

should be capable of statement in positive terms. But thus far the Conference leaders have declined to hint, even in the vaguest way, what these motives were. The most they have condescended to say is this: 'that the omission is advisable in a book to be read by children in the public schools.' But this is obviously a mere negative proposition, the logical equivalent of this—that the insertion of the story of the Incarnation and Virgin-Birth is not advisable, etc. We invite the Conference leaders to overcome their coy reluctance and inform a curious and expectant public on what direct and positive grounds they deemed the narrative of the Nativity 'inadvisable' for the perusal of public school children? We have a strict right to put this question and to get a sufficient answer, too, for the Conference proposes to compel us to pay a part of the cost of printing, publishing, and supplying at cheap rates this 'emasculated caricature' of the Sacred Scriptures. And if (on Conference principles) it is 'inadvisable' to place in the hands of children in public schools the wondrous and beautiful story of the coming of their Lord and Savior, on what grounds is it 'advisable' to place that very same narrative in the hands of the very same children—as the Conference clergy do—in the Sunday schools? And again on what grounds of consistency or principle does the Conference propose to make them read—and listen to 'historical, literary, and ethical explanations' of—the birth of Moses and the story of Uriah the Hittite?

There are a few other things, likewise, that we are pining to know before this matter of 'doctrinal reasons' can be determined. But, for the present, let us conclude with the following slashing remarks on the butchery of the Sacred Volume from the pen of the noted Victorian Presbyterian University professor and divine, the Rev. Dr. Rentoul—

'What is presented to us and to the children of the State in the narrative of these "lesson-books," and what asks the authoritative sanction of our educational system, is an Ebionite Jesus of Nazareth, born, apparently—and, as far as these lessons tell—of a human father, Joseph, and his wife, Mary, with a Messianic name, indeed, but with no reason apparent that it should belong to Him. Men are at liberty, as individual men, to take whatever views they choose of this or that historical record. They take that liberty abundantly. But a Commission of representatives of the Victorian Churches called upon to approach in honest good faith the New Testament narrative, and setting itself to tell our children the story of our Lord's birth and infancy, has no right to act thus. It is a wanton and a deadly wrong to the bona fides of the story and to the central faith of the Protestant Churches themselves. It is, I need scarcely say, a direct blow to all that is most sacred and most reverently cherished in the faith and the religion of all Catholics.'

Miss Louie Freear, a well known actress on the London boards, has been interviewed by a pressman. She stated: 'Most actresses have studied under noted and expensive professors of the histrionic art. I didn't. I never had a lesson in my life. I'm Irish, and didn't want any.' Some few years ago Mr Beerholm Tree said he never knew a really great actor who had not Irish or Jewish blood in his veins.

Lord Petre shares (says an exchange) with the Howards, Cliffords, Feildings, Stonors, Welds, Townleys, and De Traffords the aristocratic representation of Catholicism in England. Ingatestone Hall, one of Lord Petre's seats, which used to be let off in suites of apartments, is the scene of 'Lady Audley's Secret'. Miss Braddon occupied one of these suites. There remains, or did until recently, the crazy old clock with one wobbly hand. Some of the characters were drawn from other occupants of the hall, which is accurately pictured under the title of Audley Court.

British Sailors at the Vatican

The visit paid by British sailors to the Vatican recently created considerable attention in the Eternal City (writes a Rome correspondent). There were three English audiences on the occasion of the Gregorian Centenary a few weeks ago, but the three English audiences of the past week were of far greater interest to the general British public. It is nearly ten years since the last event of the kind, when Leo XIII blessed the sailors and marines in the Sistine but that was not so markedly a visit to the Pope as the present. After a few years, the event was about to be repeated, and announcements of it were made in the press, but it did not take place. Possibly this was out of consideration for Exeter Hall traditions, but I think it was on account of reasons belonging to a different order. The arrangements were cancelled. Let us hope that the happening of the present visit so early in a new Pontificate will prove an augury of repetition.

The first contingent was of about twenty-four. It came on June 16. The second, of fifty, came on June 17. The men rose at four, and fasted until noon. His Holiness learned this, and actually left the audience chamber, where several persons were waiting their turns to be received, so that the men should be allowed to break their fast as soon as possible. This audience took place in the Consistory Hall: that of the previous day in the hall called the Pope's Chapel, off the Throne Room. On each occasion his Holiness gave souvenir medals to all the men, and spoke one of his brief and pleasing addresses, which Monsignor Prior translated into English. 'I thank you,' he said sweetly, in receiving the fifty of June 17, 'I thank you for this most dear visit.' He invoked upon them every choicest blessing of heaven; upon their families and their friends. He exhorted them to lead good Christian lives, and at the same time to be loyal subjects. 'Be true,' he said, 'to the banner which allows you the consolation of this visit.' Three officers were present in uniform, but it was known that more would come with the principal body on June 18.

This was to consist of three hundred and fourteen men, all Catholics, but in the afternoon of June 17 it was learned that as many as three hundred and fifty might come. They marched from the Piazza of the Railway Station to St Peter's, in other words almost from one extremity of Rome to the other, with a band playing. The Quirites are out betimes in summer mornings, so the sight was not lost, and St Peter's was populous when at the altar and tomb of St. Gregory the Great. Father Bellasis, of the Oratory, said Mass to the music of English hymns—which the men sang. After their delightful audience in the Hall of Maps, they were entertained at dinner in the Pilgrims' Hospice of Santa Marta, right against the enormous apse of St Peter's. On the previous occasion of the sort entertainment had been given in the 'Wing' of Charlemagne, or southern branching of the Bernini Portico in front of St. Peter's. There is also another difference. On that occasion the work was in the hands of a committee formed in the colony. This time, for the initiative and everything else must be thanked Monsignor Prior, D.D., Domestic Prelate of his Holiness, who spared no pains to make the three days what they became—a complete success. Dinner over, the Gardens and the collections of the Vatican, closed at that hour to the public, were open to the men, and before they had done their sight-seeing the hour fixed for the private audience of the Admiral and the officers had arrived. To this all these went in full uniform, accompanied by their families.

The miser sat amongst his gold.

"I would not part," he said,

"With half-a-guinea, tho' my life

Were to be forfeited.

But influenza got him down,

His breaths grew short and fewer—

"Take all I've got," he cried, but give

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