

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—LX.



IN THE FIERY FURNACE.

I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.— DANIEL iii., 25.

NO SURRENDER.

THE City Corporation is lavishly spending other people's money in its attempt to put down the *Freethinker*. Sir Thomas Nelson is keeping the pot boiling. He employs Sir Hardinge Giffard and a tail of juniors in Court, and half the detectives in London outside. These surreptitious gentlemen, who ought to be engaged in detecting crime, are busily occupied in purchasing the *Freethinker*, waylaying newsvendors' messengers, intimidating shopkeepers, and serving notices on the defendants. What money, unscrupulously obtained and unscrupulously expended, is doing is being done. But there is one thing it cannot do. It cannot damp our courage or alienate the sympathy of our friends.

There is evidently a widespread conspiracy against us. We have to stand on trial at the Old Bailey in company with rogues, thieves, burglars, murderers, and other products of Christian civilisation. The company is not very agreeable, but then Jesus Christ himself was crucified between two thieves. No doubt the Jews thought him the worst of the three, just as pious Christians will think us worse than the vilest criminal at the Old Bailey; but

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posterity has reversed their judgment on him, and it will as certainly reverse the judgment on us.

If a jury should give a verdict against us, which we trust it will not, the prosecutors will probably strike again at some other Freethought publication. The appetite of persecution grows by what it feeds on, and demands sacrifice after sacrifice until it is checked by the aroused spirit of humanity. After a sleep of twenty-five years the great beast has roused itself, and it may do considerable damage before it is driven back into its lair. We may witness a repetition of the scenes of fifty and sixty years ago, when scores of brave men and women faced fine and imprisonment for Freethought, tired out the very malice of their persecutors, and made the blasphemy laws a dead letter for a whole generation. May our victory be as great as theirs, even if our sufferings be less.

But will they be less? Who knows? They may even be greater. Christian charity has grown so cold-blooded in its vindictiveness since the "pioneer days" that blasphemers are treated like beasts rather than men. There is a certain callous refinement in the punishment awarded to heretics to-day. Richard Carlile, and other heroes of the struggle for a free press, were mostly treated as first-class misdemeanants; they saw their friends when they liked, had whatever fare they could pay for, were allowed the free use of books and writing materials, and could even edit their papers from gaol. All that is changed now. A "blasphemer" who is sent to prison now gets a month of Cross's plank-bed, is obliged to subsist on the miserable prison fare, is dressed in the prison garb, is compelled to submit to every kind of physical indignity, is shut out from all communication with his relatives or friends except for one visit during the second three months, is denied the use of pen and ink, and debarred from all reading except the blessed Book. England and Russia are the only countries in Europe that make no distinction between press offenders and ordinary criminals. The brutal treatment which was meted out to Mr. Truelove in his seventieth year, when his grey hairs should have been his protection, is what the outspoken sceptic must be prepared to face. After eighteen centuries of Christianity, and an interminable procession of Christian "evidences," such is the reply of orthodoxy to the challenge of its critics.

These things, however, cannot terrorise us. We are prepared to stand by our principles at all hazard. Our motto is "No Surrender." What we might concede to criticism we will never yield to menace. The *Freethinker*, we repeat again, will go on whatever be the result of the present trial. The flag will not fall because one standard-bearer is stricken down; it will be kept flying proudly and bravely as of old—shot-torn and blood-stained perhaps, but flying, flying, flying!

G. W. FOOTE.

HENRY HETHERINGTON.

On contributing a review of past blasphemy trials to the March number of *Progress*, I much regretted that exigencies of space prevented my entering into details of the life and work of the Freethought martyrs. I propose, however, to do so from time to time in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

Second only to Richard Carlile in the great struggle for the freedom of the press, stand the names of the linked friends, James Watson and Henry Hetherington. It is with the latter I wish at present to deal.

Henry Hetherington was born in 1792, in Compton Street, Soho. He was apprenticed to the trade of a printer, and served his time with the father of the well-known Hansard, printer of the Parliamentary Reports. Early in life he imbibed the principles of Radicalism. He belonged to a body calling themselves "Freethinking Christians." They have or had until recently a chapel in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, and were essentially Unitarians of a broad type.

The earliest known effort of Hetherington in print was a pamphlet in connexion with this body. It was entitled "Principle and Practice Contrasted; or a Peep into 'the only True Church of God upon Earth,' commonly called Freethinking Christians," published in 1828, and issued from Hetherington's shop, at 13 Kingsgate Street, Holborn.

Only those who know the tyrannical censorship exercised over the newspaper press when it first became an influence in this country, can estimate the merit of the labors and sufferings of those who have established for us, the right of a free and a cheap press. Little more than a century ago publishers of newspapers were fined and even imprisoned, whenever they as much as mentioned the name of a peer of the realm. Press prosecutions were extremely numerous; no newspaper dared give an independent judgment. Anything and everything relating to politics or religion was at the mercy of the Attorney-General, who had the power to at once arrest for blasphemous or seditious libel. As the demand for newspapers increased, the ruling classes increased the taxes on knowledge. In 1765 the newspaper stamp duty was three-halfpence, in 1789 it was raised to twopence, in 1797 to twopence-halfpenny, in 1804 to threepence and in 1815 to fourpence, and here it remained until 1836, when the force of popular opinion was strong enough to reduce it to one penny, at which figure it remained until abolished in 1857. There was also a duty on paper and on advertisements.

It was Henry Hetherington who bore the brunt of the battle which so tardily ended in removing all taxes upon knowledge. On July 9th 1831, he issued from his shop in Kingsgate Street, the first penny newspaper in this country, the *Poor Man's Guardian*. The general price of newspapers at that time was sevenpence. In the place where the stamp usually appeared was the figure of a printing press inscribed "Liberty of the Press," and round it the motto "Knowledge is Power." The heading declared it was "published in defiance of the law and to try the power of Right against Might." The first number cited the law under which it was liable and which it defied. Three convictions were soon obtained against him, but the Bow Street magistrates could not enforce their order for some time. With provoking coolness Hetherington sent them a note to say "he was going out of town." He printed the note in his *Poor Man's Guardian* and commenced a tour through the country. On returning to London to his mother, who was dying, he was dragged off to prison while knocking at his own door, and none of his family knew he had returned till he was lodged in Clerkenwell gaol. Here he remained six months. Hibbert, Watson, Cleave, O'Brien, and others, saw that the *Guardian* and its outspoken policy of Radicalism was kept on. At the close of 1832, when he had not been many months free, he was again convicted and imprisoned for six months for the same crime of selling a penny paper without a taxed stamp. This time his friend Watson was also convicted, and their treatment in prison was very cruel. During the progress of the "unstamped" agitation, fully 500 persons were arrested for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*. The spirit displayed by the vendors is worthy of remembrance. They carried it in their hats and pockets. They left them in sure places "to be called for;" and when, for a while, government actually empowered officers to seize parcels, open them in the streets, and take out any unstamped publications, Henry Hetherington (while at large) made up "dummy" parcels, directed them, sent off a lad with them one way, with instructions to attract a crowd and delay the officers if they seized him; meanwhile, the real parcel for the country agent was sent off another way.

In 1833 Hetherington removed to 126 Strand. Here he also issued another unstamped paper, the *Destructive*. The *London Dispatch*, which followed, reached at one time 25,000 weekly. In 1834 he was again tried before Lord Lyndhurst for publishing the *Guardian*, but a jury was found which declared the paper "published in defiance of the law," "a strictly legal publication." Upon this decision being given numerous two-penny papers appeared, and Hetherington himself, at the end of the following year, merged the *Poor Man's Guardian* in the *Twopenny Dispatch*.

In 1840 Hetherington was again arrested for selling Haslam's "Letters to the Clergy." Abel Heywood, the original publisher, was also prosecuted, but he having influential friends, the case did not go to trial. In order to test the impartiality of the law, some of Hetherington's friends commenced prosecutions against four high class publishers, Moxon, Frazer, Richardson, and Saunders of Saunders and Otley, for the publication of "Queen Mab." The law was clear.

Shelley's poem was a blasphemous libel, and despite an eloquent defence from Serjeant (afterwards Judge) Talford, Moxon was declared guilty. It remained for the prosecution to call him up for judgment, which of course was never done, the object of the prosecutors simply being to call attention to the state of the law and to advertise "Queen Mab." The other publishers were not proceeded against. There can be little doubt that this course obtained for Hetherington a more lenient sentence than he would have otherwise received, and the most moderate expression of the law was then given from his judge, Lord Denman, who after stating that he had listened to Hetherington's defence with feelings of great interest, and with sentiments of respect, sentenced him to four months' imprisonment. When in prison, Hetherington wrote his "Cheap Salvation," a capital tract, in which he showed that all the best things of religion could be retained while dismissing priests and their theology. From this time forward, Hetherington devoted himself to the propaganda of Chartism, and Socialism. It was he who, in 1830, had drawn up a circular for the formation of Trade Unions, which had formed the basis of the "National Union of the Working Classes," which eventually led to Chartism. He was also one of the earliest and most active of working men engaged with his friend Dr. Birkbeck in founding the first Mechanic's Institute. He was a good speaker and writer, full of wit and energy, and promoted many movements for the benefit of the industrial classes. His unresting life was brought to a close on the 24th of August, 1849. A little before his death he signed his "Last will and Testament," witnessed by George Jacob Holyoake, Henry Allsop Ivory, and John Kenny. I subjoin the larger part of the document, which deserves reproduction for its intrinsic merit, as well as exemplifying the style and views of this fearless advocate of freedom.

"As life is uncertain, it behoves everyone to make preparations for death; I deem it therefore a duty incumbent on me, ere I quit this life, to express in writing, for the satisfaction and guidance of esteemed friends, my feelings and opinions in reference to our common principles. I adopt this course that no mistake or misapprehension may arise through the false reports of those who officiously and obtrusively obtain access to the death-beds of avowed Infidels to priestcraft and superstition; and who, by their annoying importunities, labor to extort from an opponent, whose intellect is already worn out and subdued by protracted physical suffering, some trifling admission, that they may blazon it forth to the world as a Death-bed Confession, and a triumph of Christianity over Infidelity.

"In the first place, then—I calmly and deliberately declare that I do not believe in the popular notion of the existence of an Almighty, All-wise, and Benevolent God—possessing intelligence, and conscious of his own operations; because these attributes involve such a mass of absurdities and contradictions, so much cruelty and injustice on His part to the poor and destitute portion of His creatures—that, in my opinion, no rational reflecting mind can, after disinterested investigation, give credence to the existence of such a Being. 2nd. I believe death to be an eternal sleep—that I shall never live again in this world, or another, with a consciousness that I am the same identical person that once lived, performed the duties, and exercised the functions of a human being.

"3rd. I consider priestcraft and superstition the greatest obstacle to human improvement and happiness. During my life I have, to the best of my ability, sincerely and strenuously exposed and opposed them, and die with a firm conviction that Truth, Justice and Liberty will never be permanently established on earth till every vestige of priestcraft and superstition shall be utterly destroyed.

4th. I have ever considered that the only religion useful to man consists exclusively of the practice of morality, and in the mutual interchange of kind actions. In such a religion there is no room for priests—and when they are seen interfering at our births, marriages, and deaths, pretending to conduct us safely through this state of being to another and happier world, any disinterested person of the least shrewdness and discernment must perceive that their sole aim is to stultify the minds of the people by their incomprehensible doctrines, that they may the more effectually fleece the poor deluded sheep who listen to their empty babblings and mystifications.

5th. As I have lived so I die, a determined opponent to their nefarious and plundering system. I wish my friends, therefore, to deposit my remains in unconsecrated ground, and trust they will allow no priest, or clergyman of any denomination, to interfere in any way whatever at my funeral. My earnest desire is, that no relation or friend shall wear black or any kind of mourning, as I consider it contrary to our rational principles to indicate respect for a departed friend by complying with a hypocritical custom.

6th. I wish those who respect me, and who have labored in our common cause, to attend my remains to their last resting place, not so much in consideration of the individual, as to do honor to our just benevolent, and rational principles.

I hope all true Rationalists will leave pompous displays to the tools of priestcraft and superstition. If I could have my desire, the occasion of my death and burial should be turned to the advantage of the living. I would have my kind and good friend, Watson, who knew me intimately for many years—or any other friend well acquainted with my character—to address to those assembled such observations as he may deem pertinent and useful; holding up the good points of my character as an example worthy of imitation, and pointing out my defects with equal fidelity, that none may avow just and rational principles without endeavoring to purge themselves of those errors that result from bad habits previously contracted, and which tarnish the lustre of their benign and glorious principles.

In harmony with Hetherington's wishes. Mrs. Hetherington and the large crowd of over a thousand Radical friends who followed his coffin to Kensal Green Cemetery, used no mourning, but wore decorations of white. The hearse was covered with a brightly-colored silk pall, bearing the words in silver, "We ought to endeavor to leave the world better than we found it," a favorite phrase of Hetherington's. His grave is beside those of "Publicola" and John Watts.

Simultaneously with the publication of his will was that of a wealthy dignitary of the Church, and notorious pluralist, who bequeathed his family many thousands of pounds. The infidel Hetherington died as he had lived, poor in Mammon's favors, rich only in the esteem of his fellow men; but he left the world a better inheritance, the example of a poor printer who fought and won the battle of "Right" against "Might."

J. M. WHEELER.

THE "FREETHINKER" PROSECUTION.

On Saturday, February 24th, Sir Hardinge Giffard, supported by Mr. Poland, moved at the Court of Queen's Bench that the rule for a *certiorari* obtained by Mr. Foote on the previous Monday should be taken out of its order in the Crown Paper and argued on the following Tuesday. Mr. Foote, in person, acquiesced, and Justices Huddleston and North made an order accordingly. On Tuesday morning last Sir Hardinge Giffard, supported by no less than two junior counsels, Mr. Poland and Mr. F. Lewis, moved that the rule *nisi* should be discharged, and put in a copy of the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*, which he described as a gross and intentional outrage on the religious feelings of the public, and which he alleged was still being openly sold, in order to show their lordships that the case was one which ought to be sent for trial at once. Mr. Foote replied at considerable length, first claiming the indulgence of the Court for having to argue in person in consequence of his not having the unlimited purse of the prosecution. He contended that the case was one for a special jury; that the law of blasphemy was very indefinite, and that a common jury might be misled; that grave questions as to the statute and the common law might arise at the trial; that it was manifestly unfair while a sweeping indictment for blasphemy was removed to the higher Court, that he should be compelled to plead in the lower Court on a similar charge; and that it was unjust to try the case at the Old Bailey, when the Corporation of the City was carrying on the prosecution. Baron Huddleston gave judgment against Mr. Foote with all that lucidity and impartiality which distinguished his summing-up in the Belt case. He did not wish to prejudge the case, but at the same time (here his Lordship held up an open copy of the Christmas Number to the Court) he would say that no man could reasonably deny that this was a blasphemous libel, as it was clearly a contumelious reproach against our Blessed Savior. Mr. Justice North concurred in the judgment of his learned brother. The rule was discharged. With his usual generosity, Sir Hardinge Giffard asked for costs, which were instantaneously granted. The trial, therefore, takes place at the Old Bailey at once, and Mr. Foote is indebted to the prosecution for the unnecessarily heavy costs incurred by them in resisting his application for a fair trial.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MAGIC AND PRAYER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An interesting article by Mr. Symes, on the above subject, which I have just had the pleasure of reading in *Progress*, reminds me of a fact the author has omitted, and which is not, I think, as generally known as it might be. The idea that gods can be cajoled, bullied or frightened into granting the requests of imbecile mortals, has by no means disappeared even from amongst European nations.

Here, in Italy, the sailors and fisherman on many parts of the coast, not only *pray* to the images of the Virgin Mary, or of their patron saints, set up for the purpose in some conspicuous part of their vessels, but also, when in danger or difficulty, *revile* and *maltrat* them, should they appear indifferent to the supplications addressed them for wet or for fine weather. The Neapolitan sailor, as the most ignorant, is also the most superstitious of his kind. When becalmed, he will implore his saint to send him wind; when in a storm, to send him fine weather; but if prayer is not listened to, it becomes a threat; the offering of money, trinkets or candles, promised to be made at his shrine on shore, are withdrawn; then, as the unpropitious weather increases, increase the revilings and threats addressed to the offender, who is generally *stogged* before the vessel arrives in port; but seldom or never is he thrown overboard—that would be a heinous crime; he is simply shut up and reserved for further use.

Superstition of a similar nature may be witnessed in Naples at the drawing of that national shame, the Public Lottery. Every Saturday five numbers are drawn in presence

of a crowd of people for the most part of the poorest class, the class which the lottery is designed to plunder. The *lazzarone*, or the *popolano*, may be seen standing before the fatal wheel with the image of his patron saint in his hand. A number is drawn, as usual not that inscribed on the lottery ticket. Then the Neapolitan looks reproachfully at his saint. A second number is drawn, and with like result—the image is shaken; a third, it is reviled; a fourth, it is cuffed; a fifth, it is trampled under foot, then taken up, wiped clean and pocketed to serve at the next "extraction."

Between the Italians, who thus treat their madonnas and saints, and the Chinese—who in time of pestilence or famine, drag the images of their gods, with ropes tied round their necks through the mire, reviling, spitting upon, and striking them—what difference is there?

At the risk of unduly lengthening this letter, I will tell you a capital story, which besides being funny, has the merit of being true; the occurrence actually taking place a few years ago at Naples.

There are, as every one knows, and in flat defiance of the law, a great number of convents still existing in that city. In one of these convents the nuns are so well looked after by their patron saint—I think he is St. Thomas—that they are exceedingly well supplied with provisions of every description; carts laden with meat, bread, cheese, etc., the gift of devout friends and admirers of the holy ladies and their holy protector, constantly stopping before the wicket constructed for the purpose of receiving such gifts. It now so happened, that for many days the saint kept his children without cheese. In vain he was prayed to, reasoned with, threatened. The long-looked-for dainty came not. At last the Abbess convened a general council of the sisters, at which, after much discussion, it was resolved that the saint should be *punished* by being locked up in a dark cellar, and oh, crowning disgrace! deprived of the new nether garments—beautifully embroidered with gold, which the ladies had just worked for him—and whipped.

Detto fatto! the offender was duly stripped, whipped and consigned to *durance vile*, where he was visited once every day by the Abbess or one of her nuns, talked to, and then left to reflect upon the consequences of his obstinacy and folly. And now, hearken all ye stiff-necked infidels that refuse to believe in the efficacy of prayer. Hearken to the wondrous tale of miracle I am about to narrate. One fine morning, a cart literally groaning under the weight of a load of magnificent cheese, stopped at the convent gate. Then did the hearts of those holy virgins (?) rejoice greatly; then was the saint duly released from his prison and adorned with his new "unmentionables"; then was the voice of prayer and thanksgiving mingled with the sound of feasting. For had not St. Thomas conferred upon his devout daughters the inestimable blessing of a whole cart-load of cheese.

R. H. DYAS.

12th February, 1883, Cossilla, Italy.

"FREETHINKER" DEFENCE FUND.

W. Tappenden, 1s.; W. Bruton, 3s. *Sunderland*: D. R. Bow, 3s.; F. S. R., 1s.; — Newman, 1s. *Altringham*: W. Brierley, 7s. 6d.; J. Brierley, 7s. 6d.; A. Brierley, 2s. 6d.; Emma Gatley, 2s. 6d. *Plymouth*: W. H. Hawkins, 1s.; — Dyas, 1s.; — Hollins, 1s.; W. S. P., 6d.; Collected at Mr. Foote's lectures, £1 12s. *S. Foulger and J. Mayfield*, 6d. *Liverpool*: Mrs. Tanner, 10s.; A. Weeks, 1s.; J. Simmons, 2s.; — Newcomb, 1s.; — Eaton, 1s.; Mrs. Beattie, 10s.; a Friend, 2s.; W. Meek, 1s.; — Meek, 1s. *John Price (Stockport)* 5s.; L. A. Warden, 1s.; A. Warden, 1s.; R. H. Findley, 1s.; — Findley, 1s.; E. Warden, 6d.; F. J. Woodward, 6d.; C. Palmer, 6d.; Josh. Johnson, 1s.; J. H., 3d.; W. Sharman, 6d.; J. Cain, 6d.; C. Bird, 6d.; F. Johnson, 6d.; W. Burrell, 3d.; a Friend, 10s.

[Collecting sheets will be sent to any Freethinker on application to 28 Stonecutter Street.

ACID DROPS.

G. B. CALVERT was arrested last week, and charged with sending threatening letters and demands for money to Lord Eustace Cecil. On searching him the police found a ticket of membership to the Upper Chelsea Branch of the Church of England Young Men's Society.

TALMAGE says that Evolution is "infidel, atheistic, absurd, and brutal," yet Darwin is buried in Westminster Abbey. The English clergy are 'cutter than Talmage. They know that Evolution has won, and they want to make terms with it. Talmage shrieks and howls at it until he is black in the face. But Evolution suffers as little from his attacks as a Nasmyth hammer would suffer from the assault of a flea.

GEORGE THOMPSON, tax collector of Jarrow, has been ordered to pay £500 damages to Margaret Softley for breach of promise.

He seduced her under a promise of marriage, taking advantage, it was alleged, of his position as a Sunday-school teacher and a member of the Church. The following colloquy took place:—

"A Juryman: Was not your confidence shaken in the defendant after the first child was born.

"Plaintiff: No sir; he was a Churchman and a Sunday-school teacher, and I had every confidence in him.

"After the seduction of course he (defendant) ceased to be a Sunday-school teacher?"

"Plaintiff: Oh no, sir, he did not."

Of course not. No doubt Mr. Thompson felt he was no worse than Abraham or David or others of God's favorites, whom he held up as examples to little children.

A MINISTER of the Gospel in Salisbury has replied to the argument that the wine used at Cana was fermented, because being used before Passover it must have been from the vintage of the previous years. He says that the wine Jesus made must have been unfermented for "my friends, there was not time for it to ferment." The guests at Cana must then have been "well drunk" indeed before they got the extra six water-pots containing two or three firkins apiece, for they said "thou hast kept the good wine till now."

THE annual sale of pews in Ward Beecher's church this year fetched 37,000 dollars. If J. C.'s enterprise had paid like that Judas would never have sold it. He would have gone on acting as treasurer to the concern until he could no longer hold the bag.

RELIGION and roguery often go together. The Moslems out in Ceylon regard Arabi Pasha as a saint, but they are none the less ready, commercially speaking, to skin him alive. One Moslem butcher offered to send in the daily supply of meat at about 50 per cent. above the market prices. Arabi gave him an interview and a severe dose of stick.

THE policy of the *Freethinker* is justified, and made absolutely necessary, by the frightful hypocrisy existing in this country. When we see Mr. Justin McCarthy, who is known to be an unbeliever, voting against the Affirmation Bill; and Mr. John Morley, who is a known Positivist, telling the electors of Newcastle that he is "quite willing to take the oath as it stands;" it is high time that some one who values truth above politeness, and honesty above "culchaw," spoke out unmistakably against the hypocrisy which is eating into English society like a gangrene. Others may trim and palter if they will, but for our part we mean to act on the advice of Carlyle, and wherever we find a *lie* smite it and spare not.

Truth states that "Society" at Cannes is very indignant with Lord Wolverton for introducing M. Clémenceau to Mr. Gladstone. The Duke of Vallombrosa is the most indignant of all. This noble gentleman's father was an army contractor who nearly got hanged for supplying as meat to a French army corps the flesh of soldiers who had died in the hospital or been killed in battle. He retired to Italy after the first Empire, purchased a Dukedom, and became a Grand Seigneur. This fellow's son is the person who complains of Mr. Gladstone's conversing with a Republican Freethinker like Clémenceau. The deputy for Montmartre comes of a Vendean family who never had a blackguard amongst them. The biography in the current number of *Progress* shows that M. Clémenceau and his father could look down on the Vallombrosas and all such miserable fry.

THE *Dalston, Kingsland, and Stoke Newington Illustrated Paper*, in its "Notes and Comments," says: "The stronghold of every evil system that lifts its head in the world, is to be found in the degree of sanction which it meets with in the Christian Church. It was so with negro slavery; it is so still in regard to the common use of alcoholic drink; and the wicked war-spirit finds its strength in the fact that men and women who profess to be followers of the Prince of Peace, allow themselves to be carried away by it." The damning fact is that Christianity has been nineteen centuries in the world without altering this. On the contrary, its fetish, the Bible, can be cited in support of slavery, drinking, and war. See the texts, "If a man smite his servant, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money" (Exodus xxi., 20-21); "Wine which cheereth the heart of God and man" (Judges ix., 13); and "I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matthew x., 34).

THE Revisers of the Prayer Book seem desirous of ignoring the fact that, that being a publication authorised by the State, any revision must be subject to Parliamentary control. We should like to see the result with Mr. Bradlaugh, Baron de Worms, Mr. Pease, Mr. Newdigate Newdegate, Sir Charles Dilke, and Sir Richard Cross, as a Committee for dealing with the Revised Version.

THE Comtesse de Gasparin has just published in French,

a scathing impeachment of the Salvation Army, whom she denounces as a new order of Jesuits, equally bent on subordinating the family to a new church. The letter from the Rev. Samuel Charlesworth to the *Times*, in which he states that Miss Charlesworth, the aide de camp to Miss Booth in Switzerland, who is under age, was only allowed to work with Miss Booth on condition of not joining the Army or taking its uniform, which conditions were infringed, seems to give some countenance to the denunciations of the Comtesse.

LORD SHAFESBURY writes to the Countess Gasparin that the Salvation Army "seems to him to be a work of the Devil, who, having for a long time tried to render Christianity odious, has changed his tactics and is attempting to make it ridiculous." We differ from his lordship. No one, not even the Devil, could possibly make Christianity more odious and ridiculous than it is.

MISS CHARLESWORTH, who has just been expelled from Geneva with Miss Booth, is only eighteen years of age, and she has already been two years engaged in saving the world. It would be more becoming if these young girls would stay at home and mind their own business. The methods of Revivalism are very singular. Girls fresh from school are sent preaching to people of twice their years, and when a thief is converted he is paid to teach honest men how to behave themselves.

THE editor of the *Banner of Light*, the chief organ of the spiritualists in America, must be a cheeky charlatan. He publishes a pretended communication from the "spirit" of the late D. M. Bennett, the founder of the *Truthseeker*, in which that able exponent and courageous sufferer for Freethought is made, in a style very unlike his own, to recommend the world to maintain "the glorious old *Banner of Light*." Not a word about his own paper which is still carried on in his own spirit by Mr. E. Macdonald. This "spirit" is altogether "too thin" for that of our very stout and sturdy co-worker, D. M. Bennett.

SOME noteworthy statements in regard to the City churches were made by the Rev. R. H. Hadden at the London Diocesan Conference. The City, said he, contained 61 parish churches, and 51 phantom parishes. There were not more than 10 real parishes using the word "parish" in its common sense. On a particular Sunday, when a census was taken, the united congregations amounted to 3,835 persons, of this number 706 were choristers. The aggregate income of the clergy of these churches was from £36,000 to £42,000; of these clergy 19 lived in the City, 30 in the suburbs and West End, 4 at a distance; one receiving £1,250 a year, lived at Bath; one received £1,000, lived at St. Leonards, one lived in Kent, and one in Surrey. Of these 61 churches, only 11 had congregations of over 100. One church had 10 persons, one 9, one 8, one 4, and one 2.

It is rather a joke to hear Dr. Parker blessing God for the return of Mr. John Morley for Newcastle. Mr. Morley is a Positivist, and writes God with a small g. Christians nowadays are thankful for very small mercies.

THE *St. James' Gazette* gives a specimen of examination papers set to girls of fourteen in the diocese of Ely. Here is one of the questions, which we have made an attempt to answer. It reads: "How many accounts have we of the conversion of St. Paul? Give a connected history compiled from them?" There are three accounts—Acts ix., xxii., and xxvi., and each is inconsistent with the other two. In the first Paul fell and the men with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man. In the second, they saw the light but heard not the voice. In the third account they all fell. It is rather too hard to expect little girls of fourteen to make a connected narrative out of stories which the Holy Ghost has stumbled over so much.

CLAUDE REIGNIER CONDER, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, has brought home some specimens of salt from the Dead Sea, which the Christian Evidence Society are of opinion may have formed a portion of Mrs. Lot. They defy all sceptics to prove it is not. The old lady, it seems, has been in a pretty pickle for some time, but having been remarkably preserved, can now be used to freshen up the almost-putrid Bible evidences.

TALMAGE objects to any mending or patching up of his precious idol, the Bible. He declares it divine throughout, and will allow no interference with the choice narratives of Judah and Tamar, Lot and his daughter, or the chaste language of Solomon's Song. All is divine alike, and once let in the waters of criticism they will wash away the inspiration of the Holy Ghost entirely.

THE debates on the Estimates of Public Worship in Germany have been very bitter. The Clerical Party denounce the Government as surrendering religion to materialism. They specially protest against the teaching of Darwinism as subversive of the interests of revelation. There as elsewhere the priests are ever the enemies of progress.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

A Verbatim Report of the Trial for Blasphemy will be given in Next Week's Number.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, March 4th) in the Assembly Room, Grosvenor Street, All Saints, Manchester:—Morning at 11, "The Black Army;" afternoon at 3, "Great Blasphemers;" evening at 6.30, "A Challenge to the Churches."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

March 11th, Edinburgh; 18th and 25th, Hall of Science, London.

April 1st, Milton Hall, London; 3rd, Walworth; 8th, Claremont Hall, London; 22nd, Leeds; 29th, Oldham.

May 6th and 13th, Claremont Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, H. A. KEMP, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9 South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—C. B. B., *G. Nightingale, Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, Langham Hall Pulpit, Portsmouth Pioneer, J. Thornos.*

M. H. A.—Your suggestion shall be fully considered.

SCPTIC.—We are overcrowded with matter just at present.

A. B. C. B.—You will do well to join at once. Every *Freethinker's* active help may be needed in the struggle. We are obliged to omit a heap of letters just now.

F. MILLAR.—Collecting-sheet sent. We are extremely glad to hear that the *Freethought* news-shop is doing so well in Peterboro, and that you have so good a sale of the *Freethinker*.

TUTOR.—We thank you, but we are too busy to attend to the sale at present, and at the best, books fetch low prices second-hand. There does not appear to us anything morally wrong in what you refer to, but every man must judge for himself.

We thank J. Brumage and W. Tappenden.

W. DECARLE.—*Progress* is a success. Thanks for your good wishes. No doubt there are thousands who suffer from the cruelty of bigotry, but we must all keep our hearts brave and help one another.

W. H. R.—It is discretionary with the postal authorities. In answer to your second question, we think not.

B. H. G.—There cannot be a better plan than the one you describe. We have not the means to advertise all over the country, but if every reader of the *Freethinker* would circulate it amongst his acquaintances we should soon double our circulation.

AN ATHEIST.—We will consult "Haridas" as to his publishing a pamphlet on "England's Rule in India."

J. DAVIS, 5 Summercoats Terrace, Colwell Road, East Dulwich, S.E., informs readers in the neighborhood of Dulwich and Peckham Rye, that he supplies *Freethought* literature and undertakes to deliver the same every Sunday morning on receipt of postcard.

J. B. T.—There are some shops in Haggerstone which supply the *Freethinker*, or at the Haggerstone Club. Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on "Perpetual Pensions" is the only one we know of as now in print. Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

G. MINSON, whose newsagent refused any longer to supply the *Freethinker*, summarily closed his account, and promises to take an extra supply elsewhere for gratuitous distribution.

AN EARNEST INQUIRER.—Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" gives no original author in whom the saying "pour oil upon the troubled waters" occurs, but gives instances of the fact. It is not a Biblical quotation, nor to be found in any of the ordinary handbooks of quotation.

J. BURNS.—We shall be glad to hear of many more who will, like you, offer to sell the *Freethinker* privately until all prosecutions have ceased.

S. A. ROSA.—Thanks, but we are overpressed with matter just now.

W. K.—The subject is too large for an offhand answer. Read the *Freethinker* and you will learn our views.

THE *Freethinker* can be obtained every Sunday morning of Mr. Hilditch on Clerkenwell Green. Private customers or even shopkeepers can be supplied by applying at Mr. Hilditch's address No. 7 Cromer Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.

SPECIAL.

THE police are unlawfully visiting newsagents and warning them against selling copies of this journal which have been neither condemned nor indicted. We ask all our friends to aid us at once in resisting this insidious attack. Any person in London or the provinces who is willing to sell the *Freethinker* wholesale or retail can have a weekly parcel

sent to him direct on the most advantageous terms. It would be well for someone, in places where the supply is stopped by the wholesale agent, to constitute himself agent for the district. Mr. Alexander Orr, of Edinburgh, has already done thus, and he has sent a circular to all the local newsvendors intimating his readiness to supply them at the wholesale rate. By this prompt action Mr. Orr will succeed in checking the scare caused by the refusal of Messrs. Menzies to keep the *Freethinker* on their list. Private *Freethinkers* might act where no newsagent is prepared to, and all friends in the neighborhood could call at his residence and obtain as many copies as they require. In cases of unusual difficulty, or where the cost of carriage is excessively heavy, our manager will make special arrangements.

Another method of supply might be adopted in out of the way places. Any number of subscribers could order through one of their number, and we would send down the copies wanted in one parcel, through the book-post, at the rate of one penny per copy, post free.

These plans are all very simple and we rely on our thousands of friends and well-wishers to put them in operation, and thus defeat our cowardly enemies.

SUGAR PLUMS.

We have "Shelley on Blasphemy" now on sale at our office. The price is one penny instead of twopence, and as the pamphlet includes sixteen pages of small type it is a cheap reprint, and will doubtless have a wide circulation. Those who can afford it should purchase a dozen copies and distribute among their friends and acquaintances. The great poet's eloquent letter to Lord Ellenborough is calculated to excite public opinion on our behalf in our present trial. Next week we shall publish "Mill on Blasphemy," thirty-two pages, price twopence. It is a reprint of John Stuart Mill's early article in the *Westminster Review* on the prosecutions of Richard Carlile and his shopmen.

THE Rev. Mother of Claydon has been lecturing in the theatre at Ipswich on "The God of Moses and His Friends." Her discourse, which might have been delivered from a *Freethought* platform, was greeted with laughter and applause by a large audience.

MR. FOOTE has met with the heartiest reception wherever he has gone of late. Last Sunday he lectured at Liverpool to the largest audiences he has ever addressed in that city. The friends there are determined to uphold the *Freethinker* against all odds.

MR. A. ORR, whose previous attempt was foiled by the bigots, has opened a shop at 332 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, for the sale of *Freethought* literature. We wish him all success in his plucky enterprise. Mr. Orr has a large and increasing sale of the *Freethinker*, and he is ready to supply all local newsvendors at wholesale prices.

THE *Times*, in a review of Mr. Loring Brace's "Gesta Christi," says terrible facts are against the attempt of Mr. Brace to demonstrate to an ordinary intelligence that Christianity is a success and the human race decidedly the better for it. It says, moreover, "There has, however, sprung up a controversy on a somewhat lower level, upon the question whether Christianity has not been a positive curse to the world."

MESSRS. WILSON AND McCORMICK, of Glasgow, announce Walt Whitman's new work, "Specimen Days and Collect," as a full compendium of the author's prose writings old and new.

"LITTLEJOHN," whose fluent pen has for many years been active in the cause of liberty, writes in the *Weekly Times* on the subject of "Law and Religion," giving an historic sketch of the disabilities under which dissenters of all kinds from the Established Church have suffered. Referring to the laws against blasphemy he says: "A prosecution for blasphemy would probably fail in most cases in which the official doctrines were assailed in the way of grave and cautious argumentation, but a judge of narrow mind, and a jury responding to his bigotry, might, on any occasion, combine for the perpetration of gross injustice. The law is still an engine capable of tyrannical use. A recurrence to precedents of no distant date might seriously imperil liberty. Mr. Justice Stephen says as much when he states that 'the true legal doctrine is that blasphemy consists in the character of the matter published, and not in the manner in which it is stated.' Thus a calm logical argument might be treated as a crime."

WHAT however does "Littlejohn" mean by saying there is a wide difference between punishing persons for coarse assaults upon the religious feelings of others—which is only one way of protecting the civil right of the injured individual—and a prosecution founded on the notion that the State is entitled to punish persons for actions which a particular church may suppose to be offensive to the Deity? "Littlejohn" knows that prosecutions for blasphemy have never been instituted to protect the civil rights of injured individuals. In such a case the individual would have to prove the injury. A publication which no one is forced to buy, cannot be liable for injuring feelings when no individual is attacked. "Littlejohn" would not protect the political feelings of the Liberals from the attacks of *Judy*, or the Irish from those of *Moonshine*. He would not even invoke the law against the one, for its gross personalities and misrepresentations in regard to Mr. Gladstone, or the other for its depicting Mr. Parnell as the grindstone whereon the knives of the Dublin assassins were sharpened, and representing Mr. Gladstone as "Number One" the inciter to the Dublin murders, hiding behind a barrel labelled with the name of his residence as Cannes!

SIR HENRY TYLER has "resigned" his chairmanship of the Brush Light Company; that is, he got out to avoid being kicked out. There is an examination threatened into the purchase and sale of shares in Lady Tyler's name. It will all come out in time, and we hope the rest of the persecuting crew will be shown up in due course. Jehovah's friends were always a shady lot, and they don't seem to improve.

A VERY good joke was cracked at one of the meetings at Newcastle in support of the candidate of Mr. Elijah Copland, who stood in the labor interest. "If we elect you, Elijah," asked a practical Radical, "what ravens will feed you?" Why wasn't that man prosecuted for blasphemy? Is there no godly Tyler in canny Newcastle?

THE Portuguese Ministry has brought in a Reform Bill, one object of which is to abolish the hereditary element in the Upper Chamber as an anachronism that can no longer be tolerated. England is being left behind in the race of political and religious progress by the smallest states in Europe. We may soon see our fat-bellied and wooden-headed House of Lords throwing out the Affirmation Bill, making itself a spectacle to gods and men, and us the laughing-stock of the civilised world.

POOR O'Donnell (alias Macdonald) got a frightful snubbing from Mr. Forster the other evening. Amid much laughter the member for Bradford remarked—"I cannot imagine any sane men, convened whether for good or for evil, taking the member for Dungarven into their confidence." So much for the "mean cuss" who deliberately dragged a lady's train over Mr. Bradlaugh's boots as he sat in a chair exhausted, after resisting the violence of fourteen "chuckers out."

IN order to give a wide publicity at present to Mr. Foote's "Blasphemy No Crime" we will send packets of the pamphlet for gratuitous distribution, to any address, at the rate of eighteen-pence a dozen, carriage paid.

READERS of Mr. Wheeler's sketch of Henry Hetherington may be interested to know that Mr. Truelove, of High Holborn, has just published a life-size bust of Hetherington. Mrs. Emma Martin, the Freethought lecturer, assisted the professional phrenologist and sculptor, who took a cast of the head after death.

A RESOLUTION declaring that the time has arrived when the State Church should be disestablished and disendowed, and that the tithes should be paid by the landowners to the Government to go for educational purposes, and the relief of other local burdens, has been passed by a meeting held at Foot's Cray, under the presidency of Sir John Bennett.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.

[SECOND SERIES.]

XI.

My guide continued his account of the flood and the consequent effects in heaven. He told me that but for religious Toryism there need have been nothing more than mere inconvenience experienced as a result of the ocean running dry, or at least, the grand catastrophe might have been avoided. Away to the north-west of heaven there was a region, distant only about 100,000 miles, and well wooded and watered. One of the archangels, named Lucifer, had gone out many years before and explored this region and made a correct map of it. This was very much resented by the orthodox angels and their party, who hated all new fangled and out of the way things. They reported the

deeds of Lucifer and his party at headquarters; and the three chiefs, befooled by their flatterers, called Lucifer to account. When before the court he was asked what he had done; and he confessed it all. He said he had felt tired of constantly playing his harp and singing, and loafing about the throne; and, feeling the want of some intellectual work, had led a party out on an expedition of exploration; and that finding the new country a remarkably good and fertile one, he had constructed a map of it, which he begged the honor of being allowed to present to his supreme Majesty Jahveh.

The old one, rather taken aback, hardly knew what to do, and reached out his hand to receive the map; when his vizier, an old angel of the straight-laced style, a sort of cross between a Puritan and High Churchman, snatched it from Lucifer's hand, and denounced it as a book on magic, designed, as he made the Father believe, to bring ruin upon the Trinity by means of unholy and diabolical spells and incantations. The Father, thoroughly frightened, sent Lucifer to hell for a thousand years. There was no trial; he got no chance of reply. Celestial Toryism was always just like that upon earth, you must understand. And so poor Lucifer was packed off to hell, after seeing his map burnt in the public square yonder.

When the thousand years were expired he was released and brought home, none the better in temper, you may depend upon it. He took no part in the flood atrocity; he had no quarrel with men below, and he had no faith in the angels above—he knew them too well for that. Now when the ocean was running dry Lucifer quickly saw what must be the result; and he ventured, even at the risk of another thousand years in hell, to suggest two methods of escaping the terrible calamity impending, either (1st) to emigrate to that country he had formerly explored and mapped; and he volunteered another expedition to re-explore it; or (2nd) to adopt some scheme, several of which he exhibited and offered to execute, for conveying hither an unlimited supply of water from the great rivers and lakes situated in the land he had so long ago discovered. These sensible suggestions were met with scorn and rage by the orthodox Tory party—they would have no change, they exclaimed. They would do as they had ever done. To change the celestial customs and manners would be rankest blasphemy. And they denounced with unmingled bitterness the suggestions of Lucifer.

As that archangel did not desire another millenium in hell, he quietly and secretly withdrew from heaven, and made his way, with all those angels who cared to follow him to the land he had discovered, where he and they still live in plenty and peace, having no religion to trouble them.

"That," said I, "is very different from the story the parsons tell their flocks about Lucifer. According to them he was a rebel, and the author of all evil, who is damned beyond all recovery for his own wickedness."

"Ay! ay!" replied my guide; "that is the old story. Religion never was anything else but lies and slander. Lucifer was a great discoverer and reformer; and those are the sole reasons why he was denounced in this place, and why his name is still held up to execration amongst the stupid and the designing ones upon earth. Lucifer was never a devil—that is, *diabolos*—that is, backbiter; he was too independent, too honest to resort to mean tricks of that sort. In truth, it was the Tory angels that slandered and backbit him; and the Tory gods that damned him, for his goodness, during that thousand years, and would have doomed him to the same place of torture for ever, if they had but possessed the power."

"That," I remarked, "is exactly the character of orthodoxy upon earth. It has never been itself of any use, and most of its time has been spent in abusing, murdering, and otherwise outraging the real benefactors of mankind, and in bewailing their inability to exterminate all reformers."

"Just so! just so!" replied he. "Well, after Lucifer and his party were gone the Tories had it all their own way. Things were getting uncommonly bad. There had now been no rain for a year; the springs were dry; the ocean was nothing but mud, fast drying up; many rivers were absolutely empty, and the river of the water of life was only fed by the remaining snows on the top of its mountain source. The cloudless sun fast dissolved those snows, and in a few months the river was nearly empty. Water could not be got for bathing; nor even for the sacrificial washings and baptism—and these were kept up to the very last possible moment. The fanatics would see universal deso-

lation before failing in one of their stupid and useless ceremonies.

"In this state of distress even some of those who formerly abused Lucifer now called out for reform and a supply of water. They started a newspaper, the first and only one that ever appeared in heaven, named the *Free Inquirer*. This was circulated very rapidly and was in the hands of most of the angels and spirits before the court party could act. When once they did act they made short work of it. The paper advocated the schemes of Lucifer and his recall in order to execute them. That was enough. The authorities shouted Treason! Blasphemy! Atheism! And, gathering a mob, set out for the office of the paper, which they left in ruins; and then proceeded to roast the promoters in a fire prepared expressly for the purpose. This they did as an awful example to all who should afterwards dare to know better than their natural rulers.

"By this time many had sickened and died. Want of water brought on a pestilence; and the angels died in dozens. This state of things was not reported to the gods, who kept themselves secluded, well knowing that their power lay in mystery and secrecy. As the inhabitants of heaven were dying so rapidly some had the temerity to suggest medical treatment for the benefit of those who were ill. The Tories at once killed them as innovators, and avowed their intention never to depart from the only authorised cure for disease—viz., anointing with oil and the prayer of faith.

"At length the pestilence reached the court. The head potentate Jahveh could not rise one morning, and got his breakfast brought up to bed. But he could not eat it. And before night he was dead.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

DESIGN AND NATURE.—Physics show that as there was a time when no organic life existed on earth, so will the time arrive—no doubt an infinite and incommensurable period—when the physical forces now existing will be exhausted, and all animated beings plunged into night and death. What are, in the presence of such facts, the pompous phrases of a philosophy about the designs which became accomplished in the creation of man; the incarnation of God in history; the history of humanity as the subjective unveiling of the absolute; the eternity of conscience, liberty and will, etc? What are the life and the efforts of man, and all humanity, compared with the eternal, inexorable, irresistible, half-accidental, half-necessary march of nature? The momentary play of a ephemeron hovering over the sea of eternity and infinity.—*Dr. Louis Büchner*, "Force and Matter," chap. xi., p. 160; 1881.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE JEWS.—Can we imagine a more amazing spectacle than Christianity appropriating the sacred literature of a Semitic tribe, adapting it to a new religion, and then persecuting and massacring its owners for proving faithful to their ancestral creed! We might as reasonably claim the Vedas as our own, reconstruct Brahminical theosophy, and insist on Hindoo acceptance of our interpretation under penalty of death.—"The Evolution of Christianity," p. 147; 1883.

A LESSON FROM A MARTYR.—It is only because religionists have so often felt the fatal effects of banter, ridicule, invective railery, and sarcasm that they have so great an objection to them—but methinks it furnishes a valid reason why their opponents should never cease to use them. I do not remember ever to have heard of a practical chemist who grew angry if rallied about his chemistry—or a geologist who was driven to desperation by witticisms directed against his science—or an astronomer who called upon the magistrate to protect him from the ignorant invective of some open-mouthed opponents—the reason being, that chemists, geologists, and astronomers, have no direct interest in always thinking precisely in the same manner. They are, beside, men of facts, who do not presume to talk about what neither themselves nor anybody else understand.—*Charles Southwell*, *Investigator*, p. 55; 1843.

CHRISTIAN TRITHEISM.—Three persons, each equally possessing divine attributes, are three Gods. A person is a being. No one who has any correct notion of the meaning of words will deny this. And the being who possesses divine attributes must be God, or a God. The doctrine of the Trinity then, affirms that there are three Gods. It is affirmed at the same time that there is but one God. But no one can believe that there are three Gods, and that there is but one God.—*Professor Andrews Norton*, "A Statement of Reasons for not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians," section 2, p. 25; London; 1846.

PROFANE JOKES.

WHAT time of the day was Adam born?—A little before Eve.
WHY did Eve never have the measles?—Because she'd had 'em (Adam).

WHO was the shortest man in the Bible?—Bildad the Shutite (shoe-height).

WHO was the first noble mentioned in the Bible?—Baron Fig-tree.

WHAT clothes did Adam and Eve wear in Paradise?—Bear-skin.

WHY are some clergymen like signposts?—Because they point the way and don't go themselves.

HOW do we know that Moses wore a wig?—Because sometimes he was seen with Aaron and sometimes without.

HOW do we know there were canals in the New Testament times?—Because we hear of one Simon Barjona (barge-owner).

A BALD-HEADED man, who has heard that the hairs of a man's head are numbered, wants to know if there is not some place where he can obtain the back numbers.

CLERGYMAN (to man fishing on river-bank on Sunday morning). My good man, don't you hear those heavenly bells calling you? *Fishermen*: Beg pardon, sir. *Clergyman* repeats what he said before. *Fisherman*: Beg pardon, sir; those bells are making such a row that I can't hear what you say.

A VICAR of a village walking along one of the thoroughfares during a severe winter, saw a parishioner of his lying upon a slide some boys had made. Upon coming near to him the vicar soon discovered that the man was drunk. The minister lectured him for a space upon the evils of drinking in excess, and finished his speech with saying—"That it was only fools who stood in slippery places." Whereupon the inebriated one exclaimed, "Yesh hic—sho I shee—hic—but I'm—hic—damned if I can."

A CLERGYMAN not long since met a prominent billiard-room keeper, with whose family he was acquainted. "How is it that I never see you in church?" asked the pastor. "Because I don't go there. If you reverends don't patronise my billiard-tables, I am not going to patronise your churches. I think it is your business to set the good example and come first."

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MR. REID'S LECTURES.—Subjects: "Commune and Civil War in Paris" (Mr. Reid having been an eye-witness); "How the Working Classes are to be Saved and Pauperism Extinguished;" "Gambetta and Bradlaugh." Address, 4 Park Street, Northampton.

MR. J. SYMES' ENGAGEMENTS.

March 4, Bradford; 11, Portsmouth; 18, Grimsby; 25, Halifax. April 1, Brighouse; 8, Huddersfield; 15, Baskerville Hall; 22, West Hartlepool; 29, Manchester. May 6, Edinburgh; 20, Liverpool; 27, Plymouth.—All applications to be addressed to Mr. J. Symes, 142 Hagley Road, Birmingham.

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BRITTON.
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