

## A PRAYER BOOK WOVEN IN SILK.

A very remarkable production of textile art, which was exhibited last year in the Paris Exhibition, is described at some length in the *Bulletin* of the Société Industrielle of Rouen. It is a prayer book woven in silk, the property of M. J. A. Henry, of Lyons. It consists of fifty pages of Gothic text in a very elegant character, each page, of course, having a different composition in the text, and also a different design in the ornamentation. There is in the latter a delightful mixture of fruits and flowers,—pansies, daisies, roses, lilies, and bindweed, gracefully and elegantly interlaced. Here are angels and saints in ecstasy; there, arabesques and armorial bearings, which the most finished engraving would hardly be able to excel. The material used was the quintessence of fine French silk, and the artist was not hampered by considerations of cost, as is sufficiently proved by the closeness of the threads in the warp and weft. The pages have a height of 175 millimetres, and a breadth of 150 millimetres, and present the appearance of leaves of very fine vellum. Four pictures are inserted in, or rather woven in, the text: the Nativity of Christ, after Fra Angelico; the Crucifixion, by Fra Bartholomeo; a Virgin with angels, in the spirit of the fourteenth century; and the principal scene in "The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament," by Raffaele. Five hundred thousand cards were required in the weaving of this extraordinary book, and the designs covered in all a surface of 70 square metres. M. Henry was assisted in his difficult task by Father Hervier, of the Society of St. Mary, who undertook to collect flower borders from the Gothic manuscripts of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and by M. Ant. Roux, a well-known French publisher. It is intended to produce 500 copies of this woven missal. We are enabled to present our readers with the accompanying illustration representing one page of the book, by the courtesy of the Société Industrielle of Rouen, to whom we beg to express our most cordial thanks.

## SIR HENRY MITCHELL ON FOREIGN TARIFFS.

A word about ourselves in connection with the stand we have taken as to the action this country should adopt with regard to foreign tariff, may not be out of place. We are Free Traders,—more earnestly so, perhaps, than those who condemn the slightest suggestion as to retaliation. It is because we are in favour of Free Trade that we advocate judicious retaliation, by which alone can the present obstructions to trade be removed. This country does not enjoy the benefits of Free Trade at the present time, however strongly some of us may protest our devotion to the doctrines of Cobden. There can be no Free Trade in England while the rest of the world continues to shut the door of commerce in our face. We may continue to buy of those who will not allow us to sell. But that was not what Cobden expected we should have

to do when he led the country forty years ago; and it is not Free Trade—it is trade carried on under every possible disadvantage that the ingenuity of our competitors can devise. We wish to see those disadvantages removed, and retaliation is the only method by which such a result can be obtained. Sir Henry Mitchell, speaking on Wednesday at a meeting of the Council of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, had something to say on matters of this kind:—

He thought it was due to the majority of the members of that Chamber to say that in view of the expiration of the French treaty early next year, and of the frightful effects which these constant impositions of higher duties had upon English trade, it was their duty to do all that they could to prevent the imposition of higher tariffs upon their goods. There was only one thing that could be done beyond the mere sending of remonstrances, and that was to appeal to the largest and most important industry in France, the wine industry, in order that those engaged in that industry

That meant that there had been a new industry nearly approaching £1,000,000 a year of exports to America to make up for the enormous deficiency which had taken place in the exportation of worsted stuff fabrics; and further, they must bear in mind that the population of America had increased by nearly 20,000,000. Where is the ground for congratulation as to the condition of our trade, one would like to know, after these facts?

## A FRENCH PROTEST AGAINST TAXING RAW SILK.

A document issued recently by the Committee of French Weavers which is endeavouring to prevent the imposition of duties on foreign silk will be read with interest, perhaps also with a spice of amusement, by English readers. It says: "To the claims of certain persons who demand of Parliament the abolition of the free entry of silks, which has existed since 1834, simply and solely for the advancement of their own interests, we reply by energetically protesting against every impost that would drive away work from our country, and, therefore, be the signal for an unprecedented social crisis. In fact, these persons, representing interests which are relatively very small, propose to burden with deadly taxes the raw material of our national industry of silk weaving. In spite of protests from every quarter; in spite of the opinions of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Commerce, and the whole government, demonstrating superabundantly the disastrous consequences which must ensue if—which is impossible—such proposals be adopted, the leaders in this Machiavellian campaign count upon attaining their ends by skilfully confusing the interests of agriculturists and sericulturists. To us they say in language which seems to be bitter mockery—'When there is less work, in consequence of the dearness of the raw materials, there will be better wages!' You 450,000 workers, to whom this great industry supplies work, which though unremunerative is our only resource, shall we allow our sole means of bread-winning to be sacrificed? No!—[This little word has a line to itself.]—Let us call the attention of the senators and deputies to the melancholy consequences of legislative measures, which, in the problematic hope of enabling some to gain 50,000,000 francs, would cause others to lose 300,000,000 francs. Along with the workers of St. Etienne, St. Chamond, Tours, Paris, Roubaix, Calais, etc., the operatives of Lyons will say to the Parliament—'It would be criminal to sacrifice the existence of 450,000 citizens to secure a privilege (for it is nothing else) to those who, whilst wishing to protect their own industry to our injury, desire at the same time to withdraw themselves from the public charges, which, according to the fundamental principles of modern law, ought to be equal for all. Measures more in harmony with progress can be applied to the support of industries which are not prospering; such are those proposed by the Government, which we heartily endorse.'



might render what help they could in preventing the new French Tariff Bill from coming into operation. He had reason to believe that the action taken by the Bradford Chamber had had a tendency to stimulate these people to do everything in their power to prevent the imposition of the higher duties. One very remarkable statement was made by Mr. Swire Smith at that *soirée*, and his attention had been called to it by many gentlemen in this district. This was that the export trade from Bradford was now four times as great as it was ten years ago. Mr. Smith had, however, since corrected that by saying that his observation only applied to the exports to America. He (Sir Henry) had carefully gone through the figures relating to the exports from Bradford to America for the last twenty years—and it was not desirable to take single years and compare them, because some years were so very much better than others were—and had found that from 1871 to 1880 the average exports of worsted goods were £2,254,000 per year, and that the average for the years 1881 to 1890 was £2,265,000, so that there was practically no difference between the two periods. They must also bear in mind that during the more recent period all their worsted coatings had figured in that amount.