

A NEW PRAYER-BOOK.

Not many weeks ago we called attention to the number of defective prayer-books that Catholic publishing houses have, of late years, given to the world. The publishers are not so much to blame as the compilers of those works. In fact, the dignitaries who give their written sanction to prayer-books should make very certain of the contents, that is to say, the exactness of the translations, the correctness of the explanations of ceremonies, or of points of doctrine. We have long been anxious to see a perfect Catholic prayer-book, one sufficiently large to contain all the necessary devotions and information concerning them, yet sufficiently small and compact to be convenient for daily use; one upon which every Catholic could thoroughly rely and in which might be found a complete course of prayers and instructions suitable to every day of the year, every event of importance in the Christian's life, every circumstance, ordinary or exceptional. Nothing human is perfect we know; but the nearest approach to that perfection, which is our ideal of a prayer-book, has just been issued by Messrs. D. & J. Sadlier & Co., of this city. It is entitled "The Convent Girl's Prayers; a complete Manual of Devotions for Church, School and Home," compiled by a Religious. This neat, elegantly bound, splendidly printed volume, of over seven hundred pages, bears the Imprimatur of His Grace the Archbishop of Montreal. It also carries upon the face of its pages the visible and certain marks of a thorough and careful revision at the hands of evidently eminent theologians.

We understand that on the seventeenth of this month there is to commence a retreat for ladies in St. Patrick's Church. We most heartily advise every one, young or old, who desires to make a thorough retreat and reap all possible blessings and benefits therefrom, to secure a copy of that prayer-book. It is at once a guide, an instructor, a teacher, a preacher, a help, a staff, and a beacon-light. To give our readers the faintest idea of its contents would be impossible unless we undertook to write another volume as extensive as itself. Suffice to say that every imaginable assistance, information, and devotion required can be easily found in its pages. The type is varied according to the importance of the matter set forth, and it is always clear and easy to read.

We might state that the author and compiler, whose humility draws the cloak of a simple "religious" over all identity, has spent several years in preparing and perfecting the work, and has, at last, with the powerful aid of theological authorities, and under the direct guidance of Rome's own great search-light, completed and given to the public one of the most exceptional and perfect prayer-books that we have ever had the pleasure and happiness of possessing. The table of contents give no adequate idea of what the work contains, for each item therein mentioned is so developed, explained, rendered interesting and instructive that it means a little manual in itself. The alphabetical index at the close is the very best index to the volume of matter so ably arranged between those precious covers. Do you wish for any special prayers, devotions, exercises, novenas, litanies, stations, or services of the Church? You find them without a moment's hesitation. Do you seek explanations of ritual, practices of devotion, feasts, fasts, retreats, or the fundamental principles and truths of our holy religion? There you have them, clearly and concisely expressed. Is it daily exercises, weekly practices, or monthly devotions

that you seek? It matters not; you have the authentic and exact explanations, accompanied with all the prayers and methods of saying them. In a word, we are unable to say more than that "The Convent Girl's Prayers" is a volume suitable for children, young girls, young ladies, married women, boys, youths, religious and lay people,—in school, at home, in the cloister, in the world, anywhere, everywhere.

It is with a hearty pleasure that we thus speak so enthusiastically of this manual. We are not given to exaggeration of praise; very often we are considered guilty of too much severity in our criticisms. But we cannot be too severe upon any work that is intended for the use of Catholics in matters of religious practice, when it does not come up to the standard that the Church demands. On the other hand we cannot praise or recommend too highly any work (and they are unfortunately too few) that is calculated to meet the expectations of even the most exacting theologian. If any of our readers should happen to rashly judge us by thinking that we are too unstinting in our remarks of pleasure and approval regarding this prayer-book, let them buy a copy, read it carefully, and we are prepared to stake our reputation upon their judgment.

CUNNING, NOT OLEVER.

The advice given by a certain speaker, at a recent meeting held for the unemployed, to the effect that they should "put a little money aside, not for a rainy day, but to buy a gun," savors very much of the professional agitator. The qualifying phrase, "there is nothing wrong in buying a gun and keeping it to shoot in return when you are shot at," may appear cunning, but it is far from a clever remark; it is merely a clumsy way of trying to provide against the possible consequences of a rash statement or lawless appeal.

It is just sufficient to show that the speaker would like to say even more, but hesitated about the advisability of having said all he did; and it is not sufficient to excuse the first blunder, if people were insane enough to act upon it, or if circumstances were such as to create a probability of any shooting being done. It is very like the boy who throws a stone and then puts his hands in his pockets and tries to appear unconcerned and innocent. The reason we refer to this incident is to counteract any false impression that might therefore arise as to the true situation in Montreal.

In the first place, there is no such thing as the military shooting down anybody here; there is no probability, likelihood, or even possibility (under present circumstances) of any conflict between the unemployed and the authorities. On the contrary, all that can be done is being done, thanks to the energy and rational course adopted by the Trades and Labor Council, for the men out of employment and in distress. Incendiary remarks of that class have a tendency to create very false impressions abroad. Strangers to Montreal are not expected to know whence the language emanates; and as a consequence, may conclude that we are in a state of anarchy here, that martial law has been, is now, or may soon be, proclaimed. Such language is an injustice to the city, to the workingmen, to the labor organizations, and to every person concerned.

We are not reduced to a chaotic condition. It is true that there is very much distress this winter, that there are great numbers of unemployed, that the workmen have much to complain of, that

the labor organizations have had their hands full and have been heavily taxed to secure work or assistance for those who suffer from the hard times; but the laborers have been peaceful, respectful, and deserve the highest of praise for their sensible and rational conduct under the trying circumstances. The good advice of the Trades and Labor Council has been acted upon, and, as a consequence, greater sympathy has been awakened than such fiery appeals could ever create.

The man who, directly or indirectly, advises, or suggests, any action or movement that could serve to alienate that sympathy, is far from being a friend to the laborers' cause. It is easy to talk of buying guns; but it would be fairer and more honest to advise the laying aside of a little against such hard seasons as the present one. Thank goodness, the real workingmen of this city, and in fact of all Canada, are too wise to be led into extravagance of action against evils that only exist in the fertile imaginations of persons in whom, evidently, the "wish is father to the thought."

Of course the remarks above referred to fell flat, and even the daily press did not deem them of sufficient importance to demand any comment; we simply call attention to them in order to disabuse the minds of the many strangers who read our paper of the false impression that might be created regarding the actual state of affairs here. We trust that in future the same indifference will be paid to all appeals, suggestions or advice that might tend to injure the cause of labor and to militate against the interests of a deserving yet suffering section of the community.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

To-morrow is St. Valentine's Day. Every child knows the custom of that day. Once before we told the story of the feast; but in conformity with a request from a leading citizen, who, it appears, is collecting our editorials, we take the liberty of repeating what certainly has its application this year as well as in the past.

Little missives are sent from friend to friend, and they are always anonymous. But very often they are so arranged that the receiver can pretty nearly guess who the sender is. These olden customs are gradually dying out; they are forgotten in the hurry and bustle of an electric age of rush. Alas, that it should be so!

Well do we remember, in years that are dead, the little joys of St. Valentine's feast. How cunningly we prepared the picture and the lines upon it that were to be transmitted by post to one or other of our companions; how cautiously we dropped the envelope into the country post office, looking carefully around for fear that any one might see the act and report; how anxiously we awaited the result and watched the recipient to see the effects of those lines! Those were grand times! And especially when we took our little package of valentines from the office; we can still recall the pleasure or annoyance with which each one was opened, according as it contained pleasant or unpleasant words, pretty or hideous pictures. But this St. Valentine's day custom is not only forgotten, to a great extent, it has even degenerated into a very offensive and, at times, vulgar correspondence. But everything seems to be vulgarized in these days of progress and invention. We remember well a forcible remark of good Father Tabaret, it was characteristic of that grand man—"the world goes on improving while men are deteriorating." How true; even in the valentines do we see that fact exemplified. Ugly cartoons, miserable doggerel and low expressions

are the indices of the minds that invent, that purchase, or that send the valentines of this period. The gratification of some petty spite or the annoyance of some unoffending creature seems to be the motives that impel the majority of young people to send these missives. But apart from the mere ordinary amusement of sending valentines on paper, and receiving the same, there are other pleasant thoughts and facts that belong to this day and which should come home to every Catholic—young or old.

From Christmas until Easter, during those three months, there have been, there are, and there will be peculiarly interesting valentines passing through the great post office of the Church. Missives of prayer are sent off by millions of children, and the carrier-angels fly with them to heaven; and back to earth they come with packages of sealed blessings of these dear little children of St. Valentine. One of the most precious of valentines—from heaven to earth—was that of the Sweet Babe of Bethlehem; one of the most glorious valentines will be the Easter graces of the Resurrection.

All through Lent, even on this day, there are countless valentines coming in and going out of that grand delivery. On the one hand secret prayers, patient sufferings, holy sacrifices, noble charities, solemn offerings, humble mortifications, are being wrapped up in parcels and addressed to God; the spirits that compose His messenger army take them up and speed away to the chancel of the skies, and rejoice and chant happy hymns as they lay the valentines on the great table of Records, before the throne of the Almighty. And then they rejoice still more and sing still louder when they are handed the sealed packages of God's choicest blessings and graces, with which they rush back to earth. What glorious valentines and how precious they are.

And even between earth and that dreary abode of the suffering souls, there are many valentines to-day. It is true that they cannot reply at present; but for every simple valentine of prayer or meritorious action that is offered up for them, we may be sure that later on, when they reach the glorious home that awaits them, the valentines that they will send in return may be treasured up as the most sacred relics of our lives. A portfolio of such missives will be the most useful baggage that we can take with us when we set out upon that important and inevitable journey from the land of Time to the regions of the Great Unknown.

The best valentine that we can send our readers to-day is a copy of our paper. Each one, we trust, will find the missive a pleasant and instructive one. Remember while you read the pages of this valentine that you are actually in communication with us, and we in spirit are with you. During the hours spent in composing and penning all these lines, we have had you before us, and although we may never meet, still we enjoy a communion of sentiment that gives us a right to call each other valentines.

THERE are giants even in our day. In the Passage Panopticon, in Berlin, is an Arab, Hassan Ali, who has grown to nine feet two inches. He is only sixteen years of age. It is expected that he has several years more to grow. He was born near Sinah Ammons oasis, in Egypt. He certainly is a desert palm-tree; but he is not quite so graceful. As a rule these gigantic men are short-lived; but Hassan is healthy and physically sound, and unless he grows too tall he may have a reasonably long lease of life. There is a very pertinent question asked: What use is his height to mankind?