presented the prizes at the conclusion of the musical programme, which was as follows:—Pianoforte duet, 'Shepherd's evening song,' K. and S. Franklin; solo, 'Pretty wavelets,' Mr. Sandys; chorus, 'Adeste Fideles'; duet, 'Waltz,' F. and C. Hart; duet, 'Sleigh ride,' T. and M. Neiper; duet, 'Caballeta,' M. Paget and T. Neiper. In addition to the foregoing items, which were all admirably rendered, the children repeated 'The doll's house party,' which formed so conspicuous a part of the programme at the recent concert. This included a good deal of speaking, singing, and no little acting, and it must be said that in every respect each one of the juvenile performers acquitted herself with the greatest credit. The dressing of the children was also very pretty, in some instances quaint, and the effect was certainly pleasing to the audience. Another pleasing item was 'The nursery rhyme quadrilles. Not a single mistake was made by the little dancers who appeared to thoroughly enjoy their exhibition. Following is the prize-list:—

Standard I.—Class prize, J. Hoare; writing, J. Neiper; arithmetic, S. Real; improvement, A. Gordon.

P. Standard II.—Class prize, F. Hart; writing and needlework, M. McMullan; improvement, B. McMullan; reading and writing, Z. Simmers.

Standard II.—Improvement, W. Roughan and M. Fitzgerald; improvement in writing, G. Leslie.

Standard III.—Class prize, M. Sandys; composition, E. Higgins; needlework and arithmetic, A. Paget; reading and composition, M. Hoare; composition, S. Donohue.

Standard IV.—Class prize, C. Hart; arithmetic, J. Real; writing and improvement, A. Gordon; neatness, M. Neiper.

Standard V.—Class prize, M. Leslie; good conduct, E. Roughan; attention to studies, T. Roughan; politeness, S. Franklin.

Standard VI. B.—Class prize, A. Higgins; arithmetic and general knowledge, J. Sandys; home lessons and arithmetic, J. Hoare; drawing and mental arithmetic, J. Oliver; neatness and application, G. Laffey.

Standard VI. A.—Class catechism, R. Donohue; attention to studies, T. Neiper.

Standard VII.—Composition and recitation, P. Higgins; English and arithmetic, M. Paget.

General Prizes.

Good conduct.—M. Paget (gold medal presented by Rev. Father Collins). Attendance—R. Donohue (silver medal presented by Mr. Jeffery) and C. Hart. Needlework—T. Neiper. Second prize junior division religious knowledge—E. Higgins and M. Sandys. General satisfaction—Arthur Higgins. Composition—R. Donohue (special prize presented by Rev. Father Collins). Dux—P. Higgins (gold medal presented by Rev. Father Collins). Navy League prizes—Standard VII., M. Paget; VI., A. Higgins; V., M. Leslie. In Standard VI. four proficiency certificates were gained.

The Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, at the conclusion of the prize distribution, thanked the parents and friends for their attendance, and complimented the good Sisters upon the excellent entertainment provided by the children, and also upon the result of their work throughout the year. The report of Inspector Bossence this year was the best they had yet received, and it showed that the ordinary school subjects were taught as efficiently by the good Sisters as in the State schools. He also reminded the children of the great privilege they enjoyed in being taught by the good nuns who, year after year, without fee or reward, or consideration for their own health, devoted their lives to the training of the children of the Catholic Church. Not only were

they taught their ordinary subjects of the school curriculum, but also their duty to God, their parents, their neighbors, and themselves. He referred at some length to the injustice that they, as Catholics, suffered through the refusal of the State to grant them the assistance to which they were justly entitled. Every child taught in the State school cost, he believed, about £4 10s per annum, and though the Catholics contributed their share through the general taxation they received no allowance from the State for the enormous saving due to their maintenance of their own schools. He trusted the time would soon come when those in power would recognise the injustice they were inflicting on the Catholics of this country and do their duty by giving them the assistance to which they were justly entitled.

MR. JOHN McCORMACK

The great singer was born in Athlone less than twenty-eight years ago. He received his primary education at the Christian Brothers' School, and in 1895 he went to the College of the Immaculate Conception in Sligo, where he remained till 1901. As a student he distinguished himself, and obtained a first-class exhibition in each grade, which is considered a very great distinction, and rarely obtained. In Dublin each year there are competitions embracing all the arts, and someone suggested to Mr. McCormack that he should enter and test his ability as a vocalist. He was successful in winning the much-coveted gold medal given to the best vocalist in Ireland. From that time he was determined to make a name for himself, and after two years' study in Milan he returned to London, got an engagement at the Royal Albert Hall, and since then he has never looked back. To-day managers vie with each other to enter into contracts with him, and whether it be at Covent Garden Opera House (London), or the Manhattan Opera House (New York) an enthusiastic reception awaits him. When Madame Melba was selecting the artists for her grand opera season, which has just been brought to a close in Australia, Mr. McCormack was one of the first to be engaged, and the enormous success he has been was a tribute to Melba's judgment in securing his services. Prior to his returning Home, Mr. McCormack was induced to give a few concerts in Australia and two in New Zealand, and the public of Wellington and Auckland will have an opportunity of hearing the great tenor on January 12 and 18 respectively. In addition to Mr. McCormack, the concert company will include Miss Rosina Buckman (lyric soprano of the Melba Grand Opera Company), Mr. Alfred Kaufmann (principal basso of the same company), and Mr. Spencer Clay (solo pianist). The box plan for reserved seats for the Auckland concert on Thursday, January 18, opens at Wildman and Arcy's on Monday, January 15.

We have to thank Messrs. Chas. Begg and Co., Ltd., for a copy of the firm's jubilee souvenir, which is practically a brief but very interesting history of the growth and development of the firm during the past fifty years. The business was originally founded in 1861 by the late Mr. Charles Begg, who, prior to his arrival in New Zealand, had had considerable experience as a piano manufacturer in Aberdeen. With characteristic energy Mr. Begg, on the day after his arrival in Dunedin, set to work, and within a brief period opened a shop in Princes street, the site of which is now occupied by a portion of the firm's fine warehouse. A piano which was constructed by Mr. Begg was awarded a medal at the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865. The founder of the firm died in 1874, and some years ago the two sons—Messrs. A. Begg and C. Begg—became identified with the business, subsequently assuming the entire management. As time went on branches and agencies were established in many of the principal towns of the Dominion—branches in Wellington, Timaru, Invercargill, Oamaru, Nelson, and agencies in about a dozen other centres, with a buying office in London. The entire staff of the firm's employees numbers 86, 43 of whom are connected with the head office.