

AUGHAN.

the authenticity of other books of the Old Testament, the Association has cancelled the engagement. The Young Christians are not prepared to seem to endorse the Latitudinarian views of the doctor, which sap the foundations of Christian belief.

The Socialists of Austria have been very anxious for the establishment of universal suffrage, and at last, as far as this point is concerned, they have succeeded in obtaining it, but not by their own strength, as there are many outside their ranks who have favored this concession to the people.

The clergymen of the various Protestant denominations who run counter to the received doctrines of orthodoxy are becoming more numerous every day. By the latest despatches we learn that the celebrated novelist, the Rev. Dr. Watson, who, under the name Ian McLaren, has so accurately delineated Scotch character, is now charged with inciting Unitarianism in his writings, and especially in his books "Mind and Master" and "The Bonnie Briar-Bush."

Dr. Creighton, the new Bishop of London, England, has caused quite a sensation by appearing at a confirmation service in mitre and cope, it being the first time that an Anglican Bishop has worn these insignia of office for three and a half centuries, that is, since the Anglican Church was originated. The object of all this is evidently to make it appear, in accordance with recent Anglican theories, that that Church is a continuation of the ancient Church of England, which was the Catholic Church in communion with the See of Rome.

The Oxford Magazine of January 27th has the following note concerning the Jesuit invasion of "Varsity-land": "The Hall of Jesuit novices, which began its existence as Clarke's Hall last term, seems to have given its name to the name of 'Campion Hall.' The name recalls interesting memories of one of the most accomplished scholars who ever came from Christ's Hospital to Oxford, and of a life of many adventures in an adventurous age. It is to be hoped that the thought of those who bear the title will dwell rather on the elegant orator who pronounced the funeral oration on Sir Thomas White, in the peaceful days when Campion served his College and University, than on the bold missionary who at the early age of forty-two suffered torture and death for his faith."

We are indebted to the Liverpool Catholic Times for the following extracts from a "Lenten Rule," recently distributed at an Anglican (Protestant) church in London: "To visit the Tabernacle daily, or three times a week, and when in the Divine Sacramental Presence to intercede for the reunion of Christendom to the Holy Souls in Purgatory." "With the advice of my confessor to increase my communions during Lent; to attend the late Mass on Sundays in Lent, even though I may have performed my obligation by having attended an early Mass."

World Magazine pro- cracter as a thoughtful while it has sufficient make it entertaining, carries some prominent thought-provoking

nged that Dr. Lyman York was to deliver a the Young Men's Chris- a, but since the rever- publicly announced his history of Jonah and

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

General Intent on For April.

THE READING OF THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

Reading is the cultivation and nutriment of the mind. What we read is treasured up in our memory, and is received like the seed which, in due season, gives birth to thoughts and desires. If we do not attempt to assimilate indiscriminately all kinds of food, and if we shun with care what ever might prove hurtful; if we do not cast into the soil all kinds of seed, but those only which are useful, how much more discernment should we not exercise in the choice of food for the mind, and in the selection of the seed from which our thoughts spring. What we read to day with indifference will, when occasion offers, awaken, without our perceiving it, thoughts which will be for us a principle of salvation or of ruin. God suggests good thoughts for our welfare, the devil evil ones, of which he finds the germ within us, to lead us to perdition; and we furnish him with a weapon whenever we are imprudent enough to store our memory with a multitude of evil and dangerous reminiscences.

Though it may be very mortifying to our pride to acknowledge it, we take, for the most part, our ideas from the books we read. Our pet authors, with whom we while away such pleasant and perchance, such dangerous hours, traffic freely with our sentiments; some they stifle, others they foster. They re-cast our way of thinking for weal or for woe, and at these every periods when genuine literature is discarded, we are helplessly transformed into whatever it may please the writers, our masters, to pre-ordain. Unwholesome reading exposes us to the peril of losing our faith, our innocence, our peace of mind and eternity itself, by making us squander the precious time God has given us where-in to earn endless happiness. How many readers, were they forced to be candid, would confess, in looking back over the years gone by, that they find the enduring impression of some indifferently written book, long since forgotten by the public, to which however they can ascribe a certain leaning of the heart, a certain bent of the mind, certain pleasures of the soul, and perhaps even certain events in their lives. One may attribute to its reading a more dreamy or more active imagination, another, a more ardent or a more unimpassioned sensibility, and a third, a more pronounced abhorrence of vice, while some unfortunate may acknowledge that by its perusal he awakened passions insatiable in their longings.

One can scarcely realize how easily awakened and how lasting impressions are in those fallow and virginal natures of childhood. A child may, even till it reaches the years of manhood, be swayed by some affecting word, some touching simile, some favorite air which erstwhile moved it to indignation or tears. Now, should the first book to fall into its hands voice only truthful thoughts and virtuous sentiments, what a precious and fruitful harvest would be sown for all time to come! But on the contrary, what a blighting, what a laying waste in those ingenuous, unguarded souls, should they happen to drink in the poison distilled from a corrupt pen!

Not to mention the violent and sudden reversions from good or evil, as the case may be, produced by reading, in the mind or heart, there is that slow, continuous, progressive action, scarcely noticeable, working a change in the soul, just as food works a change in our bodies. The venturesome reader of questionable literature is yet to be found who has not been influenced, and more than he would wish to acknowledge, by the constant perusal of such books.

Has he still the same lively horror of evil, the same keen sense of duty as formerly when he spurned weak evasions? Have doubts never crossed his mind, nor temptations ever got the better of his heart? Is he not too often willing to affect that broad-mindedness—a reprehensible sens—which, when it cannot endorse everything read as precisely good or true, has no longer the courage to resent what is vile or to contradict what is erroneous, but would allege any number of excuses in palliation of falsehood?

The danger is all the greater nowadays as it is rare to find persons, even well-to-do in the world, who possess that solid instruction which would render them proof against the false principles and equally unreliable opinions, books, papers and reviews. The very instruction which they are sought after is sufficient proof of a deplorable ignorance, or at least of indifferent mental culture in the public which allows itself to be captivated by such triflings. The greater part, if not all, the prejudice existing among a certain class may be traced to the same source. Then, again, crimes against morality, scandals in high life, the nudities of the stage, the carnal fantasies of the studio, all are seized upon with avidity and laid before the public, because being sensational they readily command a market. And to render the lesson in evil still more telling, the profusion of illustrations executed with a skill deserving of a better cause, which accompany it, are for the most part indelicate, often bordering on the obscene, but at all times sensual.

Books and papers professedly immoral or irreligious are oftentimes less dangerous than those which, outwardly good, imperceptibly predispose the reader both to immorality and impiety, by sowing in the mind prejudices unfavorable to religion and virtue. We are on our guard against the former, for they excite but horror and disgust in the virtuous. The latter, on the contrary, not seldom affect the language of piety in the relating of scandalous events; nor do they begrudge ample praise to truth, the better surreptitiously to palm off their errors on their readers. This tactic is more skillful, and for that very reason more dangerous. The poisonous teaching, artfully disguised, is unwittingly taken in. It fills the soul by its treacherous invasions, and holds it in a dreamy trance which gradually ends in death.

No, it is not possible that faith should survive unscathed the reading of irreligious books, especially when our passions are in league with our worst enemy. It is written that he who loves the danger shall perish in it. To escape so great a misfortune let us eschew every book or publication of which we have reason to doubt the soundness of the rule of the Index, so lately revised, and imposed upon the faithful for their guidance, in an Apostolic Constitution, by Our Holy Father Leo XIII.

But if we are in duty bound to avoid reading what will prove detrimental to our eternal interests, we should on the other hand make it a practice frequently to read books which will help us in the one great affair of our salvation. St. Chrysostom says: "It is impossible that a man should be saved who neglects assiduous reading or meditation. The craftsman will rather suffer hunger and all other hardships than lose the instruments of his trade, knowing them to be the means of earning his livelihood." Neglect or dereliction of pious reading and instruction is a most fatal symptom in the maladies of the soul. What hopes can we entertain of a person to whom the science of virtue and of eternal salvation seems uninteresting or beneath his notice? By pious reading the mind is instructed and enlightened, and the affections of the heart are purified and lulled. Devout persons need no incentive to reading or meditation. They are insatiable in this exercise, and according to a saying of Thomas a Kempis, they find their chief delight "in their little corner with a good book." Worldly and tepid Christians stand certainly in the utmost need of this help to virtue. The world is one whirl of business, pleasure and sin. Its torrent is always beating upon their hearts, ready to break in and submerge them in its flood, unless frequent pious reading and consideration oppose a strong breakwater to its waves.

The more deeply a person is immersed in worldly cares so much the greater ought to be his solicitude to find leisure to breathe after the distractions of business and society, to cleanse his heart by secret prayer, and by pious reading afford his soul some spiritual refreshment, just as the weary laborer, after the day's work, recruits his spent vigor and exhausted strength by allowing his body necessary refreshment and repose.

If we are once fully persuaded that that we should devote some time daily to this salutary exercise, it will not be hard to choose for our reading an appropriate book and one of real merit. We are accustomed, and do not doubt with some show of reason, to prize a book according to the literary finish imparted to it by the author; but it derives its worth to a still greater extent from the subject-matter. When there is question of a biography its main interest is grounded on the merits of the personage whose career is recorded. From this common sense principle it is easy to understand the importance we should attach to the reading of the Lives of the Saints. These records and portraits of God's friends "furnish the Christian with a daily spiritual exercise, which is not less agreeable than affecting and instructive. For in sacred biography the advantages of devotion and piety are joined with the most attractive charms of history. The method of forming men to virtue by example is of all others the shortest, the most easy, and the best adapted to all circumstances and dispositions. Pride recoils at precepts, but example instructs without usurping the authoritative air of a master; for, by example, a man seems to advise and teach himself. It does its work unperceived, and therefore with less opposition from the passions which take not the alarm. Its influence is communicated with pleasure. Nor does Virtue here appear barren and dry as in discourses but animated and living, arrayed with all her charms, exerting all her powers, and secretly obviating the pretences, and removing the difficulties which self-love never fails to raise.

In the Lives of the Saints we see the most perfect maxims of the Gospel reduced to practice, and the most heroic virtue made the object of our senses, clothed, as it were, with a body, and exhibited to view in its most attractive dress. Here, moreover, we are taught the means by which virtue is obtained, and learn the precipices and snares which we are to shun, and the blinds and by ways in which many are bewildered and misled in its pursuit. The example of the servants of God points out to us the true path, and leads us, as it were, by the hand into it, sweetly inviting and encouraging us to walk cheerfully in the steps of those that are gone before us.

Neither is it a small advantage that, by reading the history of the

Saints, we are introduced into the acquaintance of the greatest personage who have ever adorned the world, the brightest ornaments of the Church Militant, and the shining stars and suns of the Triumphant, our future companions in eternal glory. While we admire the wonder of grace and mercy which God hath displayed in their favor we are strongly moved to praise His adorable goodness.

And in their penitential lives and holy maxims we learn the sublime lessons of practical virtue, which their assiduous meditation of the divine word, the most consummate experience in the deserts, watching and commerce with Heaven, and the lights of the Holy Ghost, their interior master, discovered to them. But it is superfluous to show from reason the eminent usefulness of the example and the history of the Saints which the most sacred authority recommends to us as one of the most powerful helps to virtue. It is the admonition of St. Paul, that we remember our holy teachers, and that, having the end of their conversation before our eyes, we imitate their faith."

Had we any doubts concerning the efficacy of the reading of the Lives of the Saints in leading men to virtue, we need but consult the History of the Church. There we are sure to find, besides the weighty testimonies of eminent and holy writers who proclaim the power of this spiritual help, numberless examples of sinners converted by it to a heroic practice of piety. St. Augustine mentions two courtiers who were moved on the spot to forsake the world and become fervent monks by accidentally reading the life of St. Anthony. St. John Columbin, from a rich, covetous and passionate nobleman, was changed to a saint by casually reading the life of St. Mary of Egypt. The Duke de Joyeuse, Marshal of France, owed his perfect conversion to the reading of the life of St. Francis Borgia, which his servant had one evening laid on the table. St. Ignatius of Loyola, during a long convalescence from the effects of a wound received at the siege of Pampluna, wished to while away the time by reading tales of knight errantry. As no such books were at hand he reluctantly took up the Lives of the Saints, and from a worldly-minded soldier became a great servant of God and the founder of the Society of Jesus. Palafox relates that a prominent Lutheran minister at Bremen, known in his day for several works which he had printed against the Church, purchased the life of St. Theresa, written by herself, with the intention of confuting it; but, after attentively reading it over, was himself converted to the Catholic faith, and from that time led a most edifying life.

But to appeal to our own experience, who is not awakened from his spiritual lethargy, and con-founded at his own cowardice when he considers the fervor and courage of the Saints? All our pretences and foolish objections are silenced when we see the most perfect maxims of the Gospel demonstrated to be easy by example. When we read how many young noblemen and tender virgins have despised the world and joyfully embraced the Cross and the labors of penance we feel a glowing flame kindled in our breasts, and are encouraged to suffer afflictions with patience, and cheerfully to undertake suitable practices of penance. While we see many sanctifying themselves in all states, and making the very circumstances of their condition, whether on the throne, in the army, in the state of marriage, or in the deserts, the means of their virtue and penance, we are persuaded that the practice of perfection is possible also to us in every lawful profession, and that we need only sanctify our employments by a perfect spirit, and the fervent exercises of religion, to become saints ourselves without quitting our state in the world.

When we behold others, framed of the same frail mould with ourselves, many in age or other circumstances weaker than ourselves and struggling with greater difficulties, yet courageously surmounting and trampling upon all the obstacles by which the world endeavored to obstruct their virtuous choice, we are secretly stung within our breasts, feel the reproaches of our sloth, are roused from our state of insensibility, and are forced to cry out: "Canst thou do what such and such have done?"

By way of conclusion, let us sum up the motives which induce us, if we have not already long since adopted the practice, to read a page or so every day of the Lives of the Saints. The Saints were the particular friends of God. What, therefore, can there be more admirable, more sublime and more instructive than the record of the familiar communings of God with His creatures?

The Saints were heroes; therefore their history is above all useful in forming men of character and valiant Christians. The saints were the greatest benefactors of their race; therefore the portrayal of their lives is best calculated to enkindle in the hearts of a generation, chilled with egotism, the flame of an all devoted charity.

The saints are actually our intercessors before the throne of God. Is it not proper that we should know something of the life of a friend, a benefactor, a saviour? The saints deserve all these titles of our gratitude. After the Inspired Writings, there is no reading, from a moral and religious point of view, comparable with the reading of the Lives of the Saints. They are indeed light for the mind and warmth for the heart.

Theoretical asceticism is not to be grasped by every intellect. The Lives of the Saints are in general intelligible to the least cultivated mind, especially as regards their moral and practical aspect. And then we never understand better the science of spirituality than in seeing it put into practice.

The heart also has its share of profit. Exemplary conduct, example is an inspiring teacher, and experience is ready to vouch for the all but irresistible force of this incentive. But that the Lives of the Saints may be productive of all these desirable results we must shun several pitfalls, and first curiosity, for it would be a great mistake to read the Lives of the Saints as we would an ordinary tale of history. Next precipitation, as it is important to read with attention and with calm, so as to savor, as it were, the admirable deeds and sublime virtues which abound in the Lives of the Saints. We must also avoid presumption. The saints have often followed a path upon which it would be rash to enter without a special call from God. Visions, revelations and miracles are not the constituents of virtue, and are wholly beyond the control of the human will.

But let us read the Lives of the Saints with simplicity and a pure heart. Our Lord has said: Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. And this comprises the understanding of the things of God and the maxims of spirituality. Let us read them with a heart detached from all affection for sin. We relish better the examples we strive to imitate, and the saints who set us these examples were wholly detached from all created things. And lastly, let our reading be accompanied with a strong desire of progressing in virtue.

PRAYER. O Jesus! through the most pure Heart of Mary, I offer Thee all the prayers, work and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Thy Divine Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in reparation of the sins of the Mass, in reparation of the Apostleship of Prayer; in particular that we may all relish and practice assiduously the reading of the Lives of the Saints. Amen.

WHERE THE CHURCH STANDS.

Archbishop Ryan Defines the Position of the Catholic Church Towards Sacred Scripture. Archbishop Ryan, of Philadelphia, in an interview given to the press of that city, the other day, very clearly defines the position of the Catholic Church regarding the Bible. The Archbishop told the reporter that he had read of the views held by the minister who regards the story of Jonah as an allegory, and he said, he did not see how this minister could stop at this stage without going on further and demolishing all miracles recorded in biblical history, because as one transcends the limits of human reasoning and natural phenomena so do all. At this point the Archbishop says, further: "What is true of special Catholic doctrines is true also of many of the objections brought against revelation. Much ridicule has been thrown upon the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale. And whales have been measured and statistics have been given, to show the impossibility of the fact. Now, it appears that there is not a word in the original text of the Bible about Jonah being swallowed by a whale at all. The Scriptures indeed say that 'God prepared a large fish' to swallow the prophet, and some translators, not all, thinking there could be no fish capable of doing this, but a whale, so translated it. The Douay version, and indeed all the versions I have consulted, translate it a 'large fish' in the Book of Jonah in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the English Protestant Bible translates the term 'whale,' whilst the revised edition adds 'sea monster' in the margin. The Douay New Testament agrees with the English Protestant Bible old version with note in edition of Haydock that the original word means large fish, while that of Archbishop Kenrick, of Baltimore, has the term fish in both Old and New Testaments. The matter would be of little or no importance if it had not been magnified by ridicule.

Now, naturalists, who in the end will be found more the friends of religion than of infidelity, have discovered that there were in those early days sea monsters so large that they could have contained Jonah and some of his companions. And to say that God—the God who created the sea and all that is in it—could not have preserved His prophet within the body of such a creature is as unreasonable as it is irreligious. Again, how much ridicule has been thrown upon the story of Joshua telling the sun to stand still in the heavens. It is said that if Joshua or his inspirer knew the Copernican theory, that the sun did not move at all, he would not have commanded it to stand still. To command something to stand still that is already standing is an absurdity, and, therefore, neither Joshua nor the being who is said to have inspired him understood creation, knew what every body knows now. Again, it is said that if the earth did stand still, all creation would be cast into chaos, and universal destruction would be the result. Joshua did not know the Copernican theory? Did Copernicus know it? Yet we speak of the sun rising in the east, passing across the heavens and sinking in the west. Some skeptic in the distant future, reading our almanacs, will imagine we knew nothing of the theory that the world moves and the sun stands still, for we are

chronicling what we call the 'motions' of the sun. "You may say we speak from appearances. So did the Scripture, the office of which was to teach truth, religious truth, not science. But how is it possible that even the earth should stand still and all nature not fall into chaos? Impossible! If there was no God to sustain it. This truth applies to the story of Jonah, the story of Joshua and to the stories of all miracles, that the God who created physical laws can suspend them, can change them, because physical laws, unlike moral laws, are arbitrary on the part of God. Such moral laws as are founded on the essence of things right or wrong cannot be changed. They are intrinsically right or wrong and God cannot, will not, change them, because it would be wrong or saying falsehood. But physical laws are arbitrary. He might have decreed such an order of laws that a stone flung upward should continue to fly up like a balloon, as well as fall back to the earth and the balloon should fall to the earth as well as mount upward to the skies. He could, therefore, have suspended His laws, or caused light like that of day to continue, or He could have in the beginning, when He founded His laws, have provided for the prayer of Joshua as He foresaw all things. Or He could have kept Jonah alive in the belly of a fish despite that man is an oxygen-breathing animal, and have made this shipwrecked stranger convert the heathen city of Nineveh with a few words. The most absurd, the most narrow-minded of all objections are the objections to miracles—tying God's hands in His own creation and limiting His power."

The Catholic Church, Archbishop Ryan pointed out, cannot become involved in the arguments and differences of individual interpretation of the Scriptures as now agitation of the Protestant Churches. On the other hand, the Protestant right of private interpretation of the Scripture involves logically the right of rejection of those points which the reader cannot accept and the right of skepticism on those points on which he is in doubt. There may be creeds to direct him, there may be learned men to instruct him, but the creeds and the learned men and their teaching come also within the domain of private interpretation and there is no living speaker with authority to explain what is their true meaning when in doubt. We quote the Archbishop again: "In a State it is only necessary to have a supreme court that is final, whose decision, whether right or wrong intrinsically, is yet final, for unity then follows. But in legislating for the intellect itself, in deciding for me what I am to believe when I am in doubt, not merely what I am to do, but what I am to believe, if the tribunal of last resort be not an unerring one, the doubt remains. If that decision can be wrong, I can still be right, though I oppose it. Hence, it seems to me the logical necessity for a supreme court in spirituals to decide and end disputes unerringly for the intellect itself. I think that an unerring tribunal is essential for certainty in matters of faith, and that it was this, judging the Scriptures for oneself, and not receiving authoritative interpretation, that has led to much modern skepticism. It will never do to say: 'Well, you have the Scriptures themselves.' The question is as to their truth and meaning. A law cannot decide a law. I cannot get my final interpretation of it without a supreme court; and neither can the Scriptures uninterpreted lead to any thing in most minds than skepticism."

Young Creelman's Scapular. Young Creelman, the intrepid young midshipman who has just been rewarded with a medal by Congress for his bravery in plunging into the sea to save a drowning boy during the late hurricane around Hattaras, was almost exhausted when they lifted him aboard. On removing his clothes they lifted his scapular and would have removed it, too, but he caught it and said: "Leave it; it saved me from the sea."—Western Watchman.

LINDSAY. SILVER JUBILEE OF THE MOTHER SUPERIOR-BISHOP O'CONNOR ATTENDS THE ENTERTAINMENT IN HONOR OF THE EVENT. Sitting yesterday in the prettily decorated music hall of St. Joseph's convent, one only regretted that it was necessary to delude the public from such a treat as the concert prepared for the Mother Superior jubilee to be. On the occasion of her silver jubilee her pupils thus united to express in song and music their gratitude and love for their teacher. The Bishop of Peterborough and Father Casey, together with Monsignor Laurent and Father McGuire, were present to offer congratulations and to encourage the children. The programme was well selected and admirably carried out. The opening number was a duet by Misses Edith McGee and Florence O'Leary, followed by a chorus from the assembled school children. A pretty-voiced address was then read by Miss Mary Brady, and afterwards followed well-rendered solos, quartets and instrumentals. Particularly enjoyable were a fairy operetta by six tiny fauns and their queen, the violin selection by seven young ladies, the mandolin and guitar instrumental, the double quartet, and last, not least, the little market song so charmingly given by little Ella Brady. Toward the close of the entertainment four wee maids, representing the metals, iron, steel, silver and gold, entered and introduced themselves in suitable addresses. When Silver's turn came she presented to the Mother Superior several dainty and useful silver presents from the different classes. Another well-rendered duet and chorus brought to a close a most delightful and instructive programme. After the final number the Bishop addressed to the children a few well-chosen words, exhorting the one in whose honor they were assembled, and bidding them imitate her example throughout life. Father Casey and Monsignor Laurent each made some happy remarks, and concluded by gladdening the hearts of the children by granting a holiday.—Post, March 28.