

in the State schools of the Colony. There is apparently no supervision and no responsibility in the matter of selection. To our personal knowledge the prize-book system has been made over and over again, in State schools, the means of placing in the hands of unsuspecting Catholic children some of the most strongly-flavored controversial literature of certain Protestant denominations. While nominally and legally undenominational, some of the schools are made, year by year, underhand agencies for the circulation of denominational tracts. The annual distribution of book-prizes presents big possibilities of mischief to Catholic children, even where there is no direct intention to outrage their religious sentiments. But there are manifestly far wider possibilities for abuse where—as sometimes happens—the selection of books lies in the hands of men of strong religious bias, who could scarcely be expected to forego such a golden opportunity of stabbing 'Rome' through the little ones that are the apple of its eye.

A few days ago there was placed in our hands an evil book that was distributed—though not lately—as a prize to an innocent Catholic boy in the Woodstock (Rimu) State school, on the West Coast. The book is a well-known, or rather notorious, one—as notorious, in its way, for its coarseness, vulgarity, and (at times) for its veiled or undisguised prurientcy, as are the works of Fielding and Smollet. The man who would place the book that we refer to in the hands of a child, must be either a great simpleton or a great scoundrel. One of the tit-bits in this precious prize volume represents (in terms unquotable here) a Pope indulging—on Good Friday, of all days of the year—in the lowest debauchery. At the close of his orgie he is represented as giving his paramour 'absolution not only for every sin she had, but all she might hereafter commit'! This and other parts of that scandalous prize-book might have been edited in the sanctum of the Father of Lies. 'Against Papacy,' said Luther, 'we account all things lawful to us.' And it seems as if there are in or about Woodstock bigots of so fanatical a stamp that they are prepared to drag the souls of innocent children through swinish moral filth as well as diabolical calumny for the incomprehensible comfort of getting in a coward's blow at 'Rome.'

We have in our possession another model prize-book that was presented to a Catholic child at the Park Street State school in Invercargill. It is a gaudily upholstered but savage work of fiction. It is frankly controversial in its character, it is marked throughout with an incredible ignorance of Catholic teaching and practice, and is written for the evident purpose of bulging out the youthful brain-cells with a fierce hatred of 'Romanism.' Its characters are of two sorts: a few Protestants who are angels of light, and a collection of Catholic ecclesiastics who are simply incarnate demons—liars, hypocrites, tyrants, kidnappers, druggers of defenceless women, low schemers and plotters, savage in their vengeance, cruel as tigers, vindictive as infernal spirits, constructive if not actual murderers, and, in a word, as finished a collection of diplomaed scoundrels as were ever gathered together in waxen effigy in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's. All this is bad enough. But the worst of the foul business is this: that this pack of demons are placed before the mental eye of State school childhood as types of the really PIOUS Catholic clergy—as the flower of their kind! The rest, of course, must be walking miracles of sheer diabolism. But to the noisome class who compound such pestiferous 'prize' poison, and to the larger class for whom they cater, a Catholic priest is no more a human being than is a cobra di capello or a man-eating Bengal tiger. And the infamous book of 'prize' fiction just referred to professes to be a cool narrative of 'facts'! We have in its mendacious pages a savage fulfilment of the quoted Lutheran (not Jesuit) principle that a (supposedly)

good end justifies the use of sinful means, and of the comfortable theory of Anne Hutchinson's followers, that the moral law—and especially the law of truth-speaking—lays no obligations on the consciences of the 'elect.'

The cases to which we refer merely indicate a general danger that lurks in the State school for every Catholic child. Parents and the clergy would do well to bear a hand in removing such grievous perils from the school-lives of Catholic children. The remedy lies partly in the removal of every Catholic child from State schools, when a Catholic school is within reach; partly in the selection by competent Catholics of prize-books for Catholic children; partly in the substitution of certificates, medals, etc., for book prizes. Such incidents as we have related may well teach a lesson even to our Catholic schools, where the choice of prize-volumes is sometimes made on random or haphazard lines. Our prize-books should be procured from Catholic publishers or booksellers. And among them should ever figure prominently the admirable publications of the Catholic Truth Society, the 'Ave Maria' Series, and the varied and charming writings of Miss Catherine E. Conway ('Pilot' Publishing Company, Boston, U.S.A.). Every Catholic convent and school should, moreover, have at hand, for reference, at this season, the useful catalogues of good, sound, safe literature which is issued by the International Catholic Truth Society, Arbuttle Building, Brooklyn, New York, United States. It is a guide of enormous value, and, for the purpose to which we here immediately refer, is the nearest approach that we know of to Emerson's dream of a professorship of books.

Notes

A Cable 'Fake'

According to the cable-demon, Pope Pius X. has made haste to turn his back upon his own 'Motu Proprio' and subverted all custom and tradition by introducing female voices into choirs 'at the Vatican.' Our readers need not have the slightest qualms of conscience about branding this latest bit of Vatican cable 'news' with the word 'FAKE' in large letters.

A Peaceful Mission

Colonel Younghusband's advance in Thibet—to secure India's northern frontier—is officially described as a 'peaceful mission.' The expedition consists of a strong force armed to the teeth. It has violated the Thibetan frontier, is advancing towards the capital of that mysterious kingdom, and with Maxim guns and high explosive shells is pounding the immortal souls out of hundreds of half-armed mountaineers that make a feeble display of an attempt to bar the way. If this is 'peace' we want to know what a good screech of war is like.

In Rarotonga

In our issue of March 3 we raw-hided the Rarotongan Government for aiding and abetting the devil's work of fomenting sectarian passion in a New Zealand dependency by the free distribution of the London Missionary Society's gutter-journal attacks on the Catholic Church. We hinted that if the London Missionary Society in the Cook Islands looked to its own household, instead of circulating palpably silly tales about 'Popish missionaries' in far-off lands, it would be tired enough to go to bed when its day's work is done. Foolish talk about alleged petty requisitions by Catholic missionaries for Church purposes in far-off New Caledonia comes with a bad grace from the official organ of a Society that grinds the faces of the natives in the Cook group with such serious exactness in cash and kind and labor year by year. The Raro-