

had ever had a good view of the murderer at once identified him, but when he learned that the suspect was a fellow-Jew he declined to swear to him.

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If there is anything in this Jew story, one can only say that it is strangely out of keeping with the general character and traditions of the race. As a rule—as one of our Catholic contemporaries points out—the Jewish population furnishes only a very small quota to the criminal ranks; and their love of kindred and nation and their close-knit family ties all make for the higher ideals of living and for the safe paths of peaceful industry. If Sir Robert Anderson is able to clear up finally, absolutely, and beyond all question the mystery surrounding the identity of this notorious criminal, he might, perhaps, be justified in referring to the matter; but if, as seems more likely, he is unable to do this, he ought to have altogether held his peace.

The 'Nelson System' and the Teachers

The views of the teachers regarding the attempt to smuggle Bible lessons into the State schools by means of the 'Nelson System' must necessarily be an important factor in any agitation on the subject; and the fact that the introduction of such lessons would, in effect, mean the imposition of a religious test on the teaching body, will, one would imagine, prove an insuperable obstacle to any general adoption of the system. As a body, the teachers are opposed on principle to any proposal which involves the giving of Bible lessons on their part; and the general attitude of the profession was well exemplified by the action of Mr. W. T. Grundy, headmaster of the Clyde-Quay School, Wellington, who plainly intimated to the meeting held for the election of a school committee that he was not prepared to allow any member of his staff to give any religious instruction in the school. Occasionally teachers' institutes have put on record their official attitude towards the Bible-in-schools question, of which the following series of resolutions—passed some time ago by the Tapanui branch of the Otago Educational Institute—is a sample. It was resolved: 'That this branch of the Otago Educational Institute is of opinion that the introduction of the Bible into the State schools would be opposed to the best interests of education, of the State, and of religion itself, and for the following reasons: (1) That the syllabus is already overloaded. (2) It would lead committees to reject teachers who, for conscientious reasons, were not prepared to take charge of the Bible lessons. The institute holds that religious beliefs should be no bar to State employment. (3) It would lead to a distinction being made in our schools between Protestant and Catholic children. In our schools all children should meet merely as children of the State, and the Institute believes that their ability so to meet for over 25 years has been of very great advantage to the State. (4) It would tend to establish the authority of the State to interfere in religious affairs, an interference which, in the opinion of the institute, history plainly shows to have had evil results on both State and religion. (5) It would be a serious injustice to our Catholic fellow-citizens, inasmuch as they would be compelled to pay for that which they cannot conscientiously approve of. (6) That the institute is of opinion that religious education should be given by religious persons, otherwise there is a danger of the Bible itself being brought into contempt, and of a dislike for it being created in the minds of the children.' These objections are well taken, and they all apply to the 'Nelson system.'

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The effect which the adoption of the system would have on the position of the teachers was clearly brought out and strongly emphasised by the Rev. Father Holbrook on the eve of the recent school committee elections. Preaching at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland, Father Holbrook spoke of the agitation for the Nelson system as 'a deliberate attempt on the part of the ministers to turn the State schools into Protestant Sunday schools.' If the system were adopted, it would, he said, be 'only a question of time when there would be no Catholic teachers in the public schools of the Dominion, for they would not be able to conform to the interpretation of the Bible as laid down in the Protestant version.' Commenting—after the elections—on Father Holbrook's statements, the Wellington *Evening Post* remarks: 'The wisdom of Mr. W. T. Grundy's protest at the Clyde-Quay householders' meeting on Monday is abundantly demonstrated by the danger which the Rev. Father Holbrook scents from afar. As headmaster of the Clyde-Quay School, Mr. Grundy said that he would be glad to welcome to the school any worker in the cause of religion so far as the law allowed, but he was not prepared to allow any member of his staff to give any religious instruction in the school. Though such a rule may work harshly in many cases, and may often exclude a teacher who is thoroughly competent to give a religious lesson and would be glad to volunteer, the objection taken in Auckland

shows that it is absolutely necessary. If any of the State school teachers were allowed to undertake this work, those who refused to do so would be marked men and women; and pressure from and trouble with parents, school committees, and Education Boards would inevitably follow. The ultimate result might well be the elimination of the teachers whose consciences forbade them to give the religious lesson. No ground must be left for the just fears of the Roman Catholics in this respect. The religious instruction must be strictly voluntary for both teachers and pupils, and on no account must the State school teachers be allowed to take a hand in it.'

Devotion to Mary: More Protestant Tributes

Last week we gave a fairly varied selection of Protestant poetic tributes to the Blessed Virgin. The collection, though not exhaustive, was sufficient to show how numbers of the great Protestant poets, breaking through the fetters of official religion, have acknowledged, in terms the tenderest and highest that the human mind can command, the unique character of our Blessed Lady. We conclude our reference to the subject by giving a few testimonies from prose writers to the unquestionably elevating and ennobling influence of Catholic love for and devotion to the Virgin Mother. Our citations shall in all cases be from distinctly non-Catholic writers.

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We have before quoted in these columns Ruskin's well-known tribute. 'To the common non-Catholic mind,' he says, 'the dignities ascribed to the Madonna have always been a violent offence; they are one of the parts of the Catholic faith which are open to reasonable dispute and least comprehensible by the average realistic and materialist temper of the Reformation. But, after the most careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend, of the influences of Catholicity for good and evil, I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. . . . There has probably not been an innocent cottage house throughout the length and breadth of Europe in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties, and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women; and every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts and strength of manhood has been the fulfilment of the assured prophecy of the Israelite maiden, "He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His Name."'

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Lecky, the historian of Rationalism, who certainly cannot be accused of any bias towards the Catholic faith, writes: 'The world is governed by ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more salutary influence than the medieval conception of the Virgin. . . . All that was best in Europe clustered round it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of civilisation' (*Rationalism in Europe*, c. iii., p. 234).

Again, in his *History of European Morals*, v. ii., p. 389, he very strikingly corroborates Ruskin's testimony. 'Whatever may be thought of its theological propriety [he is speaking, of course, from the Rationalist point of view], there is, I think, little doubt that the Catholic reverence of the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal woman, and to soften the manners of men. It has had an influence which the worship of the pagan goddesses could never possess; for these had been almost destitute of moral beauty, and especially of that kind of moral beauty which is peculiarly feminine. It supplied in a great measure the redeeming and ennobling influence in a strange amalgamation of licentious and military feeling, which was formed around women in the age of chivalry, and which no succeeding change of habit or belief has wholly destroyed.'

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Schlegel, one of the German translators of Shakespeare, a great poet and critic, and a staunch Lutheran, witnesses to the same truth. In his *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, p. 8, he claims that 'with the virtue of chivalry was associated a new and purer spirit of love; an inspired homage for genuine female worth, which was now reared as the pinnacle of humanity, and enjoined by religion itself under the image of the Virgin Mother, infused into all hearts a sentiment of unalloyed goodness.'

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We conclude with a brief but beautiful passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne, the great American novelist: 'I have always envied the Catholics their faith in that sweet, sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the Deity, intercepting somewhat of His awful splendor, but permitting His love to stream upon the worshipper more intelligibly to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness.' Commenting on which passage, a well-known Catholic writer supplies the following interesting and significant fact: 'One wonders whether Hawthorne,