

or the attraction of a catchy title. We have personally seen distributed to Catholic children florid volumes of vapid tract-fiction that was published for non-Catholic homes by such associations as the Religious Tract Society or the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. We have seen Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* presented as a premium to a lad of fourteen. And in 1899 a zealous New Zealand priest showed us an indecent No-Popery 'shocker' that had been selected in the slipshod fashion referred to above, and placed in the hands of an innocent child as a 'reward' for 'good conduct' at a Catholic school in this Dominion of New Zealand! The book in question was fit only to be burned by the common hangman. This may be—we believe it is—an extreme case. But we refer to it here in order to illustrate a danger that is inherent to so loose and culpably careless a method of selection as that which is under consideration here.

According to Byron's *English Bards*,

'A book's a book, although there's nothing in it.'

And any agglomeration of printed paper and garish binding seems to some people good enough to place as a prize in the hands of school children. The mischief that may be perpetrated by a slipshod mode of selection of book rewards is, however, a matter on which the conscience of teachers cannot well be too tender. It is not, however, sufficient merely to eliminate from the prize distribution the risk of positive moral harm to children. This annual feature of our school life should be made the occasion for circulating good, sound Catholic literature in our homes, and fostering a habit of good reading that will be a blessing in the after life of the child. We venture, at this opportune time, to make the following suggestions to those responsible for the selection of this year's prize-books:—

1. No prize-book to be selected merely because of its title or binding.
2. No prize-book to be given to a child unless character and contents of such book are well known to the responsible heads of the school. Don't trust the opinion of the first-comer in estimating the literary value or the moral status of a book, or its suitability for presentation to, and perusal by, children. In case of doubt, consult your pastor.
3. We may here repeat a word of advice given by us in this connection nine years ago:—

'Boycott unmercifully the following: Books with catchpenny titles; works on history and popular science, the authors of which are not known to be, from the Catholic standpoint, reliable; morbid, hysterical, sensational, "problem," and undesirable novels of every kind; the latest novels; books about which "society" prattles and the secular press and the non-Catholic pulpits gush—there is generally a codlin moth in that sort of fruit; books, magazines, tracts—no matter how heavily gilded—that are published by, or in connection with, any Protestant association; a certain class of namby-pamby, flaccid, spineless devotional or ascetic works—chiefly translations—that find favor chiefly with the more emotional of the lady members of religious Orders.

4. Have a glance at the name of the publisher.
5. Select books that will serve a useful purpose—not books of the kind that made 'Mr. Dooley's' friend, Hogan, 'wan iv th' best read an' mos' ignorant men I know.'
6. Above all, let the books be CATHOLIC—not Catholic merely in their authors, but in their tone or theme. Make the prize-distribution an occasion for the spread of Catholic literature. The other kind has practically all the rest of the year.

Give the boys and girls books of history, biography, fiction, adventure, written in a Catholic spirit by Catholic authors; give them devotional and ascetic works suited for their years—the work of clear, sunny, sensible, orthodox writers who are sane in spirituality and do not set up to be wiser than the Church. The name of such books is legion—from Wiseman and Canon Schmidt to Dr. Barry and Canon Sheehan and Father Benson. Their works are easily procurable, and there is in them plenty of solid meat, and not merely frothy nothings or unwholesome sensation. On the prize-lists of Catholic schools there should also figure the works of Cardinal Moran, Archbishop Carr, Father Finn's delightful boy-stories, the writings of Father John Talbot Smith, the novels of such Catholic writers as Christian Reid, Marion Crawford (a selection only), Katherine Tynan, Sir F. C. Burnand, Lady Gilbert, Clara and Rosa Mulholland, E. L. Dorsey, Katherine Conway, Mary E. Mannix, Maurice Francis Egan, Mary Catherine Crowley, Lady Fullerton, Lady Herbert, Mrs. Cashel Hoey, Cecilia Caddell, Julia Kavanagh, Fanny

Taylor, 'Theo. Gift' (Mrs. Hayers), Kate O'Meara (Grace Ramsay), Anna T. Sadleir, Charles J. Kickham, Father Hickey's *Innisfail*, the translated works of Manzoni, Veuillot, Conscience, Fernan Caballero, and Edmondo de Amicis, and the whole lot, stock, and barrel of the publications of the *Ave Maria* press and of the London Catholic Truth Society and the Australian Catholic Truth Society. The catalogues of these two Societies, and of all the leading Catholic publishers, should be in the hands of those responsible for the selection of prize-books for our schools.

Notes

Our Papal Jubilee Number

On September 17 we publish our Papal Jubilee Number. It will contain, in addition to the customary features, thirty-two extra pages, sixteen of which will be devoted to the life and work of Pius X., and sixteen to illustrations. Among these latter will be engravings from portraits of the Pontiff taken at various periods of his life, and a series of beautiful pictures of Rome, Venice, and other places with which he is, or has been, associated. This will be the largest and best illustrated number of the *N.Z. Tablet* that has ever been issued. The price will, however, remain as usual. Our readers are requested, in order to avoid disappointment, to send in their orders as soon as possible for copies to retain as souvenirs and to transmit to friends at home and abroad.

Progress

A recent Papal Decree removes Great Britain, Canada, and the United States from the list of 'missionary countries,' detaches them from the jurisdiction of the Congregation of the Propaganda, and places them under the operation of the ordinary law of the Church. At the same time the Pope has altered, recast, and reorganised, in the interests of efficiency and economy, the various Roman Congregations or Departments through which the business of the Universal Church is transacted.

A Wellington Verdict

The following verdict (say the daily papers) was recently returned by a coroner's jury in Wellington:—'Deceased met his death by failing to grasp a rail that had been removed the day before.' This is one of the bits of serenely unconscious humor that adds a joy to this 'wale of tears.' There was, on the other hand, a whiff of grim but conscious humor in two verdicts returned seventy years ago by Irish juries at inquests on men killed in party 'shindies.' 'The deceased,' said one verdict, 'met his death by the visitation of God under suspicious circumstances.' Another coroner's jury found that 'Tom Cusack was killed by the fall of a piece of timber on his head.'

Good Advice

'To sustain good newspapers,' says Monsignor Delemaire, Coadjutor-Bishop of Cambrai, 'is, obviously and before everything, to buy them and to read them; to pay ungrudgingly and even cheerfully the cost of their support, and especially to do this in the manner that will be of the greatest benefit to them. So do not buy these excellent journals in an intermittent fashion as your affairs give you more or less leisure to read them, or the events published are more or less interesting; but be to them a friend faithful and devoted, on whom they can rely for each and every day. Be their subscribers, and their disinterested subscribers.'

Indulgences

One Rev. E. S. Gunson, M.A., has lately been 'explaining' the Catholic doctrine of indulgences—in a manner marked by more heat than light—to a gathering of Orange brethren at St. James's Church, Great Hamilton St., Glasgow. To Catholics, a 'hundred days' indulgence, his reverence averred, 'meant that they would get a hundred days knocked off in Purgatory.' Of course this is not so. It is here a question of the remission of a canonical penance, as every instructed Catholic schoolchild knows, and not 'a hundred days knocked off in Purgatory.' If the Rev. Mr. Gunson were told that the Belfast *Weekly's* dynamo takes ten amperes on a 'full load,' he would probably scramble all over it to shake hands with Ampère and his family; and when he learns that Chambers' Belfast-made motor-car is fifteen horse-power, he will, perhaps, lift the bonnet and peer underneath it in search of those fifteen horses. Next to a knowledge

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