

benevolent "lawyer" will be crowned with the success they merit, and I venture, with much respect, to commend the whole subject to the favourable consideration, and active co-operation, of the Catholic Literary Society.

#### THE CONVENT SCHOOLS

The result of the examinations just held in the Convent schools—the Select School, St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, and the Angel Guardians, have been in every way most satisfactory. The Rev. Father Ginaty distributed the handsome prizes, the list of which is really quite formidable, and one is struck with the number and variety of the subjects in which the pupils receive instruction. So many young ladies distinguished themselves by obtaining a very large number of prizes that I hope I shall not be thought to make an invidious distinction by mentioning that the gold medal for exemplary conduct was gained by Miss Ellen Holley, who also secured prizes in drawing, French, and fancy work, and a special one for excellence in illuminating, ornamental writing, recitation, grammar, ancient and modern history, geography, mapping, use of the globes, composition, astronomy, and botany. Miss Holley deserves the greatest credit for the very great assiduity and perseverance she must have displayed to achieve such praiseworthy results, but were I in her place, I should be above all most proud of the reward for exemplary conduct, and such would I hope be the feeling of most Catholics, however ridiculous an old-fashioned sentiment of this kind would appear in the eyes of the pupils of the State Schools. Another young lady, Miss Crone, carried off no less than 13 prizes. In company with some ladies, I paid a visit to a large schoolroom which really presented almost the appearance of a well arranged bazaar, containing as it did a large collection of useful and ornamental articles, the work of the young ladies during the past year. The exercise books containing specimens of composition, analysis, book-keeping, &c., were really meritorious. There were also water-colour paintings, crayon and chalk drawings, maps, illuminations, and a wealth of needlework of all kinds, from artistic crewelwork to plain useful garments for the little ones, and my fair friends expressed much admiration for the beautiful specimen of crewel work which gained the first prize, also for some pretty brackets, mantelpiece borders, macramé lace, and—above all—some magnificent point lace, which must have taken months of patient and skilful labour. There was a nice useful knitted quilt, and I was informed that the plain needlework in all classes was most creditable—some pocket-handkerchiefs being exquisitely embroidered in satin-stitch, and that the Berlin work, some with beads, some without, was well executed; in fact, that the whole of the exhibits in needlework were of a superior character. Just one specimen of useful work I did not see, and that was darning. Does anyone know the miseries of a badly mended sock, to which the familiar and time-honoured penance of peas in one's boots, must be the veriest trifle? If so, I am sure, I shall meet with sympathy and approval when I venture to express the hope that the Sisters will see their way another year to offer a prize for excellence in this much needed accomplishment, or if they would accept one at the hands of an outsider, I shall have very great pleasure in thus testifying to a "fellow-feeling for a fellow-creature." In connection with this very useful if homely art, I am glad to learn that the Sisters propose to open in the new convent a room to be used as a laundry, where ironing is to be taught to their pupils, and that possibly other much needed lessons, such as instruction in cookery, may follow all in good time.

#### BAD BOOKS.

The latter portion of a recent letter was so hurriedly written that in mentioning the Catholic Book Depot, I now see that I omitted what ought to have been said as to its first starting. This was undoubtedly originated by the painful reflections suggested to him by the circulation of so many bad and infidel books, for which there then existed scarcely any antidote. These same bad and mischievous books have occupied a good many of my thoughts lately, from the fact that several times recently when I have had occasion to go to a certain shop in this city for the purpose of buying the *Field* the *Australasian* and other papers not always procurable in the principal shops, on returning home I have found that a list of the most immoral and infidel works has been slipped inside the newspapers. It seems of little avail to keep the most scrupulous watch over the contents of our booksellers' shops when such tactics are resorted to, and the curiosity of thoughtless young folks thus excited, nay, perhaps the ruin of many a soul effected. I could wish that the police had the ample powers they possess in England where such proceedings would not be tolerated; perhaps this power may be available here, but if so, I cannot think that it is ever exercised. People are not at liberty to kill their bodies, or more correctly, I should say that if they attempt suicide and fail, they undergo some punishment at the hands of the law, such also is the case with would-be-murderers; but as for murderers and suicides of the soul, who cares to punish them? I have just read some very admirable remarks from the pen of a distinguished writer, so pertinent to my present subject that I feel sure you will have pleasure in allowing me to add them. "A fire has blazed throughout Europe for more than half a century; and it threatens to set the whole world in flames before long. This fire arises in the minds and hearts of men; it spreads by words; it communicates itself to whole nations; it burns at the foundation of States, and at the roots of social order; it undermines thrones and altars, changes the earth into one immense volcano, and seems destined to destroy the universe at last in one universal conflagration. Is it from hell that the first sparks of this flame have come forth? Yes; most certainly. It is set on fire by hell. Have wicked men served as instruments to the powers of darkness, to diffuse and extend its ravages? Yes; most certainly. Have the seditions and the corrupting discourses of these men, their *furious* and *impious* declamations been, as it were, the torches and brands with which they have set all around them on fire? Yes; the universe is a witness of the fact; and they boast of it themselves; it is their tongue has set the whole world in a blaze. *Lingua ignis est*. If they had nothing else to produce such disastrous effects except the tongue and voice which they have received from Nature, the mischief

which they might cause would be very circumscribed, and of necessity limited to the narrow circle of hearers by whom they might be surrounded; they require another tongue which is far more powerful—a tongue which never tires—another voice much louder than their own—a voice which may be heard at the same time in every place—another mouth besides their own, which may be ever open to circulate and vomit afar off the burning and ever-succeeding waves of their calumnies and their blasphemy. This indefatigable tongue is their pen; this voice, which is everywhere heard, issues from their books; this mouth which continually vomits forth the fiery torrent with which it covers the whole earth, is the press, which at the present day is so prolific, so criminal, so formidable to Governments, to religion and morality. In plain language, bad books and their pernicious circulation are the fire which has come forth from the abyss—the fire which has caused such frightful devastation and wrapped the two hemispheres in one destructive blaze. Bad books multiplied almost to infinity—translated into every language—circulated with unlimited population throughout every country—filling every library—finding their way into every human habitation, from the rich man's palace and philosopher's closet, to the labourer's cottage, the tradesman's workshop, and the poor man's hut—corrupting every age, every sex, every condition, every people; this is the *world of iniquity* of which the Apostle speaks, and which it is impossible to mistake, *lingua universitas iniquitatis*. Bad books breathing revolution and war against the God of Heaven, and against all the lawful powers of the earth—disturbing the Church, the State, the private circle, and every other society of men—exciting and inflaming every violent and vindictive passion—provoking discord and wars, and the revolutions of empires; this is the *unquiet evil* which spreads universal agitation and terror, and no longer leaves any spot undisturbed throughout the world. Behold all the guilt which we see around us, and which we cannot too earnestly deplore—crimes the most unprecedented and enormous, becoming ordinary events which no longer occasion the least surprise—the most horrible catastrophes exhibited as daily spectacles to a cold curiosity which has now ceased to be excited by such atrocities—the eternal foundations of social order overturned—injustice converted into right—and licentiousness styled law—all that generations have revered as sacred for the last six thousand years consigned to ridicule and contempt—the most monstrous paradoxes of libertinism and infidelity converted into maxims and doctrines—morality abandoned, faith almost extinguished, and the ties of humanity itself forgotten; these are the fruits of bad books—the new poisoned branch which has sprung from the tree of knowledge, and which, as it were, produced the fruit of a second original sin, has once more perverted and degraded the human race. *Lingua maculat totum corpus*. How deeply seated this wound! how poisoned!"

#### VARIETIES.

School, together with other circumstances, the principal is to be cordially congratulated on the gratifying results of the late examination, which showed marked progress. No particulars have reached me, but I believe the same remark is substantially correct with reference to the examination of the boys' parish school. The children of Papanui and Halswell will be examined during the course of the present week. The parish priest yesterday announced that the Sacrament of Confirmation, which was to have been administered on the first Sunday in the new year, has been unavoidably postponed until the second Sunday, 8th January. I regret to hear that the subscriptions towards the new convent come in but slowly. Apart from the satisfaction which must be generally felt by those who have lately visited the noble building now rapidly approaching completion, one cannot but feel the importance of a work like this in a great and powerful centre such as Christchurch, the influence of which work must as it were radiate far and wide, without in the least detracting from the value of other and similar foundations, such as the one at Timaru. Undoubtedly the times are hard, and money far from abundant, still I feel sure it is only necessary to state that should the convent be unfit for occupation when the middle of February comes, the Sisters will suffer serious loss by being unable to receive a number of additional boarders already promised; and Catholics will eagerly come forward to avert the possibility of so unfortunate an event. The bazaar, it is understood, is hardly likely to be held before April. Gigantic preparations are going on for a magnificent picnic and regular parish outing on Boxing Day, to be held on the Racecourse, which has been kindly lent by the Jockey Club. All is under the supervision of Father O'Donnell. I say a regular parish outing, since not only the children, but the parents are invited, not only to grace the festivities by the charms of their presence, but also to have the comfort of easing their anxious hearts by ocular demonstration that their heart's treasures come to no harm. Every one in the parish will hope that wind and weather will be propitious on the eventful day.

Messrs. Smith and Smith, Octagon, Dunedin, have lately enlarged and improved their premises, in order to keep pace with the constant increase in their business as painters, and paperhangers, and in all the other branches of the trade in question. Their establishment will be found to perform all commissions entrusted to it with the utmost satisfaction to its patrons.

The Port Chalmers Restaurant, Mount street, Port Chalmers, has been opened by Mrs. Coffey, who is a lady in every way calculated to conduct a hotel and boarding-house with respectability and comfort. The house is a convenient one, and offers excellent accommodation. Mrs. Coffey, it will be remembered, is the widow of Sergeant Coffey, whose sudden death occurred some little time ago at the Bluff—partly, as it is believed, in consequence of services required of him at a coroner's inquest. The lady in question, then, has a double claim to patronage, arising both from her own qualifications and the sympathy due to the family of a public officer, who to a certain extent must be regarded as having fallen a victim to his duties.