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The Week in Review

The Leys Institute.

THE best antidote to bad literature is the provision of good literature, and anything that tends to this end deserves the thanks and the support of the community. St. Paul's maxim was that we should overcome evil with good, and in nothing does this hold more true than in our choice of books. If we once accustom ourselves to enjoy what is highest and best in the literature of all time we shall be able to oppose a shield of triple bronze to the Maurian arrows of the enemy. Few institutions have done more in this direction than the Leys Institute, Ponsonby. The library is one of the finest in the Southern hemisphere, and the books have been most carefully selected. An especial feature is made of technical works, and during last year 146 books dealing with the arts and trades were placed upon the shelves. So greatly has this department grown that a special room has now been devoted to this part of the library. In addition to books of every kind the Institute provides for lectures and concerts during the winter months, and has a gymnasium club, a draughts club, a Shakespeare club, debating and literary societies, and other provision for instruction and recreation. Auckland owes much to the munificence of its private citizens, and to few does it owe more than to the generous founders and benefactors of the Leys Institute.

A Unique Award.

The Australasian Royal Humane Society has awarded its gold medal to a woman, this being the first occasion on which a woman has gained this much coveted distinction. The cable message briefly stated that the medal had gone to a Mrs Kennedy, wife of a railway line repairer, for conspicuous bravery in snatching a child from almost under the wheels of an engine. There were no details, but an Australian paper shows it to have been one of the most courageous acts of self-sacrifice and heroism ever reported. The story bristles with sensation. The Goulbourn Valley train, which left Seymour at 9.20 a.m. on December 4, had almost reached the level

crossing, about two miles south of Waring Station, when the engine driver, Michael Keane, and the fireman, Arthur A. Stedel, noticed a little child, aged 3½ years, on the line a short distance ahead. The driver promptly opened the whistle of the engine as a warning. The screech of the whistle attracted the attention of Mrs Lavinia Kennedy, wife of Thomas Kennedy, line repairer, who, looking out at the door of her gatekeeper's cottage, saw the little girl, Eileen Moira Mulcahy, on the rail at the cattle pit by the crossing. The train was travelling at 25 miles an hour, and was within 15 yards. She made a dash forward, and, heedless of the risk to herself, sprang in front of the approaching train. She jumped on to the cattle pit, and, throwing her body across one of the logs, seized the child—snatched it almost from under the wheels of the engine, and dropped with it on to the bars of the pit. Even then her position was most hazardous, for she was lying partly in the cattle pit and partly across the log, and wedged therein by the barbed wire protecting the pit. Her head was within 9in of the rail, and the wheels were sweeping her hair as the train passed over her. The engine was pulled up, and the fireman ran back to see how the woman and child had fared. To use his own words in the statutory declaration furnished to the society by the fireman: "To my great and glad surprise I found both were uninjured. A brave and heroic deed it was; for an instant's hesitation or a slip of any sort would have meant certain death to both, as the train was travelling over 20 miles an hour."

Women Masqueraders.

Although Miss Amy Beck has succeeded in producing a sensation unique in the history of the Dominion, she cannot lay claim to be the only woman who has successfully played the part of bridegroom at a wedding. History has afforded more than one instance of a woman going through the marriage ceremony with another woman. The most famous case was when a Spanish military nun named Catalina de Branzo got married to a Spanish-American lady named Juana. But here the nun's motive for the fraud was ample—viz., to save her-

self from an immediate and awful death. The bride never knew the truth, the nun making her escape immediately after the wedding ceremony, and never been seen again by Juana; but there is no doubt she would have sanctioned the fraud to save the life of her whom she loved. She lived and died a soldier, and the secret of her sex would probably never have been discovered had she not, after a deadly struggle, saved the life of a woman whom she barely knew, and in that struggle received a wound in the breast that immediately betrayed her sex. As is well known, it was no less a personage than the Pope who licensed the military nun henceforth to wear a cavalry officer's dress. In heart, courage, strength and skill with the sword she equalled all and surpassed most men.

Clean Sport

The New Zealand Boxing Council is to be congratulated on the efforts it is making to purify the sport from all objectionable features. Many people object to boxing exhibitions because of the manner in which some of these exhibitions are conducted, for few could be found to object to the exercise itself. Everybody knows that it is good for a youth to learn the art of self-defence. He learns courage and self-control, he can defend himself and others if occasion arises, he is compelled to be temperate in his habits. That the sport is becoming increasingly popular amongst us is no doubt due to the efforts of the Boxing Council to keep it free from any suspicion of unsportsmanlike practices. In the Boxing Council's report there is a reference to this matter. The Council states that "the determination of local associations to keep the sport clean is shown by the fact that during the season four persons were punished by life disqualification for various offences. This promptness to deal severely with cases of misconduct in and out of the ring, has had a very great influence on the public mind, showing, as it does, that those who are primarily interested in the sport are keenly alive to their responsibilities, and to the necessity that exists for eliminating anything of a nature likely to arouse adverse public criticism. The past season, undoubtedly, was the most successful that has been recorded since the foundation of the council. Thanks to the support given by the Press, and the sympathy of the authorities, and the earnest and conscientious labours of those identified with the various local associations, the sport is now firmly established and is rapidly becoming one of the most popular in the Dominion." Everybody will agree in wishing the Council all success in their laudable endeavour to raise to its proper place in public estimation the manly art of self-defence.

Our National Vices.

Our two great national vices are said to be gambling and a craze for experimental legislation. The latter is probably the outcome of the former. It would seem that the gambling instinct is taking a firm hold of the rising generation and that even the Maori children are following the footsteps of their pakela comrades. A correspondent, writing to the "Manawatu Standard," gives an instance showing how quick

the native is to imitate the white man. He says:—"Coming up from Foxton this morning by train at the first stopping place a dozen young Maori boys got in on their way to school at Grouse Bridge. No sooner were they in than down went every window in the carriage and out went a dozen heads. Yet they were well behaved, and soon broke into song. I don't think I ever heard 'The Old Folks at Home' more sweetly rendered; nor do I think the same number of pakela boys taken haplessly could have come near them. But I was rather astonished when they alighted at the Bridge to see about half of them settle in the middle of the frosty road, and taking silver and copper coins from their pockets begin to gamble like any two-up school in the Dominion. I think it was 'pitch and toss' they played, but to see the cool way they pocketed one another's cash; their honoured parents could not have done it better. Whatever other bumps may be missing, the bump of imitation must predominate in the native race. How true it is. Train up a child in the way you want him to go and you may rely on it he won't be far off the mark in the end. And so sure as we sow dock seeds in our garden plots it is useless to expect a crop of Christmas lilies from it."

Technical Education.

The Napier Technical School Board has provided every facility for technical training, and has erected a healthy and handsome building in a suitable locality. Capable instructors are in attendance, and the only lack is a lack of pupils. In Palmerston North, where the school is not so modern or so commodious, there is a roll number of 650, while Napier, with its better facilities, can only boast of 170 pupils. A local paper says that the evening classes at the Napier school are suffering badly for the want of better support. A carpentry and joinery class has had to be discontinued for the lack of young tradesmen to take up the work. The class provided for instruction in skilled carpentry in all its branches, and only asked that a pupil should give up one hour of his time a week. The following figures show the support afforded to the other classes:—Building construction and drawing 6, plumbing 10, bookkeeping 13, house-painting and decorating 10, mechanical engineering 10, wood-carving 6, art class 6, geometrical drawing 3, chemistry 4, drassmaking 6. Classes in the chemistry of agriculture and domestic science have had to be abolished owing to the fact that support was not forthcoming. Similar complaints have come from other parts of the Dominion. Parents should remember that technical training is one of the most important branches of education, and that unless these schools are properly supported the grant will in all probability be considerably reduced and the schools will be financially crippled.

A Modern Oracle.

The Wellington Trades and Labour Council has decided that in future reporters from the capitalistic Press are not to be admitted to its discussions and deliberations. The decision is probably a wise one, judging from some of the reports published. The members of the Council do not desire that publicity should be given to what they term "little