



Bone & Brass Victorian Style Earrings

### **Strange Conduct Of A Clergyman**

At the Andover Petty Sessions, on Monday, the Rev. Esdaile Birkett, vicar of Charlton, near Salisbury, was charged with cruelly ill-treating two children, aged seven and nine respectively, the daughters of Mr Edward Coles, of the Eight Bells Railway Hotel.

It appears that the reverend gentleman had occasion one day last week to put up his "trap" at the above named hotel, and on leaving, the children expressed a wish to have a short ride with him, the mother consenting. The prisoner took them a short distance, as far as the Whitechurch-road; he then showed them some trinkets, brass and bone ear-rings, &c., and asked them if they would like to have ear-rings in their ears. Of course the children said "Yes;" he then pierced their ears with some blunt instrument, and sent the children home with their necks covered with blood.

It was stated in evidence that the prisoner had tried to compromise the matter by making arrangements with the father, which the latter declined to accede to, but put it in the hands of the police, who arrested him on Monday, at the vicarage. He could offer no motive for what he had done. The magistrates, after consultation, ordered him to pay a fine of £5, or a month's imprisonment, stating at the time that they (the magistrates) thought the prisoner was not a proper person to be a clergyman any longer. As the Rev. gentleman had not the cash by him, he was allowed a week to pay.

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