

New Books

'The Virginal Life'. By the Very Rev. P. J. Power, Hawera. Anything from the pen of the learned pastor of Hawera deserves a welcome at the hands of New Zealand Catholic readers. The present publication consists chiefly of six discourses on the virginal state, which are at the same time expository, devotional, and (though not in form) apologetic. The circumstance that gave rise to them was the publication of an alleged interview between a correspondent and Pope Pius X., which (says the Very Rev. author) 'created an impression amongst many non-Catholics in this Dominion that the Holy Father, when directly questioned, was unable to justify a preference for the Celibate and Virginal Life'. The discourses do not purport to be 'a treatise on Virginity, but just a few thoughts to show how and why Virginity has always been considered by the Church a higher, holier, and more perfect state than marriage'. What the author modestly terms 'just a few thoughts' constitute, nevertheless, a really excellent popular treatise, in compact form, on the subject on the following well-thought and comprehensive lines: (1) The Beauty of the Virginal Life; (2) The Force of its Example; (3) It Propagates Christianity; (4) The Works of Corporal Mercy; (5) Choice of a State of Life; (6) On Spiritual Direction. The style is of the easy-flowing, and at times eloquent, kind with which many of our readers have been acquainted who have perused previous publications of Father Power. These discourses give useful instruction on a subject on which the means of instruction are not ready to the hands of our people, and they are well calculated to foster vocations among those who are called to 'the better part'. We commend the new publication to the clergy, convents, and the general reader. An announcement in regard to it appears in our advertising columns. By special request there is appended to the little book the author's discourse at the month's mind of the late lamented Father Lewis, of Wellington.

'Children's Retreats Preparing for First Confession, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation'. By the Rev. P. A. Halpin. We have just received this really practical and devout work from the publisher, Joseph F. Wagner, New York. It is a very valuable aid to the clergy and those in charge of Catholic schools in the difficult and important work of preparing the children for the worthy reception of the Sacraments named in the title. The author seems to have had considerable experience with children, and to have learned the art of getting to the child-mind by pretty short and easy cuts. The seven discourses for each retreat are marked by great directness and simplicity of language, clearness of exposition in matters of dogma, easily understood allusions and illustrations from Scripture and history, and useful practical directions and instructions—all within the capacity of the average child of an age to receive the Sacraments referred to. Apart from the immediate purpose of its publication, the book would form a useful aid to the clergy, to teachers in Catholic schools, and to all engaged in catechetical work. (Pp. 170, cloth gilt, price one dollar; obtainable from the publishers and through all Catholic booksellers).

From the Australasian agent (Mr. W. P. Linchan, 309-311 Little Collins St., Melbourne) we have received the October number of the American 'Ecclesiastical Review'. This monthly publication for the clergy long ago assumed an international character. The contents for October include articles on 'A Catholic Bible Society', 'An Historical Sketch of the Temporal Power', several other interesting articles, and the 'Analecta', 'Conferences', and other standing features of this excellent magazine.

St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Dunedin

'Hans the Boatman,' which is described as a romantic musical drama, was the play selected this year to be given in aid of the funds of the St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Dunedin. The drama had been actively rehearsed, and this, together with the well known ability of the principal performers, led to the expectation of a production superior to that generally given by amateurs, and that this expectation was fully realised was admitted by all who witnessed the first performance in His Majesty's Theatre on Monday evening. It was an ambitious undertaking, considering the length of the play and the dramatic talent necessary to fill the principal parts, and therefore those responsible for its production are to be warmly congratulated on the success achieved. There were a few weak points here and there, as there are shortcomings in nearly all first-performances even by professionals. But on the

following evenings these defects had almost wholly disappeared. The performers were letter perfect in their parts. The title-role was admirably filled by Mr. Percy James, who made an ideal Hans, the simple-minded, light-hearted, child-loving boatsman. Mr. James's humor and his singing of several introduced songs were highly appreciated by the large audience. The rough but warm-hearted Yank Thursby was impersonated to life by Mr. S. H. Osborne, whose acting throughout was extremely natural. Miss Tot Brennan, acted, with much vivacity and a keen appreciation of the requirements of the character, the part of Thomas Jefferson Thursby, a girl with a heart of gold. Miss Jean Fraer displayed a practical conception of the character of Gladys Farwell, and sustained the part with a considerable measure of success. Mr. J. Brennan filled in a conscientious manner the part of Mr. Farwell, a visitor from New York. The thankless role of villain fell to Mr. P. R. Fordham, who displayed the usual lack of honor, and the cynicism peculiar to such individuals, whilst Mr. J. Dee gave a faithful presentation of the character of Lieutenant Finch. Master Fritz Valentine did admirably as little Hans, and secured a round of applause for his song. Minor characters were filled by Miss Nellie Finnegan as Baby Coquette, and Miss Molly Brennan as Little Fritz. A number of children, who had been trained by Miss Major, gave some choruses and otherwise contributed to the evening's amusement. The piece was well staged, and the scenery was very appropriate and effective. The drama was produced under the direction of Mr. Percy James, who deserves every credit for its success, whilst Mr. George King was stage manager, the business part being in the capable hands of Mr. J. J. Marlow, as honorary secretary, who is noted for the financial success which results from all such undertakings with which he is connected. The drama was also produced on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, when the attendance was again very good.

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